

Technical and Vocational Education and Training:
Issues, Concerns and Prospects 20

Hans-Uwe Otto *Editor*

Facing Trajectories from School to Work

Towards a Capability-Friendly Youth
Policy in Europe

Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects

Volume 20

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Hans-Uwe Otto
Editor

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Roland Atzmüller • Thierry Berthet
Lavinia Bifulco • Jean-Michel Bonvin
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Björn Halleröd • Christian Christrup Kjeldsen
Marek Kwiek • Regine Schröer • Josiane Vero
Marianna Zieleńska
Co-editors



Editor

Hans-Uwe Otto
Faculty of Educational Science
Bielefeld Center for Education
and Capability Research
Bielefeld University
Bielefeld, Germany

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Foreword

Fighting Social Inequality for Vulnerable Youth: A European Case

At least the last 30 years have seen a steady growth in the number of unemployed people in European countries. The so-called great recession of 2007–2008, however, has witnessed not only one more increase in unemployment, but one of a radical nature. It is a sign of the resulting catastrophic situation that the number of unemployed youths in many EU-countries is greater than that of unemployed people generally. This is where the scandal begins as the hopelessness of integrating the youth into the labour market has so far become increasingly entrenched, together with dangerous consequences for their entire life perspective.

The group of unemployed youth has increased regardless if they have received a professional or a vocational education are drawn into a vortex of structural exclusion from all chances to get job opportunities. Especially those youths in particular find themselves in a dramatic situation who are disadvantaged because of their socialisation, their inadequate school achievements or their status of early school leavers. During the extraordinarily important transition phase to an adult role, and at a time when they are adjusting to the necessary orientation to the labour market, they are excluded through the conventional structure of opportunities from the dominant system of norms and rigidly regulated access possibilities. This group of youths is at the centre of the European empirically-based joint project “Making Capabilities Work” (WorkAble). This project has concerned itself with the research, analysis and dissemination of fundamental changes in the framework of the theory of justice, and has applied its findings to the consequences for youth – and social policy on the transition from school to work.

The multiple problems caused by youth unemployment and its consequences are of course not new, but, far from going down, the number of disadvantaged youths has increased exponentially in the present crisis situation in Europe. Many organisational solutions of transition systems in the respective countries, though no doubt well-intentioned and largely responding to traditional job descriptions, have

not been greatly successful in their offers of old, standardised approaches to the world of work. It is because of these reasons that participant youths tend to regard these efforts with resignation rather than deriving extra motivation from them, not least because these measures mostly do not impart skills or achievements that would count either towards a regular job or further education courses. And even if such chances arise, they are to be found in an increasingly deregulated labour market in the EU, i.e. the 15–25-year olds are offered either insecure part-time jobs or instruction courses, or temporary jobs.

Once again, these vulnerable youths, in times of a weak economy, are the first to be parked in areas of exclusion, or rather shunted to them. In this way, unemployment is constantly associated even by these young people with the societal stigma of self-blame.

However, also flexibility to adapt as a demanding strategy of employers have for many years not been enough to develop sustainable chances for re-employment and the quality of life in the context of human development. What is necessary therefore is a radical spin of the ideological and factual lines of actions that dominate in the EU.

This volume was initiated in response to the way in which a high level of youth unemployment has become a permanent feature throughout Europe. Although descriptions of the problems involved have by now elicited an almost overwhelming mass of critical analyses, this has not led to any improvement for the youths concerned. Rather, all the different national training initiatives merge into a comprehensive lack of any prospect for the group of vulnerable youth. In this problem area, “Making Capabilities Work” is the first empirical project to pursue a justice theory perspective on the European level, thus contributing to a fundamental change in the currently mostly insufficient attempts within the human capital approach towards using the labour market to ensure desired lifestyle forms and a secure income for young people. Therefore only a radical change in the usual organizational forms and the dominant policy concerning the vocational and educational training is necessary to give the young a real chance to live a life they have reason to value. The top priority of a new policy must be to level substantial inequalities of skills and living conditions to enforce their reproduction aiming the quality of equal opportunities in work and social life.

These issues must be addressed from a structural perspective. The labour market policies of today are focused on the supply side, emphasizing individual human capital. But should young people be expected to value jobs that are not valued by the rest of society?

In a clear alternative to existing research in this problem area, the application-oriented basic research of the WorkAble project will take the Capability Approach (CA) as a heuristic frame of reference for the analysis of the processes described. Beside its political-philosophical character, the CA provides a particularly appropriate basis for interdisciplinary research that clearly goes beyond earlier theoretical and empirical research approaches on well-being, educational and learning.

Essentially, the CA describes and explains in an overarching framework the conditions and possibilities of human development in the light of the individual person as well as an institutional support that human beings receive or do not receive. In the CA theory, the term *capability* means a person's potential to achieve certain functionings. Viewing social inequality as a form of capability deprivation makes it possible not only to conceive of interdisciplinary studies in interactional disadvantage as being embedded in a broader social context but also to develop counter measures on all relevant levels, means institutions, structures and individual characteristics.

In the "WorkAble" project, the CA has been used as an evaluative framework in which the application of indicators will follow central benchmarks, namely the capability for education, for work and for voice. The background to the CA is always formed by a justice-theoretical framework directed towards what is particularly important to the population under study: namely the fact that all persons have the freedom to exploit alternatives to those possibilities of reproduction that have either been assigned to them or that they have chosen for themselves.

By using the capability approach, the authors offer a unique combination of theoretical explanations, innovative research and empirical methods in evaluating practical models in the transition from school to work in different European countries.

"WorkAble" has therefore set itself the goal of performing a problem-oriented analysis of youth unemployment and acquiring the necessary knowledge for a broader clarification of what we need to know. These are on the one hand analyses of longitudinal EU-SILC and other data, in combination with in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries. On the other hand, what also has been a desideratum were qualitative case studies in the following nine countries: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK (Scotland). The main research interest was to what extent the individual programmes opened up new chances and new spectrums to develop social justice, human flourishing and emancipation or whether they gave them only time for limited experience usually without any chance to reach a sufficient vocational education or offering any new perspective to maintain a decent life.

The findings of the research close an important gap in the overarching search for the development of consistent alternatives to the dominant practice. The research was carried out using the CA with the primary aim of furnishing new approaches towards more socially balanced vocational programmes, but also for comprehensive reforms in welfare-related contexts, which are needed to strengthen the structural prerequisite: human development beyond the human capital approach! It is only through this novel approach that young people are given the chance to exert real influence on their lives, which increases at the same time their energy potential as well as their motivation to engage as members of a civil society in more general matters of public concern.

In addition, the challenges and perspectives of capability-friendly policies are thrown into relief by this combination of aims, which adumbrates the dialectical

relationship between personal development and structural preconditions, and thus points out the new challenges to societal efforts to establish new kinds of youth, social and labour market policies.

Bielefeld, Germany

Hans-Uwe Otto

Series Editors Introduction

Hans-Uwe Otto (Ed.) **Facing trajectories from school to work – Towards a capability-friendly Youth Policy in Europe**, Springer: Dordrecht

Youth unemployment (and underemployment) is a serious problem in the vast majority of countries in Europe. It is an economic and social problem which has been steadily growing over the past 30 years, and which has enormous political ramifications.

Youth are defined by the United Nations as being between 15 and 24 years of age. An unemployed person is someone who does not have a job but is actively seeking work, is willing and able to work, and is of the officially designated ‘working age’. Youth unemployment rates are, historically, double or more the adult rates in nearly every country in the world.

This important book examines key aspects of youth unemployment and school to work transition with regard to social inequality and discusses what can be done productively, and in concrete terms, to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in Europe.

The book is the result of a European funded research project called “WORKABLE: making capabilities work”, undertaken between 2009 and 2012. That project explores the application of the ‘capabilities approach’ to policies for the support of disadvantaged young people in Europe and the possibility of their full participation in their societies and economies.

The capabilities approach is a concept developed in developmental economics that has until now been mainly applied to developing countries and the quality of life in such societies. The concept aims at an expansion of welfare economics from a mono-dimensional concentration on income maximisation to a wider, multidimensional concept of quality of life, which involves a range of indicators, such as income, education, and health. The concept of capabilities welfare economics addresses not only the maximisation of income but also the possibilities and chances of individuals to participate in social and economic life. Beyond the application in comparative developmental economics, the concept is also used for national reporting on welfare, poverty and the like.

This book makes an original contribution to this field in that it reports on results from the first project that sought to apply the capabilities approach to the topic of vocational education and training, and to labour market policies of the European Union and its member states. The authors apply the concept to different levels of the topics of youth policies, vocational education and labour market policies. In addition to examining capability perspectives concerning such important matters in Europe as changing welfare policies, institutionalized education, labour market and education, and programmes for disadvantaged young people in Europe, the volume provides nine insightful case studies of programmes for disadvantaged young people in Europe.

The book assists the reader to understand the important contribution of the capabilities approach to the analyses of youth and social policies. The volume will be of interest to students and researchers working on the topics of poverty, vocational education and training, and social policies, as well as emerging labour market policies; and will be of value in a range of courses that deal with the relationship between welfare economics, social policy and education, in education, sociology, social sciences, and economics.

The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Tai Po, Hong Kong
2 August 2014

Rupert Maclean

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Part I

**Capability Perspectives on Vulnerable
Youth in Europe**

Chapter 1

Towards a Capabilities Perspective on Vulnerable Young People in Europe: An Introduction

**Holger Ziegler, Thierry Berthet, Roland Atzmüller, Jean-Michel Bonvin,
and Christian Christrup Kjeldsen**

The volume at hand was developed out of the insights and results of an EU collaborative research project with the title “Making Capabilities Work”. Within this project, 13 partner institutions from different disciplines (educational science, sociology, economics, philosophy, political studies and social work), which are located in ten European countries, have collaborated in a multidimensional research process. This project was the first that applies the so-called capability approach to the topic of vocational education and training as well as labour market policies of the EU and its member states. Based on the insights of this project, the interdisciplinary chapters of this volume aim at assessing the policy strategies dealing with local

H. Ziegler (✉)

Faculty of Educational Science, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany
e-mail: hziegler@uni-bielefeld.de

T. Berthet

CNRS, Centre Emile Durkheim, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
e-mail: t.berthet@sciencespobordeaux.fr

R. Atzmüller

Department of Theoretical Sociology and Social Analysis (TSS),
Institute of Sociology, Johannes Kepler University (JKU), Linz, Austria
e-mail: roland.atzmueller@jku.at

J.-M. Bonvin

Center for the Study of Capabilities in Social and Health Services (CESCAP),
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO),
Lausanne, Switzerland
e-mail: jmbonvin@eesp.ch

C.C. Kjeldsen

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
e-mail: kjeldsen@edu.au.dk

youngsters' education, labour market demands and regional inequalities with respect to their potential of enabling young people to participate in working life and society.

The volume is designed for scientists and (advanced) students in the fields of social policy, education, youth studies, labour market analyses, economics and sociology but also for professional practitioners and policymakers who are interested in a cardinal issue in countries all over Europe: the issue of unemployed and socially vulnerable youth and what policies might contribute in order to improve their situation and to create a more socially balanced and just polity. As the volume demonstrates that this task requires the development of capability-friendly politics and that virtually all European countries could do more to develop (further) in that direction.

Theoretically this volume draws on ideas of the capability approach. This approach is applied to a broad number of practical topics of European policies. The volume demonstrates that this application may provide a more appropriate evaluative frame for assessing policies and politics and shows that this perspective makes a difference and provides value added in terms of promoting well-being on the level of individual persons – in particular for the worst off – but also in terms of enhancing justice on a social level.

Philosophically the capability approach represents one of the currently most influential and sophisticated attempts to reconcile the competing demands associated with the fundamental conceptions of equality, recognition and liberty and offers an alternative evaluative framework for assessing both the life perspectives of individuals and the social quality of policies and social arrangements, which moves the attention towards the issue of autonomy and “agency freedom” of young persons. Analytically this approach promises offering solutions to the problem of full and effective social participation while simultaneously adapted to the changing work conditions with their demand not only for competencies and skills but also flexibility and autonomy.

It focuses the issue of a good life, respectively, a successful conduct of life or in other words the extent of negative and positive freedoms and powers people have to achieve doings and beings that they have reasons to value. As the fundamental metric of this approach is the capability each person has to enjoy the valuable states of being and practices, the capability approach is concerned with the possibilities of cultivation and just distribution of the freedom and the well-being of persons and thus with the range and quality of the spectrum as well as the number of those opportunities and capacities of people to be able to realise doings and beings important to their own concept of a good life that can effectively be realised and differentiated. For this attempt, it is vital to distinguish merely formal possibilities from realisable ones. This, however, is not primarily a philosophical but a complicated empirical question in the field of scientific policy analysis.

As a philosophical approach, the capability approach does not primarily concern itself with what causes the present or absent capabilities in specific given situations and economic, social and institutional conditions. Related to this, the approach as an abstract, universalist approach does not deliver an analysis of the mechanisms,

institutional frames and social or policy contexts that support or limit the achievement of capabilities and may thus also neglect specific structures of power and inequality. Yet this is what this volume, as a social scientific analysis on the heuristic framework of the capability approach, aims to provide. Furthermore, the volume at hand tackles an “elephant in the room” within the capabilities literature. The philosophical debates around the capability approach are often remarkably silent about the issue of work. Yet it is simply obvious that work (including unpaid work) takes up much of the lives of people, counts to the important practices that people may or may not have reason to value and has – related to its quantity and quality – profound further effects in terms of enhancing or constraining the capabilities achievable to persons, may that be through its products or the very process of work. As Andrew Sayer (2012: 5)¹ points out: “Work is or can be more than merely a means by which we provision ourselves. While it is often treated negatively in economics as simply a cost or burden, it may, depending on its character, enable us to use and develop our senses, skills and powers, to relate to others and indeed be a good in itself rather than merely a means to other ends. In addition to the intrinsic qualities of the activity, be they good or bad, the kind of work we do also affects the recognition that we get from others. This may range from respect to contempt, and can in turn have significant effects on individuals’ self-respect and self-esteem”. This also outlines what a capabilities perspective on (youth) unemployment scrutinises. In doing so, the volume combines the results of three levels of analyses:

1. A comparative institutional mapping and analysis of vocational and labour market policies in a range of European countries
2. Case studies to reconstruct the conceptions, aspirations and practices of local actors implementing educational and training programmes
3. Quantitative secondary analyses of national and European longitudinal data revealing how effectively these strategies enhance economic performance and close the capability gap for young people

1.1 Central Considerations of the Volume

While strengthening economic competitiveness is currently the main aim of youth, labour market and social policy, it seems to be obvious that/not least the recent crisis showed that also the development of strategies for enhancing the social sustainability of Europe is still an unfinished task. The central argument of the contributions of this volume is that such strategies have to be able to deal with local labour market demands and regional inequalities and need to be focused on the capabilities of young people to actively shape their personal and work lives and to cope with economic, cultural, demographic and technological challenges. With respect to this

¹Sayer (2012): *Capabilities, contributive injustice and unequal divisions of labour*. In: Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, 13(4), pp. 580–596.

task, it seems to be clear that strategies which focus on individual knowledge, skills and competencies on the one hand or individual motivations and behaviours on the other hand must fail if the complex social, cultural and institutional factors are ignored which on the one hand affect personal features and on the other hand allow young people to convert such features into capabilities to function as fully participating active citizens and provide opportunities or restrictions for using such acquired powers.

The contributions in this volume indicate that the assumption that European societies are shaped by a diversity of economic conditions and political traditions resulting in different national and regional policies and practices, different welfare policy arrangements and different vocational and educational regimes is by and large still valid. However, they also demonstrate that beyond all these differences, in more or less all European societies, political and institutional strategies have to cope with the challenge of considerable rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education. With respect to unemployment rates, there is no doubt that all over Europe the proportion of unemployed young persons is generally higher than the overall rate of unemployment. In this respect, the different countries vary. In Germany, for instance, the proportion of unemployed young persons in relation to general unemployment is 1.5:1, whereas in other countries such as Sweden or Italy it is more than 3:1. Yet these numbers depend on the question what is counted as “unemployment”, as in some countries – as, for instance, in Germany – unemployed young persons who are “parked” in labour market policy measures which are conceptualised as “educational” typically do not count as “unemployed”. Furthermore, the mere (un)employment rates do not give much information about the quality, the stability and the durability of the jobs. There is some evidence that, with respect to the prospect to get a kind of education and employment which they have reason to value, in particular the young adults often exhibit multiple strains and remain stuck longer in a transitional state between insecure employment conditions, short-term educational and employment support projects and educational and social welfare support systems.

Currently, most strategies of youth, education, labour market and social policy in European societies at least rhetorically (respectively, in terms of legitimatory claims) emphasise the necessity to promote skills and competencies of young people that are seen as conducive to improving the economic productivity and competitiveness of the given countries of Europe as a whole. Yet there is empirical doubt that the actual policies for those young people that failed in the standard educational path are really geared towards promoting skills and competencies. At least in some strategies, the focus on “skills and competencies” seems to be more or less tantamount with disciplinary strategies to enhance the allegedly low willingness of marginalised young persons to work under increasingly precarious conditions.

Yet beyond the question, the promotion of skills and competencies is seen as actually a task and not only as legitimatory claim, and beyond the question how successful the strategies of the different countries actually are with respect to *this* task, it is debatable whether the task itself is appropriately formulated. Even if Europe would succeed with respect to such economic performance indicators,

the problem is still that such a metric of economic returns of investments in young persons does hardly grasp the extent of young people's capabilities to act as fully participating active citizens in not only economically but also democratically well-performing societies.

Thus, European societies seem to be confronted with the unfulfilled task to develop transversal strategies integrating central economic, educational and social issues in order to close the capability gap in the young and particularly the inadequacies between education and training and the requisites of modern societies to which they, and, above all, the more disadvantaged, are exposed.

The volume at hand argues that deprivation in terms of education and technical and nontechnical knowledge and skills is not just a burden to economic productivity, growth and competitiveness and the social cohesion of European member states. Rather it focuses on the fact that it also diminishes individual well-being and future prospects for the young people concerned in terms of labour market chances, financial security, democratic participation and opportunities for self-realisation.

The starting point of the analyses within this volume is the observation that a considerable number of young people are exposed to social disqualification and even disaffiliation in social life. From this observation, a main objective is clearly to derive: What policies are needed in order to extend young people's capabilities to function as fully participating citizens in modern European societies? The volume argues that to give an answer to this question is not only central for the young people themselves but also for a future Europe endangered by the exclusion of young people from education and labour market, as well as their non-participation in political and community life.

This perspective broadens a current perspective which is not necessarily wrong, but as the contributions in this volume suggest too narrow and too one-sided. It is hardly to deny that in policies all over Europe, educational strategies in the form of investments in human capital are increasingly regarded as the primary means to tackle the challenges of demographic and technological change but also the risk of social disruption. At first glance, there might be a reason to suggest that these strategies are rational and appropriate. There is little doubt that levels of education can still be raised significantly across the EU and that the levels of education are – at least statistically – associated with the employment rate, the degree of unemployment and the quality of labour. A range of prospective studies indicate that, particularly due to technological change, labour demand will increase relative to supply for more highly educated people while there will simultaneously be "a considerable replacement demand for less skilled people, especially in EU-15 countries" (European Commission 2007: 59). Thus, investments in human capital that enhance the development of knowledge, dispositions, skills and competencies – and therefore the quality of the labour force – might well be perceived as investments in an area with relatively high social and economic returns. This is particularly the case when a match between the supply of skills and labour market demand is ensured. This common wisdom seems to be generally valid, and there is not much doubt that investments in education and training before, during and after unemployment generally increase re-employment chances and reduce scarring effects. However, the overall requirements

of this match do vary between European countries. Thus, the relation of investments in educational and vocational training and social and economic returns is not always and everywhere the same and it is not always strictly linear, and strategies which seem to be effective in “bringing young people into jobs” were not necessarily helpful with respect to the job quality and stability once they were (re-)employed, let alone with respect to their broader well-being.

Nevertheless, the Lisbon strategy of the EU underlines that pursuing the goal of making the European Union, respectively, the members of the union a competitive, wealthy and dynamic knowledge-based economy entails the demand for a strategy for European multilevel governance in order to create realms of possibility for the ongoing development of skills through education and training. Actually, a broad range of human capital and employability-oriented approaches to education have been developed. These strategies emphasise tailor-made active labour market policies which promise investments in the potentials of individuals in order to promote labour and social integration within society.

At least rhetorically promoting the task of increasing employment opportunities by ensuring that (young) people acquire and maintain “marketable” skills, knowledge and competencies seems to be the overarching task in all the countries considered. Yet the strategies of ensuring employability – but also of mediating the relation between unemployment deprivation and vulnerability – vary significantly. Broadly speaking, three general strategies might be identified:

1. *Initiative employability.* This is a strategy which insists on developing individual employability and individual responsibility for this (i.e. the state ought to retreat in order to oblige individuals to take up their responsibilities). The matching between supply- and demand-side policies is mainly conceived in terms of individual adaptability. These strategies often go alongside with the development of fixed quantitative targets and policy evaluation instruments in order to monitor not only the benefit recipients’ behaviours but also the officers’ practices within local service agencies.
2. *Interactive or embedded employability.* These are strategies which stress the joint responsibility of the state and companies to develop individual’s employability. These strategies differ from the latter in particular in terms of the realm of negotiating with respect to the content of employability policies and in terms of the degree to which a two-way adaptability is demanded, whereby the two-way adaptability indicates that it is not only the responsibility of individuals to be equipped for labour markets, but also the task of labour markets to be equipped for individuals.
3. *Flexicurity strategies.* Flexicurity strategies are strategies which combine flexible contractual arrangements, (lifelong) training strategies, active labour market policies and modernised social security mechanisms. These strategies highlight the negotiation between the social partners as a key ingredient in the design and implementation of policies.

While all of these institutional strategies are focusing on the development of individual potential and trying to combine supply-side and demand-side policies,

they vary in terms of the aspects of employment they are focusing on. Furthermore, these strategies vary in terms of their responsiveness with respect to the fact that increases in average skill requirements, coupled with the risk of skill polarisation, imply the need of a reform of educational processes and outputs in terms of a shift from specialised skills towards broader, more analytical generic skills. In this respect, strategies which stress the need of two-way adaptability seem to be more appropriate than programmes which are only focusing on short-term individual adaptability to current labour market demands. Eventually these strategies also vary with respect to their implications on labour market regulation, the way education and training and other compensatory programmes for unemployed youth are organised and finally even in their concepts of the “disadvantages” they are intended to tackle.

Yet the task of this volume is not only to classify and evaluate different given strategies but also to elaborate strategies which go beyond employability perspectives, i.e. to develop and justify an evaluative metric which balances demands from employment systems and lifeworlds beyond the economy and takes into account the options of young persons to make choices about the life path they have reason to value.

A central aspect of the theoretical considerations of the contributions at hand is that the tendency to reduce educational processes to investment in human capital runs the manifest risk to ignore or even to positively undermine the notion of education in terms of practical reasoning and reflexive judgement concerning the creation of one's own life project but also those abilities and competencies that are undismissible to reproduce the social conditions of capitalist market economies. These effects of the market appear as problems of individuals and in particular of young people to have a stable life course. Thus, a central conclusion is the argument that – at least in the long run – only when people have the ability to choose the life they have reason to value, the economy may have the prospect to be reproduced in a socially sustainable way. This basically means that through the capability approach the problem to socially (re-)embed an (increasingly globalised capitalist) economy to secure its social sustainability can be posed from a different angle. This approach allows to start from the perspective of what individuals can actually do and achieve and then asks which social (i.e. resources and conversion factors) as well as individual (capabilities) conditions are needed for these freedoms to be realised.

To envisage and acknowledge the fundamental place of work in human life and to acknowledge the relevance of education in terms of training and expertise are therefore not the same as to reduce and to streamline education into human capital production, and it is obviously not the same as to impose “employability” as an indisputable objective.

This points to a number of theoretically considerable and practically significant differences between hereto dominating employability strategies and a capability perspective which is elaborated in the volume at hand. An outline of these differences might be summarised as such: *Competence-oriented employability* is centred on individuals and consists in a combination of knowledge, know-how, experiences and attitudes implemented in a given context. Therefore, evaluating the employability,

respectively, the (ability to) work in given job options is by and large equated with an evaluation of the person. Yet the theoretical and empirical contributions of this volume provide evidence that the development and realisation of such competencies require knowledge, will, the power to act (agency) and recognition. These are not only individual features. In particular the agency and the recognition of competencies largely depend on the institutional contexts and the opportunities provided in these contexts. Thus, equation of employability with the individual features of the person might foster the tendency to weaken collective frameworks and supports, to inappropriately responsibilise eventually those unable to fulfil their personal task and update their competencies in accordance to the demands of the labour market.

A *capabilities perspective*, in contrast, denotes a person's potential, that is, in this connection, the capacity for work and achievement, the scope of possibilities a person can effectively achieve. This concept thus aims at effective freedom in life and work, that is, freedom on the labour market, at work and in the design, implementation and assessment of educational and training interventions themselves. The expansion of public investments to enhance capabilities is conceptualised as a collective responsibility aiming at, for example, establishing collective guarantees ensuring the transferability of expertise acquired by young people.

On the fundamant of the capability approach, this volume provides evidence on the significance of educational and other strategies to support people who fail to travel the standard routes of education and transition to employment, not only in terms of investments in human capital or instruments for enhancing employability but in a broader sense of enabling individuals to develop a range of capabilities that allow them to lead the life they have reason to value. These capabilities are about choice in terms of valuable options and not only about having useful and marketable capacities and skills.

There is an inherent, yet tense, relationship between the concept of capabilities and the very notion of education. On the one hand, there is reason to argue that every educational process somehow supports capability formation. The contributions of this volume identify a number of strategies which do so only implicitly. Thereby, they demonstrate that an advantage of the capabilities perspective is to provide analytical tools to grasp this influence and to support the aim of making this a rational strategy for individuals and political actors. On the other hand, there are some strategies which seem to aim at creating something like "capabilities" on a surface level. Yet sometimes, the legitimatory claim of creating capabilities seems eventually to dovetail well with a kind of secret curriculum, which may, for instance, be reconstructed with respect to the function of the dual system to integrate young workers into a hierarchical order with strong gendered notions etc.

It is important to note that the question what education and which educational strategies contribute to creating capabilities is a complex and multidimensional empirical issue rather than an issue of sound proclamations and legitimatory claims.

Nevertheless, this volume emphasises the insight that education may play a critical role in the conversion of potential resources and opportunities into real and effective capacities that possess a practical relevance for conducting a life characterised by meaningful work but also by autonomy and voice. Yet this role of education

presupposes that it is not instrumentally narrowed into an activation tool for work-first strategies. The concept of “conversion factors”, i.e. the features, structures and processes, which allow a person to transform resources or services into the achievement of beings and doings he or she has reason to value is of significant relevance. The volume at hand focuses on the complex interplay between personal and social or institutional conversion factors. These conversion factors might be analytically disentangled and differentiated, practically; however, they seem to be highly related. Personal conversion factors indicate internal enabling skills as well as faculties, abilities, aspirations and attitudes (all of which are not only individual features but features which might be acquired through educational processes). With respect to the issue of such personal conversion factors, it is worthwhile to mention that the contributions in this volume draw on evidence from genuine local research suggesting that the ability of a young person to develop and express his or her preferences is not a generally given individual feature but largely structured by education and institutionally arranged opportunity sets. This is one aspect of what we call *opportunity for voice*.

Social and institutional conversion factors might be considered as socially structured sets of a person’s attainable opportunities and life paths. On a socio-structural level, social norms, gender roles, power relations, discriminatory practices etc. function as such conversion factors. On the level of institutional practices, entitlements, welfare and educational arrangements, collective provisions but also the rationalities of collective decision-making processes turned out to function as important conversion factors. Particularly interesting might be the fact that institutional classifications of persons into categories turned out to be an important part of institutional conversion factors which may generate inequalities and constraints in the access to the means and freedoms of full social participation. Public organisations and programmes tend to enable or constrain particular life courses and ways of conducting one’s life by implying more or less restrictive views of what is a valuable being or doing. Therefore, management reforms such as, for instance, towards more standardised managerial forms of service provision are not only a side issue but indeed a significant aspect of enhancing or diminishing the capabilities of the beneficiaries of social or educational services.

In order to grasp the potentials of educational strategies, this volume elaborates a research focus which argues that the number of people integrated into the labour market (with a certain quality of work) is an important, but not the only, criterion to assess the effectiveness of educational, social and labour market policy. On this fundament, it investigates which capabilities are important for young people in order to not only adapt to currently prevalent conditions but also actively steer their own future development and in order to enhance the complex range and quality of what young people are effectively able to do and to be. These capabilities turn out to be tantamount to key competencies permitting continuous flexibility in skills acquisition and enabling young people to cope with discontinuities in their private and working biographies, the uncertainties of social and economic conditions.

The contributions in this volume imply that a broadening of the informational basis is a prerequisite for appropriately assessing the policies in different educational and

labour market regimes. This necessity is clearly recognisable in particular when young person's own perspectives and his or her own choice of pathways were taken into account. Therefore, this volume suggests a concept which entails a combination of the key labour market functionings of employability, participation, well-being and agency. The central performance indicator is the expansion of the capabilities of young persons, enabling them to live in and shape a democratic society by functioning as fully participating citizens. These capabilities are conceptualised in terms of a young person's potential or substantive freedom to achieve alternative combinations of states or activities he or she has reason to value.

In order to underline the significance of both personal and contextual conditions for the construction and exploitation of capabilities, we distinguish analytically between *internal capabilities* involving skills, knowledge, attitudes, sense of initiative, self-efficacy, creativity etc. located in person-related characteristics and *external capabilities* relating to economically, culturally and institutionally structured sets of attainable life paths that make it necessary to analyse whether and how gender, class position, ethnic background or spatial segregation impede the development of young people's opportunities and abilities to achieve full participation.

In essence, the evaluative metric elaborated in this volume grasps the essential fulcrum between opportunities, institutional structures, personal and external resources and human achievements. This analytically complex frame is necessary in order to assess more carefully the possibilities that are open to young persons, the amount and quality of effective freedoms they possess as well as the obstacles that impede their life perspectives and most of all the possible public actions available to enhance their possibilities and to diminish the inequalities in their capabilities.

The volume highlights the relevance of the differences of opportunities which are experienced as *real* and not merely as hypothetical and formal. This difference is particularly critical when opportunities are perceived as largely formal, but the task and responsibility to make use of these "opportunities" is attributed to the young persons themselves. It is not only the opportunity set of a society which is largely structured by general economic conditions but also the local practices of public policies and the meaning-making or signifying practices of services sector institutions, which ensure or impede opportunities for young persons to fully participate and especially to succeed to convert them into capabilities in the sense of "real" opportunities.

Given the often vulnerable life situations of young persons, it seems to be fair to suggest that education and training for the labour market is one of the most significant contexts of providing and mediating prospects of positive development in current European societies. As this context is a major determinant of not only individual life chances but also the preconditions for participating in collective decisions, it is most vital to look at education from a holistic perspective. The capability approach seems to be appropriate to provide an analytical fundament to develop such a perspective.

In particular, three interrelated dimensions of capabilities are of central architectonic relevance for the life prospects of vulnerable young persons. These capabilities

point to the freedoms of young persons to navigate the complex interplay between education, work and community and might be described as:

- (a) Being able to work, i.e. to choose a self-valued professional life and securely access the labour market
- (b) Being able to be educated and to choose a self-valued educational career
- (c) Being able to participate in economic, political and social life

Intentionally or not, all local policies in the countries analysed in this volume directly or indirectly affect the capabilities sets of young persons with respect to these dimensions and enable or hinder young persons to convert institutional, educational and vocational resources into capabilities, allowing them to function as active and fully participating citizens who are able to take autonomous decisions and to participate in the constitution of the new situations they have to face in the transition to adulthood.

In summary the volume highlights the need to appropriately analyse the process of developing young people's skills as a process of capability building, which includes the need of recognising the complex relations between formally institutionalised strategies of vocational education and training (VET). It demonstrates that it is reasonable and appropriate to focus on the institutionally mediated complexity of different *conversion factors* rather than on the youth characteristics in themselves and on the resources or goods they obtain from the labour market and institutions, i.e. the significance of resources and services derives not only from the individual but also from the socially and institutionally embedded capability of young persons to convert them into valued states and actions.

Following this consideration, the volume aims at analysing the real possibilities which are open to young persons in different educational and labour market regimes but also the obstacles which impede their life prospects.

It is apparent that public action consists not only in distributing individualised resources, but also in different strategies of addressing social and cultural factors of conversion for the individual. Thus, the volume highlights the local level of practical interaction between youth and institutions in terms of street-level bureaucracies, local employment agencies, educational agencies and devices. In a second step, it reconstructs the relationships between these local levels of practical interaction and the more comprehensive context of educational and labour market regimes and their ongoing transformations.

In the analyses of the contributions of this volume, the perspectives of young people themselves were systematically taken into account. They show that individuals have their own reasons to view pathways as a series of decisions that are not always and necessarily linear. It seems to be a major challenge to develop VET pathways that are more open to individual choice and changes of direction. Obviously some educational regimes are more able to accommodate this nonlinearity not only into official programmes but into real locally enacted strategies.

The following chapters will give detailed insights in the conception, theoretical foundation and empirical significance of the dimensions outlined. Of course this volume does not claim that the insights of its contributions are sufficient to present

a kind of master plan on how to tackle the situations and the capability gap of vulnerable young persons and public policy strategies dealing with the complex problems of local labour market demands.

However, it might become apparent that the suggested capability perspective of enabling young people to participate in working life and society has the potential of providing a fundament for more appropriate alternative strategies which are of high practical significance to educational and labour market policies in Europe. For the reasons mentioned above, we have structured the volume in the following way:

After this introduction, the analytical and theoretical chapters are presented.

The first of these chapters, “*The Capability Approach, Education and Labour Market*” (Chap. 2), is the main theoretical article and addresses the core idea and concepts within the capability approach and serves as an introduction to our conception of the approach for the readings of the other chapters in this volume. The concepts are presented in short and brought into their interdependent relations with a strong emphasis on the capability for education and work. Due to some differences between the conceptual understanding of capabilities between Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Robeyns 2005), this chapter furthermore provides a suggestion for an accessible model, which brings together the strengths from each conceptual perspective.

In the chapter “*Multilevel Governance and Capability Approach: What Convergence?*” (Chap. 3) the focus is turned to the issue of multilevel governance. Multilevel governance is a result of the growing political capacity of the European Union and subnational actors, which assesses the weakening of the traditional state-centred regulation model. The chapter argues that three major dynamics are promoted by the multilevel governance scheme: territorialisation, hybridization and individualization. These dynamics are also core components of the education-employment-training policy nexus dedicated to vulnerable youth. Hence, one question emerges: what kind of links can be made between the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen and this new political regulation scheme? In this chapter, the compatibility of the multilevel governance model with the capability approach is discussed in a theoretical mode and with references to vulnerable youth policies.

Policy programmes do not only work as programmes but have to be enacted by welfare professionals. This is discussed in the chapter “*New Conditions of Professional Work or Fall of Professions? On Managerialism and Professionalism*” (Chap. 4). This chapter presents and analyses the relationship between professionalism and managerialism. It focuses on the specific features of the changes of welfare policies, based on the insight that a number of shortcomings are also an outcome of the idea of economization of welfare and educational field. This chapter consists of three main sections and a short concluding discussion on this topic. The first deals with the changing societal conditions, pointing to the paradigmatic shift from welfare state to competitive state. Then a following section concentrates on the changing understanding of professionalism, which in turn is further followed up in section three by presenting changes in professional practice focusing on changed values of the public services, changed professional practices and impacts of competition. The fourth section is a short conclusive discussion.

The chapter “*Free Choice of Education? Capabilities, Possibility Spaces and Incapacitations of Education, Labour and Way of Living One’s Values*” (Chap. 5) changes focus from macro and conceptual levels and bring the focus on the individuals. It deals with the reconciliation of (pre)conditions and possibilities of access and choice of education and the contemporary educational dominating discourse in Danish education policies, i.e. the culture of testing and competition. Thus, the author uses among others the theoretical approach of the capability approach to sort out opportunities and processes of freedom in order to provide a theoretical framework and to describe with respect to the discourse of competition dominant influences, like, for example, the family background as well as international organisations, on possibilities of having actual free access to attain the education one reasons to value. The probability of having a free choice of education is not at least related to both individual and external conversion factors, whereas the latter are severely affected by education (almost exclusively) to labour disregarding the lack of preconditions and therefore worsening the situation of vulnerable youth. Pursuing the logic of the framework of the capability approach, the notion of external and individual capabilities are applied in order to point out individual, institutional and societal obstacles concerning the aim of accessing free choice of the educational trajectory one reasons to value.

Also dedicated to the question of institutionalised education is the chapter on “*European Universities and Educational and Occupational Intergenerational Social Mobility*” (Chap. 6). This chapter discusses EU-level developments in policy thinking in the area of higher education, training and labour markets. It assesses the drastically low chances for young Europeans from poorer and low-educated backgrounds to get higher education credentials and to work in highly skilled white-collar occupations. Special attention is given to the issue of access to higher education and how research may benefit from utilising theoretical insights from the capability approach.

Exactly this question, i.e. the connection between theory and empirical findings is the focus of the chapter “*Operationalisation of the Capability Approach*” (Chap. 7). While the capability approach offers a rich, comprehensive and innovative way to analyse well-being, its operationalisation is a demanding task, posing several conceptual, methodological and empirical challenges. This chapter provides an overview of the current state of the art of the application of the capability approach in economically developed countries to labour market and education research. The intrinsic complexity and multilayered structure of the capability approach seems to be particularly suitable for conceptualising and contextualising the integration of different aspects of the education-employment-community nexus. The education-to-work transition is used as an example, where a comparative perspective is taken to analyse employment and educational policies at the local, regional, national and European levels.

The chapter presents methodological and empirical strategies to highlight how the issues of suitably capturing and measuring young people’s capabilities can be addressed. In doing so, the chapter presents interesting perspectives and examples for those who wish to make use of the capability approach for future investigation.

Based on EU-SILC longitudinal data set from 2007 to 2008, the following chapter “*Labour Market Trajectories and Young Europeans’ Capabilities to Avoid Poverty, Social Exclusion and Independency: A Comparative Analysis of 23 European Countries*” (Chap. 8) shows how labour market trajectories are related to poverty, deprivation and also lack of independent living. The analysis reveals how the capabilities of young persons to lead a life they have reason to value are dependent on the country they are living in and on their labour market-related trajectories in each of these countries. Yet the results of the study also imply that even the fact of being in a stage of a more or less positive transition from education to employment may still go alongside with lacking basic capabilities.

Also based on EU-SILC longitudinal data, the chapter “*Would Active Labour Market Policies Enhance Youth Capability for Work in Europe?*” (Chap. 9) scrutinises whether the implementation of active labour market actually met the conditions in order that young entrants can take part in the labour market and whether they contribute to promoting respect for young persons’ capability to choose the work they have reason to value. Particular attention is given to the issue of employment quality. The contribution shows that a focus on internal capabilities alone might fail as individual and environmental factors interactively affect processes that may enhance or constrain their capability for work.

This perspective is deepened and differentiated in an assessment on “*Critical Aspects of the Transformation of Work and Welfare from a Capability Perspective*” (Chap. 10). This chapter shows the relevance of the capability approach for critical analysis of welfare states (and vice versa) because by starting off with the individual’s options to live the life one has reason to appreciate the former helps to understand why the contested character of social policies raises normative questions concerning the creation and implementation of measures and strategies that can support the freedom of the individual. The author argues that in particular the transition to a knowledge-based economy and the rise of activation policies have put the adaption of the abilities and competencies of individuals at the centre of political conflicts and debates. The capability approach provides an evaluative tool not only to understand this but also to propose adequate policies and intervention. Through an analysis of the results of the WORKABLE project, the paper highlights emerging ambiguities and modes of operation of dualised welfare systems, whereby transcending a narrow orientation towards the reinstalment of the capitalist work ethic as can be found in the debates about workfare. The paper shows that the WORKABLE research on educational and vocational policies and in-depth case studies on educational programmes concerning labour market transitions in 11 European countries offer a range of insights about the scope and content, as well as the relations and interactions between activities for peripheral groups and core routes of education – VET – employment.

In order to enhance our understanding of the ways to develop the capabilities for voice, work and education of young people who encounter difficulties in the transition from school to work, nine national, respectively, local *case studies* are presented and discussed in the next chapter “*Capabilities for Voice, Work and Education: Critical Analysis of Programmes for Disadvantaged Young People in Europe*” (Chap. 11). This chapter represents a micro-perspective on educational,

welfare and labour market policies and highlights the necessity to take the role of local actors into account. The case studies illustrate that processes of capability formation have to be understood as fertile in their relational dependencies, conditions and consequences as well as in relation to the contextual differences they operate within. The last article within the case study chapters, “*Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice: A Concluding Remark*”, compares central aspects of the case studies and brings them briefly together within an analytical and heuristic framework. The conditions for “a sustainable capability space” for young people in Europe are discussed.

The chapter “*Employability Versus Capability: European Strategies for Young People*” (Chap. 12) focuses in an empirical (albeit non-exhaustive) way on the issue of which elements of a capabilities perspective can already be found within the European Union’s education and employment strategies set up (mainly but not only) in the framework of Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in order to address the growing rates of youth unemployment. The search for a definition of the target group of the analysis moves from “young people with fewer opportunities” to focus on young people Not in Education Employment or Training. The chapter describes the main strategies that the EU has put in place to match the education-related headline targets set by Europe 2020, paying particular attention to the EC strategy to reduce Early School Leaving, the measures put in place through the Youth Opportunity Initiative to tackle youth unemployment as well as the EU policy cooperation realised through the European Youth Strategy. The following section aims to identify CA-friendly elements within some of the above-mentioned policy measures developed and implemented by the EU, followed by recommendations for policymakers emphasising the need to reshape their approach towards youth (un)employment first and foremost by putting the empowerment of young people at the centre of the measures set up to facilitate the transition from school to work and adult life.

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Chapter 2

The Capability Approach, Education and the Labour Market

Christian Christrup Kjeldsen and Jean-Michel Bonvin

2.1 Introduction

Europe is currently experiencing its worst economic crisis since World War II. The present situation within European labour markets raises important questions regarding future opportunities for a great proportion of vulnerable young people. Even though a large number of young people in the age group 16–24 are enrolled in education (Eurostat 2012a), it is worth noticing that among young jobseekers, the “unemployment rate in the EU-27 was around twice as high as the rate for the total population throughout the last decade” (*ibid.*). This trend in the unemployment rate of the total labour force and of young people in particular calls for decisions and innovative solutions for the 24,667 million unemployed men and women within the EU 27 (Eurostat 2012b). The prescribed “medicine” has proved to be inadequate until now: “flexibility and a willingness to adapt have not been enough to ensure re-employment for many years. Neither does the repeated demand for mobility guarantee a job” (Schneider and Otto 2009: 8).

A closer scrutiny shows that the opportunity structures in terms of employment are unequally distributed within each country and that there are also large differences between countries. We can also observe a clear gap in the employment rate along age lines within the EU 27. The unemployment rate for young people under 25 is higher,

C.C. Kjeldsen (✉)

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
e-mail: kjeldsen@edu.au.dk

J.-M. Bonvin

Center for the Study of Capabilities in Social and Health Services (CESCAP),
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO),
Lausanne, Switzerland
e-mail: jmbonvin@eesp.ch

and these individuals can therefore be regarded as disadvantaged in relation to other age groups. The latest figures emphasise the precarious situation of many EU citizens facing an unemployment rate of 11 % for the former EU countries (EU 17) and 10.3 % for the EU 27 (Eurostat 2012b). But the gap between the 16- and 24-year-olds and the total population have grown even more dramatically, since 22.5 % of the young are jobseekers (more than twice the overall rate). In other words, more than one in five of the young people covered by this data (and this does not include young people attending education) “are available to start work within the next 2 weeks” and have “actively sought employment at some time during the previous 4 weeks” (Eurostat 2012b) without any success.

There is no doubt that this raises concerns in relation to EU economic competitiveness. But the risks are also very high for the future of each of the young people outside the labour market, and the question is whether this will not become an even more threatening situation for Europe. Indeed, a whole generation of young people is at risk of losing faith or even trust in the future, because of the experience of uncertain income, a lack of job security and the failure to fulfil job aspirations, etc. This will raise other crucial issues if it results in a “process of increasing job insecurity and increasingly precarious living standards – a process which tends to destabilize society as a whole” (Schultheis 2009: 79). Being without a stable job influences the level of well-being experienced by individuals, mainly because it relates to the level of income the individual has for living. But as Amartya Sen argued in his famous Equality of What? (Sen 1980), this is not the whole problem. There is more in life than money making – as Aristotle reminds us: “The life of money-making is one undertaken under compulsion, and wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else”. (Aristotle 1995: 1732).

The WorkAble project strives to tackle precisely these issues, as it has promised to find new solutions and insights in relation to the most vulnerable young people by applying the capability approach to analyse the present and provide suggestions for the future. During the last 3 years, the project has been struggling with many issues, one of them being the conceptual considerations that this paper will draw upon. In the following, we have combined some of the results of this theoretical development with labour market concerns.¹

We will firstly present our interpretation and reading of the capability approach. Secondly, we will point out how this approach has been conceptualised in relation to the project aims. Finally, we will discuss these issues with an emphasis on the human capital vs. human capability debate. Let us therefore start by addressing the question: which concepts are central to the capability approach?

¹This article builds partly upon a draft working paper presented and discussed with the WorkAble partners in Lausanne, on 17th November 2010, as well as a presentation of the initial results at the international “Social Work & Society” Academy (TiSSA) 2011.

2.2 Main Concepts, Their Mutual Relations and the Two Key Dimensions Within the Approach

A description of the core concepts can be found in Robeyns. According to her, “The major constituents of the capability approach are functionings and capabilities” (Robeyns 2003: 11). However, according to the Human Development and Capability Association, we could also argue that “The central terms in the capability approach are: Functionings, Capabilities, Agency” (Alkire 2005). Amartya Sen has in various contexts emphasised these terms and combined them in different ways. In many ways, all these concepts are constitutive of the approach, but they are similarly related to other concepts that we will include in the main concepts, because these cannot be understood without them. We therefore argue that commodities as well as their characteristics have to be taken into account. A departure from bundles of commodities to an understanding of the set of characteristics is an idea presented by Lancaster as a “breaking away from the traditional approach that goods are the direct objects of utility and, instead, supposing that it is the properties or characteristics of the goods from which utility is derived [...] Utility or preference orderings are assumed to rank collections of characteristics and only to rank collections of goods indirectly through the characteristics that they possess” (Lancaster 1966: 133). This idea has been taken into account by Sen, even though he is arguing that it is per se an insufficient measure for accessing the standard of living, because “the right focus is neither commodities, nor characteristics (in the sense of Gorman and Lancaster), nor utility, but something that may be called a person’s capability”. (Sen 1983: 160). In addition, the notion of conversion factors represents an important core concept that is very relevant in the understanding of education and work/life circumstances. Taken as a whole, the main concepts relate to what is called the informational basis of judgment in justice, which is highly relevant for our purpose since it represents the information regarded as relevant when assessing an individual or a social situation such as the employment status of the individual. As a result, we end up with the following ideas, notions and concepts:

- Commodities
 - Commodity characteristics
- Conversion factors
- Capability
 - Capability set
 - Choice
- Functionings
 - Functionings vector
- Informational basis for the judgment of justice (IBJJ)

The relation between these concepts is not linear. It is more complex than that, as we will now demonstrate. When we combine all these elements in a single framework, we find that the approach has two main dimensions which have to be taken into consideration. These dimensions have been sorted out differently during the course of the WorkAble project; but from a merely theoretical viewpoint, we suggest distinguishing between the empowerment dimension and the freedom to choose dimension. Conceptually, the two dimensions are represented through the distinctions between commodities and capabilities on the empowerment side and capabilities and functionings on the freedom to choose side. By combining these two-dimensional sides of the capability approach, we end up with an original and highly sensitive and promising approach when it comes to investigating the situation of young vulnerable people in the labour market in the present European state of crisis. The reasons for this are that liberals tend to insist only on freedom to choose without caring to empower people, thereby running the risk of falling into Marx's objection to formal freedom (this liberal position also seems to forget that "Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are also among its principal means" (Sen 1999b: 10), i.e. means for other more important ends, such as well-being or even citizenship). By contrast, some radical versions of social democracy focus mainly on the material empowerment of people and end in another pitfall, failing to adequately guarantee the freedom to choose. Both dimensions have to be taken into account: hence, if young people outside the labour market are given social benefits but not guaranteed any influence or real freedom to choose in relation to potential jobs, the result could be a situation in which "The loss of freedom in the absence of employment choice and in the tyrannical form of work can itself be a major deprivation" (Sen 1999: 112). Such a pitfall could be illustrated by some of the contemporary welfare programmes or empirically sketched out in some of the case studies in the WorkAble project, ending up in a risk of falling into the trap of paternalism or moralisation (Kjeldsen et al. 2012: 6). Taking commodities, such as money, as a measure of welfare would also, according to Sen, be to fall into the trap that Karl Marx described as "commodity fetishism", where commodities are seen as important ends and not purely as means for other fundamental ends such as well-being and the freedom to choose. Commodities can be seen as an important means for enhancing empowerment, but should not be seen as an end per se. It is in many ways these tensions that the capability approach seeks to overcome. But let us go a bit deeper, firstly with the understanding of commodities and their characteristics (characteristic vector).

2.2.1 *Commodities and Their Characteristics*

According to Robeyns, commodities designate all goods, services and incomes available to a person. Therefore, wages as well as transfer incomes from the welfare state (such as social benefits, etc.) have to be taken into account. Not only the quantity but also the quality (i.e. the way they are valued in a specific social context)

matter here. From our point of view, it is equally important to look not only at the commodities possessed by the single individual but also at the commodities to which the individual has access (command over). For instance, you do not necessarily need to buy a textbook if you can borrow it from a library or from a friend. A complete list of all the commodities owned by an individual is known as a commodity vector. Sen denotes the commodity vector x_i – the list of commodities a person possesses (is in command of). Empirically, it would be an overwhelming task to unveil such a list for each single individual. Instead, this could be replaced by evaluating whether a certain important subset of the commodity vector is in fact available. The reference here is to a subset of commodities that is related to the capabilities being investigated. This indicates the relevance and importance of the linkage between the chosen subset of “important” commodities and the informational basis of judgment in justice. Another aspect that should not be overlooked is the fact that individuals are able to exchange some commodities with others (for instance, money can be turned into other goods which you can then choose to sell).

If we make a list of all the uses or special characteristics of each commodity (for each element of the commodity vector), we end up with all the characteristics and possible uses of these commodities summarised in a vector of characteristics. One example that is frequently used in this connection is the commodity “bread”. Bread can be used by individuals for nourishment. It has some specific characteristics such as proteins, vitamins, etc., which differ from one kind of bread to another. At the same time, in some social contexts, bread can have a social function (as part of the individual’s ability to invite guests), or it may play a role in religious rituals (communion bread, for instance). Depending on the situation, bread can have different uses and characteristics. Consequently, a person possessing a certain commodity bundle possesses an even larger set of possible uses. This means that the volume of applications is far greater than the quantity of commodities. Sen names the abstract function (in a mathematical sense) that converts a commodity vector into a vector of commodity characteristics: $c(\cdot)$.

As Erik Schokkaert points out, it is essential to bear in mind that the different characteristics of commodities are person independent (Schokkaert 2007). Expressed in Sen’s words, “Wheat, rice, potatoes, etc., are commodities, while calories, protein, vitamins, etc., are characteristics of these commodities that consumers seek” (Sen 1982: 24). This will be important when the theory has to be operationalised for empirical work. In conceptual terms, the individual’s degree of use of a commodity due to his or her conversion factors can vary, while the commodity characteristics vector is still interpersonal independent. Instead, the possible individual utility of a commodity (and its characteristics) is represented by the conversion factor function $f(\cdot)$.

How can this be relevant in the context of people’s opportunities in education and working life? We will try to answer this question by using an example. Bertel Haarder is a leading politician in Denmark and has been one of the major stakeholders in the field of education for decades. While he was minister of education, he said: “IT development is the best thing that has happened to school; in a couple of years, it will become obvious that the children must have a laptop – just as it is

obvious that they need a bike” ([Jyllands-Posten 2009](#)). In Denmark, people feel that it is a parental responsibility to provide their children with a bike, and Haarder advocates that it will soon be just as natural for parents to provide their children with a laptop for their school work as well. This view has now been widely accepted, and the same logic is also to be found in a project for the developing world entitled “One Laptop Per Child” ([OLPC 2010](#)), the mission of which is to make laptops affordable and “designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning” ([OLPC 2010](#)). Sen provides a similar example:

In West Europe or North America a child might not be able to follow his school program unless the child happens to have access to a television... the child without a television in Britain or in Ireland would be clearly worse off – have a lower standard of living – in this respect than a child, say, in Tanzania without a television... the fact remains that the television is a necessity for the British child for school education in a way it is not for the Tanzanian child. ([Sen 1983: 162](#))

In other words, commodities have a range of different characteristics. When used within the world of education, some of these characteristics can support the individual’s real freedom to choose a valuable life. In this understanding, it can be claimed that they have a great impact on people’s capability for education as well as for work and life. This type of commodity is relational in the sense that its importance changes over time and from one society to the next (the possession of a small blackboard or slate to practise writing letters is no longer required in most Western countries, whereas it is of great importance in some parts of the developing world). Consequently, the logic advocated here is in many ways similar to Adam Smith’s ideas about the commodities that were needed to appear in public without shame (which can be seen as a capability) and the way these commodities change over time and depending on context ([Smith 2007 \[1776\]: 676](#)). So we need to keep these possible differences in mind when comparing countries as well as individuals or groups.

The decision about which commodities to include in such a subset needs further scrutiny in each application of the approach, because different commodities have many possible uses due to their different characteristics. Let us shortly give another example that builds on three different capabilities in relation to just one commodity: the laptop mentioned above. A laptop computer allows you to play chess without an opponent, giving you the capability for play that Martha Nussbaum regards as a central human capability ([Nussbaum 2011: 32–35](#)). On the other hand, it can also serve as an indispensable tool for writing a paper and thereby be related to the capability for work, for instance, writing academic articles such as this one. At the same time, it can be seen as an essential compensating tool for the dyslectic young person (capability for education). This clearly raises issues of empirical complexity. Taken together, the bundle of commodities and the characteristics they entail could be seen as “means for achievement” ([Robeyns 2003: 11](#)); but before looking at the freedom to achieve represented by the capability concept, we will have a look at functioning, i.e. what is actually achieved.

2.2.2 *Functionings*

Functionings designate the beings or doings of a person, i.e. what she/he actually is or does, by contrast with what she/he can be or do (i.e. his/her capabilities). What a person does, his actual state, is related to his well-being, but “On what does the claim of functionings to reflect well-being rest?” (Sen 1999: 19). Sen’s answer is: “Basically, the claim builds on the straightforward fact that how well a person is must be a matter of what kind of life he or she is living, and what the person is succeeding in ‘doing’ or ‘being’” (Sen 1999: 19). The distinction between capabilities and functionings is key in our application of the approach in the WorkAble project and also when assessing new configurations in the European labour market. Indeed, placing the focus of public policies on capabilities rather than functionings makes a huge difference – and not only to empirical research, where a discussion of the empirical difficulties in placing the concern on capabilities instead of functionings has been emerging. The objective will not be to adequately equip young people in terms of resources or skills and competences but to provide them with capabilities, i.e. with as much real freedom to choose their way of living as possible. Thus, the passage between capabilities and functionings is envisaged as a matter of individual free choice, which implies that society should encourage such individual freedom of choice for all its members. This points to the issue of the informational basis of judgment in justice: indeed, if society or collective rationality privileges a specified or restrictive informational basis of judgment in justice (IBJJ), it means that a restrictive view of what is a valuable being or doing will prevail. By contrast, Sen insists on two key issues:

1. The IBJJ promoted by society should be as incomplete as possible so as to allow individual rationalities to express themselves and flourish as much as possible. Indeed, there is no single view of rationality, contrary to what, e.g. defenders of rational choice would claim. As Sen puts it, the issue of rationality is fundamentally undecidable (Sen 2002), which does not mean that there is no such thing as rationality but that this issue needs to be tackled in a contextualised way. What is rational cannot be decided in an abstract and universalist way. It has to be debated in situation, thus allowing all individual views about what is rational to express themselves.
2. As a consequence, collective rationality should be as democratic as possible with a view to promote the constructive dimension of democracy (Sen 1999b, 2009), i.e. democracy is the most equitable way to connect individual preferences and collective decisions. It is certainly impossible to fully avoid clashes between individual preferences and collective rationality, but the construction of collective decisions via genuine democracy and public reasoning (strongly emphasised in *The Idea of Justice*) is certainly the best way to tackle this issue.

With respect to our topic, this requires investigating the extent to which young people are allowed to have their say in collective decision-making processes concerning them. According to Otto and Ziegler, we have to bear in mind “the creation of places where individuals get the opportunity in public and social work action to express their own opinion, as well as the creation of a space for the ‘meta-capability’ of reflection” (Otto and Ziegler 2006: 283). To use Hirschman’s words, the question could be put as follows: are young people constrained to loyalty to decisions made by others? Or are they able to voice their concerns and make them count in the collective decision-making process? Or, if they do not wish to be involved in such processes, what are the consequences of this behaviour, which can be assimilated to Hirschman’s exit option? (Hirschman 1970) In analytical terms, then, this implies investigating decision-making processes and assessing the extent to which young people are entitled to these three options (exit, voice and loyalty) when confronted with active labour market programmes or the like. This implies that young people can choose either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or exit so as to be able to escape these collective norms at an affordable cost (e.g. by refusing to take up a badly remunerated job without having to accept excessive financial penalties) (Bonvin 2012).

2.2.3 *Capabilities*

Capability reflects a person’s freedom to choose between different ways of living. The underlying motivation—the focusing on freedom—is well captured by Marx’s claim that what we need is ‘replacing the domination of circumstances and chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances’. (Sen 1989: 44)

Knowledge, skills and competences are often at the centre of the discussion when it comes to understanding the needs of the labour market and the outcome of education. As the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training argues, “The knowledge, skills and competences Europe needs to compete successfully in a global labour market is a major question on the European Union policy agenda. It is a question directly relevant to European citizens who want to know which knowledge, skills and competences will help them find or keep a job” (Cedefop 2008: 1). These elements are without doubt important, but the question also relates to what kind of outcome we are in fact seeking: economy for its own sake? well-being? Or are we seeking in a broader sense to “enable young people to act as capable citizens in the labour markets of European knowledge societies” (WorkAble objective)? When looking at labour market needs in the perspective of this last objective, i.e. through the capability lens, we find that the former objectives miss important issues related to the freedom to choose a job, to reconcile work and life, etc. At the same time, focusing on outcomes of education in terms of knowledge, skills and competences reflects a reductionist conception of education and

training which are then “valued primarily for their economically productive potential” (Baptiste 2001: 185).

So in order to capture the difference between internal skills or competences, on the one hand, and external circumstances such as liberties through legislation, commodity command, etc., on the other hand, a number of theorists, including Martha Nussbaum, distinguish between internal capabilities and external circumstances or, as Otto and Schrödter put it, “I-Capabilities” and “E-Capabilities” (Otto and Schrödter 2009). In Nussbaum’s earlier writings, external circumstances were also called external capabilities, which Nussbaum changed after Crocker’s criticism (Crocker 1995: 161; Nussbaum 2001: 84). The ability to participate in society through democratic actions illustrates the relevance of this distinction. The individual may have the ability, skill or competence to act democratically and raise his or her voice (internal capability), but in order to have the real possibility to participate democratically, one also needs favourable external circumstances, e.g. the right to vote, to express one’s opinions and the freedom from repression. For instance, even though the women’s movement in Denmark promoted the voice of many women of the time, it was only in the year 1915 that women in Denmark were given the right to vote. Until this external circumstance was secured, even though women had the internal capability for reasoning and shaping their ideas, they did not enjoy the freedom to participate democratically in the voting procedure. Likewise, situations may easily be found where formal rights and entitlements envisaged as external circumstances are not actualised due to a lack of internal capabilities to use these formal rights. As such, they will remain empty formal rights.

Sen includes both parts within his concept of capability, while Nussbaum first separates internal and external dimensions, and then synthesises them in what she calls “combined capability”, which is equal to the real possibility to lead a life one has reason to value (Nussbaum 2006: 11–12; Otto and Schrödter 2009). Nussbaum justifies this as follows: “People come into the world with rudimentary abilities to lead a dignified life. These abilities, however, need support from the world, especially the political world, if they are to develop and become effective. First, they need internal cultivation, usually supplied above all by a nation’s system of education – together with whatever support people receive from their families and other voluntary institutions. I call the developed form of innate abilities “internal capabilities”” (Nussbaum 2006: 11).

Each person can have many capabilities that can be combined in many different ways. Sen grasps this with the notion of a capability set – all the achievable functionings within individual reach.

The formal representation of the capability set of a person is that of a set of functioning n-tuples (or vectors, when the functionings can be numerically measured) from which a person can choose. (Sen 1987: 32)

This represents then all the possible functioning vectors which constitute the individual’s set of capabilities. This set of real freedoms to achieve is connected to the understanding of the functioning vector in a way where “The capability set gives us information on the various functioning vectors that are within reach of a person,

and this information is important – no matter how exactly well-being is characterized” (Sen 1995 [1992]: 41). Whereas, in the space of commodities, the “budget set”, which is the bundle of goods the person can afford given his income and the existing prices (Takayama 1985; Chakravarty 2005 [2002]: 52–55), represents a person’s possible choice to buy different bundles of commodities, “the ‘capability set’ in the functioning space reflects the person’s freedom to choose from possible livings” (Sen 1995 [1992]: 40). As mentioned earlier, there is a distinction between the actual achieved state of living (functioning) and the freedom or opportunity to live differently. In the same way, Sen insists on the difference between “agency achievement” and “well-being achievement” on the one hand and “agency freedom” and “well-being freedom” on the other hand; and he states that “it is the latter that is best reflected by a person’s capability set” (Sen 1995 [1992]: 57).

Another way is to distinguish between conversion factors, which can be internal or external, and capabilities. Sen’s seminal example in this respect is that of the bike. It illustrates that the possession of a commodity is not enough to guarantee the full enjoyment of a capability. The presence of adequate conversion factors is needed to translate or convert resources into capabilities. In the case of the bike, skills and competences are required from the user (these belong to what Robeyns calls individual conversion factors) as well as tolerant social norms allowing all people to ride a bike (if such norms prevent some categories from using bikes, then the resource cannot be converted into a capability) and an adequate infrastructure (roads or the like). Thus, capabilities that designate the real freedom to choose the life one has reason to value require the presence of a whole configuration of adequate resources (or commodities) and conversion factors: if one is missing, capabilities are equally missed. This is an adequate comprehension of what we can call the “empowerment side” of the capability approach. With regard to our topic, i.e. education and youth, a key issue is to identify the resources and conversion factors pertaining to this configuration: what individual and social conversion factors are decisive when it comes to enhancing the capabilities of (marginalised) young people? In other words, what skills or competences should be provided via training, but also how should schools, the labour market, towns and society at large be made more inclusive so that they make space for people belonging to this target group? What resources or commodities should be provided (money, time, infrastructure, etc.), and for whom (schools, families, third-sector associations, etc.)? One of the main objectives in WorkAble was to empirically identify this bundle of resources and conversion factors and to assess the extent to which it actually promotes (or maybe obstructs, insofar as so-called conversion factors can also act as obstruction factors) the enhancement of young people’s capabilities.

But what capabilities should count as important? In such cases, we are tempted to turn to Nussbaum’s list of central capabilities, but in situations that are similar to those explored in the WorkAble project, she states: “Much depends on our purpose. On the one hand, if our intention is simply comparative, all sorts of capabilities suggest interesting comparisons across nations and regions, and there is no reason to prescribe in advance: new problems may suggest new comparisons” (Nussbaum 2011: 29). So there is a task in identifying relevant capabilities or, as Sen points out:

“The theory of inequality evaluation has close links with that of assessment of poverty, and the choice of space becomes a central concern” (Sen 1995 [1992]: 9). Sen insists that equality can be envisaged along different competing ideologies; as such it raises central and fundamental issues. The objective of (some sort of) equality is not the main difference between these ideologies. Rather, the difference relates to the space within which equality is sought and in which inequalities are regarded as acceptable or unacceptable (Sen 1995 [1992]: 16–26; 2006 [2004]: 22–23). In relation to our topic, we find three “spaces” that are of importance, namely, the capability for work, education and voice. These three dimensions ought to be taken into account when investigating the freedoms of young people in relation to the labour market. They have been conceptualised throughout the project and have been included in the following discussion about the differentiation between human capital thinking and the human capability or human flourishing approach.

2.3 Discussion

2.3.1 *Human Capital vs. Human Capability in Relation to Education and the Labour Market*

Consequently, the world of education needs to consider a number of different factors when addressing the problems mentioned in the introduction. First of all, education has a social and an instrumental role. The public debate and dialogue often requires some level of literacy in order to participate in and thereby have a real influence on social and political affairs. Instrumentally, a sound education can be seen as a necessary prerequisite in the support of our ability to participate in decision-making whether at home, in the local community or even nationally (or transnationally). So it is also an important ingredient for individual empowerment (and in this sense education can support the ability of disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded groups to organise themselves politically and have an effective voice). The importance of education for economic growth and as a material means for welfare has been emphasised since the mid-1960s, when Gary S. Becker presented his book Human Capital (Becker 1993 [1964]). Already at that time there were critics of this concept. With his own words, “Passions are easily aroused on this subject and even people who are generally in favour of education, medical care, and the like often dislike the phrase ‘human capital’ and still more any emphasis on its economic effects” (Becker 1993 [1964]: 12). Our main criticism relates to the idea of return on investment purported by the notion of human capital. In Becker’s view, the assessment of education’s “return on investment” was linked to economic growth, and the investment was of different types, such as investments in schools, higher education and training, which had diverse rates of return. Other scientists and economists than Becker could have been named as fathers of this paradigm. In fact this idea is by no means new. As long ago as 1776, Adam Smith had an eye for the

relationship between education and training and the varied investments made in this respect, and the increasing total sum of wealth for society. As he stated:

A man educated at the expense of much labour and time to any of those employments which require extraordinary dexterity and skill, may be compared to one of those expensive machines. The work which he learns, it must be expected, over and above the usual wages of common labour, will replace to him the whole expense of his education, with at least the ordinary profits of an equally valuable capital... The difference between the wages of skilled labour and those of common labour is founded on this principle. (Smith 2007 [1776]: 84)

Here again we find the emphasis on skills and competences. What the WorkAble project suggests by contrast is to apply the insights from the capability approach and develop the ideas of the utility of education further by challenging its main premises. In such a perspective, the primacy of the economic effects of education is a problem. Instead, the focus is placed on the freedoms to live the life one has reason to value. In that light “However, the ability to exercise freedom may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach” (Sen 1989: 55). Taking such a different stand in the means/ends position of education vis-à-vis the economy may pave the way for a departure from the human capital path and its pitfalls. Economic growth and returns on educational investment may certainly be good means for other ends, such as well-being or valuable opportunities to flourish in areas like art, music, etc. But if these economic effects are taken as the only aim, we then end in commodity fetishism. In other words, education has many other roles to play for the individual and society that Sen identifies as education (1) for productivity, (2) for a better distribution of national income, (3) as a personal conversion factor and (4) as a promoter of “intelligent choice between different types of lives that a person can lead” (Sen 1989: 55). Still, this is only half of the story. The other half is related to the labour market, because following the human capital approach, returns on investment can only happen when they are related to work, no matter what the content of such work is (i.e. whether it is a creative or a physical activity). Here the logic and argumentation of human capital thinking raises further problems that the capability approach seems to overcome.

In relation to work and the labour market, Nussbaum argues that it is a governmental responsibility to offer people the opportunity to have control over their environment. She introduces this as one of the central human functionings on her list of ten capabilities, which is “supposed to provide a focus for quality of life assessment”. This central capability also implies “having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others [...] in work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers” (Nussbaum 2011: 33–34, 1999: 235). In this perspective, it becomes clear that work can also be understood as an important means for other ends than money making, no matter whether it is for the individual’s sake or for society’s sake. It is the individual’s real opportunity to lead a good life that he or she values, which then becomes the genuine end of public action. Still one has to bear in mind the liberal foundation of the capability approach. People should have the freedom to exit in the Hirschmanian sense (Hirschman 1970), but this does not

exclude the possibility that they actually prefer to work with an “intense dedication that precludes recreation and play”, because “a person who has opportunities for play can always choose a workaholic life: again there is a great difference between that chosen life and a life constrained by insufficient maximum-hour protections” (Nussbaum 1999: 237–8). Still, the primacy placed on individual freedoms raises a voice against the human capital work-first perspective, because the main objective of public action in the field of welfare should not be to put people back to work at all costs (i.e. a functioning) but to enhance their real freedom of choice with regard to the labour market (Bonvin 2012).

We started this paper by outlining the problems raised by unemployment and their impact for millions of European citizens of all ages. If we take the capability approach and its emphasis on capabilities instead of functionings seriously, the measures of the achieved doings and beings do not say everything about the set of possible beings and doings enjoyed by European citizens. If we assume, just for a moment, that we ought to measure the freedom to seek and get a job, then is it reasonable to claim that this substantial freedom or capability for work is better secured through the expansion in the individual human capital? If we think that the good life should be regarded as the genuine end instead and that training and education should be regarded as a means of reaching this end, then this analytical focus requires exploring new avenues and new ways to solve the problems faced by the EU nowadays. It becomes much more complex too, because while the human capital approach values the economy and economic growth as the main aim to be pursued, the capability approach considers that the value of the economy must be assessed against its capacity to support the development of valuable opportunities for human growth and flourishing, where development is seen as the expansion of freedoms to live the life one has reason to value. According to Elaine Unterhalter, Sen has emphasised the difference between these two approaches and insists that human capital “concentrates on the agency of human beings – through skill and knowledge as well as their effort – in augmenting production possibilities”, whereas the capability approach “focuses on the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have” (Sen 1997, cited by Unterhalter 2009 p. 212).

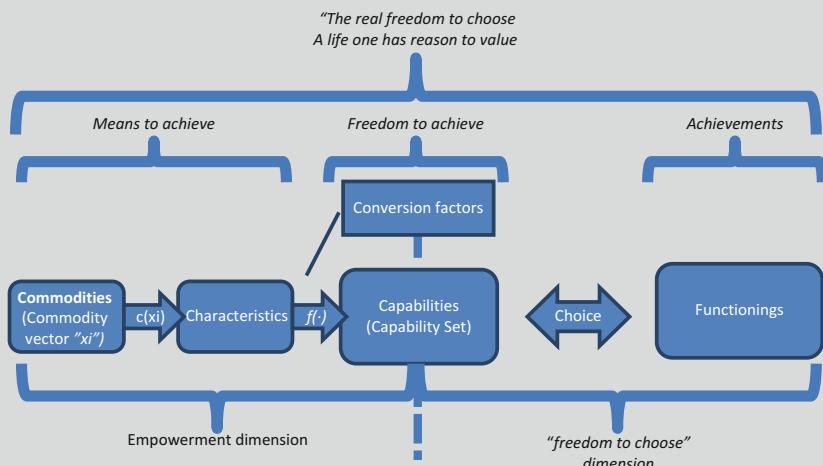
Conclusion

The challenge raised by the implementation of the capability approach lies in holding together all dimensions of the approach, i.e. in integrating in the same analytical grid resources (commodities), conversion factors, capabilities, collective and individual decision-making processes and their relation to individual preferences (with the issues of exit, voice and loyalty) and functionings and in doing all this without losing sight of the fact that the focus ought to be placed on capabilities, i.e. what is measured or assessed is not resources or functionings, but capabilities. In relation to the circumstances prevailing in the context of the European crisis, we have argued that

(continued)

it is crucial to put the emphasis on the development of individual freedoms to shape and choose the life one has reason to value. This theoretically stands in sharp contrast to the “work-first” perspective that human capital thinking propounds. Instead, the capabilities for work, voice and education, envisaged as real freedoms, seem more promising. According to Nussbaum, we therefore recommend taking account of the central role of education as a necessary prerequisite for a truly human life. As a matter of fact, education should be regarded as an important end and not merely as a means of getting people into work. This is in line with Nussbaum’s insertion, in the list of the ten fundamental capabilities, of the issue of “senses, imagination and thought”, which covers the ability for reasoning and the use of one’s senses and reason in a way that is “informed and cultivated by an adequate education”. This goes far beyond an instrumental view of education.

Being well aware that this does not catch the full complexity of the approach, we suggest bringing the two dimensions and the core concepts together in a heuristic model that briefly illustrates the complexities of their mutual interrelations² and paves the way for further investigations in this subject matter. This model should not be understood as a linear relation but as a dynamic model (circulating between the concepts).



²The relational illustration is partly inspired by Robeyns (2003, 2005) and Sen’s conceptual description presented in his book *Commodities and Capabilities* (Sen 1999a). The illustration has been further developed by the authors of this article.

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Part II

**Changes of Welfare Policies and the Role
of the Capability Approach**

Chapter 3

Multilevel Governance and Capability Approach: What Convergence?

Thierry Berthet

“Things are no longer what they used to be” is a common observation in social sciences and quite a well-known point of departure for building new concepts aiming at describing a “new” perspective or set of social practices. The notion of multilevel governance belongs to this kind of premises. This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the theoretical relations that can be made between the capability approach and the notion of multilevel governance. A first section is dedicated to presenting the notion of multilevel governance and its relation to policy analysis. In a second section, the possible convergence and meeting points between the capability approach (CA) and the concept of multilevel governance (MLG) will be discussed.

3.1 Multilevel Policymaking: What Do We Mean by This?

The idea of governance was promoted by social scientists – and especially political scientists – to describe the emergence of new modes of regulation based on coordination rather than authority. These modes of regulation include public as well as private actors in arenas where constitutive types of policies (Lowi 1972) and technical knowledge are getting more and more central. In other words, the traditional authoritarian state-centered domination is challenged by new forms of regulation based on a larger diffusion of power and a general process of bargaining in policymaking. The analysis of reforms in British urban policies represents one of the first attempts to describe a process of authority reallocation (Le Gales 1995). Although the territorial

T. Berthet (✉)

CNRS, Centre Emile Durkheim, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
e-mail: t.berthet@sciencespo.fr

dimension was closely linked to the development of the concept of governance, this framework was not at first designed to seize processes of re-territorialization. The focus was rather put on changing governing techniques than on the territorial rescaling of power relations.

3.1.1 A European-Born Concept

Bringing into the political debate, the notion of multilevel governance (MLG) introduced the idea of a territorialized reallocation of power. If local politics was the starting point of the academic work on governance, European studies played the same role for multilevel governance. Starting from Gary Marks' seminal work on the European structural policy (Marks 1993), the notion of multilevel governance has progressively become more popular. Once again, the starting assessment was a major change in regulation that the former traditional framework of analysis could not describe properly. "The first, and for a long time only, application of MLG theory was in the realm of [European] cohesion policy, as it was in this realm that unconventional mobilization dynamics and decision-making patterns were most apparent" (Piattoni 2009, p. 5). The transformation of relationships between European institutions, member states, and subnational political bodies has drawn the attention of political scientists and specialists of the European integration. Among this community of experts, a strong cleavage opposes intergovernmentalists and supranationalists. The first ones are pleading for realism and argue that national states remain the central political actor. Based on a functionalist perspective, the second argues in favor of a federalization trend. The MLG approach is presented as a third way. It relies on the following criticism of these two opposite positions: although they differ in their analysis of the political leadership, both of them stem that European decisions are taken in a political arena dominated by national and supranational institutions (Jeffery 1997). In so doing, they miss the increasing development of an all set of complex power relations between local, regional, national, and European actors. They also disregard the fact that contemporary policy streams are increasingly based on coordination and competition of territorial levels. The notion of multilevel is an attempt to take these dimensions into consideration and to focus this analysis on the concrete practices and political exchanges of the various stakeholders participating to the policymaking process. The fact that this conceptual discussion was initiated from European studies and more precisely from the study of the cohesion/structural/regional policy of the EU is significant. This area of research is a front row seat to observe the way by which the national traditional policymaking process is bypassed by infra- and supranational public and private actors. In particular, the guiding principles (subsidiarity, additionality, partnership, evaluation) as well as the implementation of the structural funds (ESF, ERDF, CAP) have led to the development of new policy networks where the commission plays a leading role to the benefit of regional decisional actors. Such a large margin of decision led to the commission in the allocation of financial

resources to subnational governments (Marks 1993) as well as the policymaking method used appear new and does not really fit in either the intergovernmentalist or the functionalist perspective. As reminded by Charlie Jeffery (1997), the bargaining process related to European summits, the negotiation of treaties and the implementation of the cohesion policy have given subnational actors the opportunity to acquire the political resources necessary to participate in the European decision-making process. Thus, the interdependence of actors and of levels of governments has been increased and institutionalized. This process results in the overwhelming of a “simple” bipolar decision-making process between national states and the EU authorities through a complex multilevel and multistakeholders’ governance framework. This somehow new mode of regulation was rapidly identified as a multilevel governance one.

3.1.2 A Definition

Defining precisely what is intended by MLG has been one of the tasks of political scientists convinced by this perspective. Several definitions have been given, some insisting on the multiscalarity of MLG (Stubbs 2005), some on the negotiation dimension of a governance process (Peters and Pierre 2001), others on the “dispersion of decision-making away from central states” (Hooghe and Marks 2003). Before we go any further in discussing the question of MLG from a capability perspective, it is necessary to ground our analysis on a precise definition of MLG. Following Philippe Schmitter’s definition, by multilevel governance, we will intend here “an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors – private and public – at different levels of territorial aggregation in more-or-less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority to any of these levels” (Schmitter 2004, p. 49). This detailed definition is useful for the dimension it introduces. The authoritarian dimension of regulation and policymaking is necessarily part of MLG as the decisions reached are compulsory. The jurisdictional question in MLG also clearly deals with interdependent actors and organizations participating together to a broad governance scheme. One of the interesting points in MLG is the unstable organizational dimension. As noticed by Philippe Schmitter in his definition, this policymaking does (until now) result in processes of devolution or on discussing the transfer of competences between territorial levels. Connected to this point, the idea of a mixed set of private/public actors is also a characteristic of the governance of the policymaking process. It represents a key issue in terms of empowerment of the civil society from a capability perspective. Finally, the territorial dimension is also central as MLG supposes in order to identify political streams between levels of government and in order to analyze the real authority and leadership exercised by localized actors.

3.1.3 Public Policy Dimensions of MLG

Many points arise when studying MLG from a public policy perspective.

First, concerning the use of the notion, it went through the same process than many other theoretical concepts. It was at first designed to describe social reality from an analytical point of view. But as the concept became popular and due to a growing porosity of the academic and political spheres, policymakers started to use this analytical concept and hence immediately transformed it in a normative one.

The analytical use of MLG is designed to unpack social practices insufficiently understood by the previous theoretical frameworks (here intergovernmentalism and functionalism). In a process of paradigm shift well informed by the epistemology of sciences (Kuhn 1983), the MLG concept aims at providing new and more efficient tools of analysis. Once adopted by policymakers, the concept stops to be an analytical one to become a prescriptive one. Far from aiming at unpacking social practices, it starts to pack them and tries to orientate them in a certain way. In other words, the normative use of MLG recommends what to do and how to generate a good multilevel governance! A clear example of this process is given by the publication of the European Committee of the regions' white paper on multilevel governance (COR 2009). This white paper states that "establishing genuine multilevel governance in Europe has always been the strategic priority of the Committee of the Regions. It has now become a condition of good European governance. This White Paper acknowledges this priority, proposes clear policy options for improving European governance and recommends specific mechanisms and instruments for stimulating all stages of the European decision-making process" (COR 2009, p. 5). It is quite important to identify this shift in the use of the notion because it has direct effects on the policymaking process itself. Once the MLG concept has become so trendy that international organizations, national and local stakeholders promote it and provide management recipes to achieve its implementation, it starts to influence the political process. In that sense, multilevel governance practices once observed by political scientists as an upcoming phenomenon tend to expand and become a norm imposed by policymakers.

Another way of problematizing the MLG notion can be to confront it to two theoretical models of public policy analysis: the sequential analysis of public policy cycles and the well-known typology politics/polity/policy.

Introduced by Charles Jones in the beginning of the 1970s, the sequential model presents the policymaking process as a cycle made of successive stages (Jones 1970). We can then distinguish between three main sequences: problem framing and agenda setting, decision-making, and implementation. How does the MLG model connect to this idea of policy cycle? It can be noticed that as formulated above, MLG should intervene at each sequence of the policy cycle. With regards to the definition of public problems, several examples can be given. It can be at first observed that the EU is more and more a key actor in shaping public problems at the national and regional level. In the field of training and education, the commission pushed forward a conception of lifelong learning policies as well as the idea of a

common set of basic skills. Hence, it shapes the way these topics are discussed in member states political arenas. In another way, national and EU authorities closely monitor local experimentations in the field of employment and professional integration in order to integrate and disseminate the so-called good practices. In the decision-making process, MLG plays a key role. Most of the analyzes conducted on MLG have focused on that stage. The MLG perspective provides a framework for analyzing the complex set of relations built in the decision-making process between policy stakeholders located at various territorial levels. Analyzing the decision-making process from a MLG point of view means several things.

Firstly, it means taking into consideration the fact that political power of the nation states is shared with subnational and supranational political entities. It acknowledges the growing political capacity of both regional/local and European policymakers. In that perspective, decentralization means the transfer of such capacity in decision-making to both the EU and subnational actors. It signifies that a growing number of decisions are not only taken in a bipolarized relation between the European community and the member states but also in a complex network of political relations between multiple levels of actors overwhelming the nation state constitutional power upward and downward.

It also means assessing the fact that regional and local actors are more and more lobbying and acting at the European level to raise political decision in accordance with their own interests. In certain matters – such as the regional policy of the EU – subnational actors have gained resources allowing them to participate in the European decision-making process without referring to their central governments.

Finally, the MLG perspective acknowledges the fact that the range of actors involved in the decision-making process has enlarged. On the one hand, the decision-making process does not clearly separate policymakers and receivers anymore. The beneficiaries of this process are actively acting to shape and influence the decisions raised. On the other hand, the former strong boundary between public and private actors seems more and more blurred. Private actors (companies, NGOs, lobbies) are involved in the decision-making process. This governance mode of regulation has raised and is being encouraged by EU authorities. They provide recipes to implement an open mode of governance while encouraging at the same time the development of a soft influential regulation with member states (i.e., the open method of coordination).

Implementation is also a stage in policymaking where the MLG perspective provides interesting insights. The idea of bringing together in an implementation chain a large range of private and public actors from different territorial levels supposes to move away from the traditional functionalist executive scheme. The traditional functionalist idea of state public administration and civil servants acting solely as executing agents seems outdated. The actual process of policy implementation provides a more complex picture. Subnational entities are being transferred more and more responsibility in implementing national as well as their own policies, while NGOs and private sector organizations are more often involved in implementation through the development of public tenders and externalization. In the field of employment and training policies, this externalization/contractualization scheme

became increasingly significant over the last two decades with the support of the EU and a strong implication of local authorities (Berthet 2010).

The well-known policy/polity/politics' typology in policy analysis is another way to assess the development of MLG practices in the political process. If the MLG perspective is mainly based on analyzing public policies, its implication on both the polity and the politics spheres is to be taken into account.

Regarding the politics dimension, the development of MLG policymaking processes changes the nature of the game and the partners. In the first instance, the development of a strong and sometimes coordinated political activity has brought renewal and change. New scenes have emerged, new categories of politicians have come to the forefront, and new skills including a deep knowledge of the European and local policymaking specificities have become necessary for decision makers to play a significant role in this MLG scheme. On a structural level, a multiplication of forums and arenas can be observed. They bring in new figures of political activity (experts, technicians, NGOs, etc.). These new stages have transformed the political debate into a more complex and specialized one. Of course this process is not directly caused by the development of MLG practices, but they have undoubtedly reinforced it.

Although it is generally not evoked by academics working on the MLG processes, the polity and the citizenship question is another important dimension to study in policymaking analysis. If the political authority of member states is deeply rooted in the history of nation building, European and local authorities – especially for centralized states such as France – do not necessarily enjoy such a strong legitimacy. Building up the polity dimension is a significant challenge for them and MLG is a powerful tool in that perspective. The redistributive capacity of the EU and especially the structural funds play a great role in building a positive image of the European Community. The local implementation of the European cohesion policy is one of the major fields supporting the development of MLG. It clearly shows how policymaking is connected to polity and politics.

Efforts have been made to enhance the visibility of these funding for EU citizens. These programs are highlighting a set of coordinated policies for local communities' development. Indirectly, they also support and make use of the local political identity. In a series of economic sectors, territorial identity has become a core component of competitiveness (Cuntigh et al. 2005). As shown by Garcia and Genyès (2005), in some territories, structural funds have been used to develop and strengthen local identities in order to support and promote specific economic activities (tourism, wine industry, food industry). By doing so, they constitute a strong political capital for local politicians lobbying at the European level to capture these grants in order to reinforce their own local legitimacy. New local elites connected to European spheres are emerging. Local identity and politics are at the same time supported and changed by these policies.

Another typology is interesting to present in order to conclude this short presentation of multilevel governance. Gary Marks and Lisbeth Hooghe (2003) elaborated it in order to clarify the structural dimension of this process of political regulation.

As a starting point to this typification attempt, they raise up four questions aiming at building a set of ideal types.

1. “Should jurisdictions be designed around particular communities, or should they be designed around particular problems?
2. Should jurisdictions bundle competencies or should they be functionally specific?
3. Should jurisdictions be limited in numbers, or should they proliferate?
4. Should jurisdictions be designed to last, or should they be fluid?” (Marks and Hooghes 2003, p. 236)

From these variables emerged two ideal types: type II and I presented in the following table.

Types of multilevel governance

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Nonintersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdiction at a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System wide architecture	Flexible design

The first model is close to the federalist system with a stable and strongly institutionalized mode of regulation, while the second one is more blurred and theoretical. It relies on goal-oriented cooperation, weak institutionalization, and overlapping memberships. As noticed by Skelcher, the first type is more familiar at first sight because it resembles to the “predominant mode within national politics” (Skelcher 2005, p. 94). It reminds us that MLG is a routinized practice in federalist systems. But the second one appears to be more convenient to seize the local level where contemporary local governance schemes seem to offer a fertile ground for its development. It should be reminded here that these two models are ideal types. They can be used analytically to describe emerging forms of multilevel regulation and confront it to other theoretical devices such as the capability approach.

3.2 Multilevel Governance and Capability Analysis: What Compatibility? What Value Added for Vulnerable Youth?

Discussing the relationship between multilevel governance and the capability approach raises a series of questions: what are the main implications of a capability approach in terms of policymaking? Is multilevel policymaking favorable to the development of individual capabilities? On what conditions?

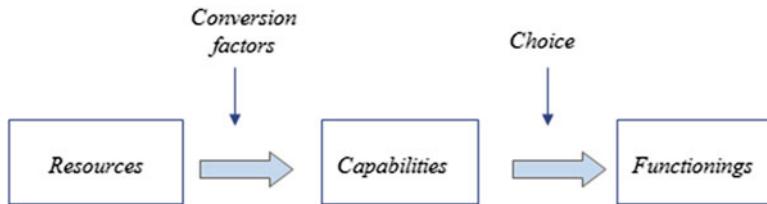


Fig. 3.1 The capability approach framework

3.2.1 Capability Approach and Multilevel Governance: What Is the Problem?

Most of the reflections on capability approach (CA) and public action focuses on the aims of public policies (Bonvin and Farvaque 2008). As a normative theory, the CA engages primarily the discussion on what should be the objectives of public policies. Focusing on individuals' freedom to choose what they find valuable for themselves invites to think about how individuals' choices and preferences could be the target of public action. Of course, the commodities/capabilities/conversion factors/functioning (Fig. 3.1) model proposed by Amartya Sen (2000) engages a reflection on the means achieved by public policies. But it is more at the level of service delivery than at the more general level of policymaking design and intergovernmental relations. On the contrary, the MLG theory is at first interested in looking at how deliberation, decision, and general implementation are structured in contemporary societies (Berthet 2013).

Thinking about how CA and MLG theories can match supposes to discuss mainly two dimensions:

1. The articulation of policymaking and concrete implementation. Or to put it in other words: how the CA can be introduced in a MLG policymaking process by offering a new set of aims and objectives?
2. The ability of the MLG perspective to take into consideration the CA's interest in the freedom of individual. It also means questioning how the CA can be used as an evaluation tool to assess the reality of MLG on one side and the effects of a multilevel public policy on the individual's capabilities on the other one.

The CA supposes to analyze public policies from a processual point of view. Hence, it is by studying internal qualities of this process that it is possible to assess its ability to improve individual's capabilities. Indeed the CA does not suppose or promote a specific method to decide and implement public policies. The normative dimension of this theoretical framework is not a matter of organization, but rather relies on the goals and aims of public policies. The CA assigns to public action a general aim of promoting the development of individual's capabilities based on the freedom for individuals to choose what is valuable for them. The organizational means of such development are not indicated *prima facie*. They are more generally assessed in terms of their appropriateness to fulfill this general aim. Based on these premises and on the fact that MLG is at first a constitutive approach (Lowi 1972),

it could be argued that it is useless to question the compatibility of the MLG with the CA. If the first deals with the organization of contemporary public action and the second does not really care about organization while proposing a possible goal for it, it does not make a lot of sense to question their adequacy. But the question could also be to wonder if all modes of policymaking are equal, or if some, like MLG, are more able than others to guarantee a better compatibility to the AC's prescriptions. We will try to assess this proposition by analyzing if the MLG could represent a favorable governance scheme to improve individual's capabilities.

The development of capabilities relies on the relations built between a series of well-known dimensions of the CA illustrated below:

In this model, the role of policymakers and of policy tools is to guarantee both the access to resources (commodities) and also the existence of the proper individual conversion factors to allow youngsters to freely choose what they have reason to value. The question is then: Are some policymaking design forms, and in particular here the MLG, able to:

1. Provide policy tools and organizations allowing to promote this process of individual capabilities development: *policy design*.
2. Assign to this first dimension a general aim compatible with the AC shared by all stakeholders: *policy goals*.

Does the MLG provide a good frame to enhance these two dimensions? To answer this question, we then need to analyze both the organization mode and the main principles guiding its fulfillment.

3.2.2 *Policy Design: Two Logics of Action*

Following Schmitter's (2004) definition of MLG, two logics of actions have to be considered when trying to assess the compatibility of MLG with the CA.

On the one hand, MLG relies on a growing *territorialization process* leading to a reinforced political capacity of the EU and subnational political authorities (Pasquier and Carter 2010). Territorialization is a transversal logic that tends to be declined in different national spaces in Europe. Many different European countries are concerned with devolution processes to subnational entities being regional, meso (such as the French "département" or the Italian province), or municipal. Over the last decade, a clear shift from central states to a more decentralized implementation of employment and training policies has clearly occurred within the last 10 years (and even – with a broader point of view – within the last 15 years). Most of European countries acknowledge the need for "stronger" local authorities in employment and social cohesion policies. In the same time, a Europeanization process of major public policies such education, training, and employment policies for youth at risk in the WorkAble project case is occurring. The reinforced political capacity of local public authorities is followed by a growing influence of the European strategies on national policies. The different components of these strategies (OMC, Lisbon strategy, EES pillars, UE 2020 program, flexicurity principles,

lifelong learning programs, ESF, etc.) are representing an influential reference for the national and subnational policies (Berthet and Conter 2011; Radaelli 2002; Palier and Surel 2007).

With regards to the question of capabilities, this territorialization process of policies towards vulnerable youth represents an added value as well as a risk. The added value relies on a proximity-based construction of institutional resources. Related to a growing individualization, decentralization appears as a main governance tool to promote proximity policies. Proximity is seen as a practical and efficient way to develop a tailor-made public intervention. This logic of proximity-based social policies can make way for an increased consideration of youngster's environment. It could lead to taking into account their social and environmental conversion factors. Nevertheless, it is only a potential, a favorable factor that does not guarantee that localized policies towards vulnerable youth will automatically take these conversion factors into account. Indeed, we have several examples of the contrary shown by the workable case studies. The risk here is related to the possible imprisonment of deprived youngsters in very localized protection networks that are poorly related to possibilities of interconnected geographical and social mobility. Geographical mobility, as a factor of social mobility in a globalized world, represents a crucial stake for professional and social integration of youngsters. Limiting their action and projection landscape to a closed territorialized settlement related to the assistance they receive could lower down their capability to build and assume their own choices.

On the other hand, it should be noticed that policymaking arenas tend to be more open to nongovernmental and private organizations. This enlargement leads to a growing *hybridization of the decisional arenas*. Promoted by the governance logic, this hybridization results in including actors from the civil society and the economy world into the policymaking process. Actors' cooperation and organization's coordination are quite difficult tasks to achieve. Bureaucratic inertia, corporatist's resistance, professional culture's barriers, or mutual ignorance represent some of the well-known obstacles to the promotion of a multistakeholders' integration. Despite this general consideration proposed both by the governance theory and the sociology of organizations, it should be noticed that most of the European countries have promoted more coordination between stakeholders. From a general point of view, policymakers foster stakeholders' cooperation under various patterns. This cooperation includes both public/public coordination and public/private partnership. These broad observations cover several levels of intensity in coordination. On the public/public side, these relations can be cooperative or hierarchical, while on the public/private side, they can include governance when this partnership is large and related to the whole chain of policymaking and externalization when it is limited to implementation.

- *Cooperative partnership* is sought when ministries are asked to join their fields of competencies in a multidimensional perspective.
- *Hierarchical coordination* is a traditional mode of partnership's regulation in the public sector.
- *Governance*, as a mean to include private and public actors in a multilevel policymaking scheme, can be illustrated by the German case of the dual system.

A strong tradition of intense partnership between the government and social partners leads to a highly technical corporatist coordination in the matter of labor market's governance and reform.

- Finally, the most common pattern of multistakeholders' integration seems to be the *externalization* process. Contracting out is by far the most used way to coordinate public/private actors. It aims at reconciling the wish of national governments to keep employment and training policies under a close control; and their decreasing financial capacity reinforced by the 2008 crisis. Also fostered by the New Public Management theory, externalization has been introduced as a common way to implement employment's public policy.

In terms of capability approach, hybridization schemes could be an opportunity to enlarge the scope of employment, education, and training policies of vulnerable youngsters. Introducing NGOs, employers, professional associations, local civil servants, parents, and their representatives in the policymaking and implementing process is certainly a good way to provide youngsters more opportunities to fulfill their self-made choices, or not! In fact it depends on two factors: the kind of coordination institutionalized and the effectiveness of a deliberation process in policymaking and implementation. Concerning the first factor, the cooperative partnership between public administrations from different policy fields can facilitate the development on an integrated approach for the vulnerable youth. Governance is also another potentially interesting scheme, while hierarchical coordination and externalization seem to be less efficient in opening the policymaking process to individual's capabilities improvement. Concerning the second point, it leads to the question of the role left by policymakers to other actors. An opened and truly deliberative process where individual and collective preferences can be expressed and taken into account can represent a real opportunity to expand youngsters' capabilities. On the opposite, a formal deliberative process locked by policymakers and street-level bureaucrats can be a fertile ground for the development of contradictory injunctions and adaptive preferences.

In other words, the organizational processes promoted by MLG are not necessarily capability friendly. It is highly dependent on the goals and underlying principles guiding them.

3.2.3 *Policy Goals: The Subsidiarity Principle*

Questioning the policy goals supposes to confront the guiding principles of the policymaking process. In the name of these principles, the exercise of the power is legitimized and institutionalized¹ to the various stakeholders. One of the main

¹We refer to the notion of institution in the sociological sense, i.e., as a set of rules recognized as legitimate by the actors and that allows them to anticipate the roles and behavior of others.

aspects related to MLG is to recognize the multiplicity and interdependency between levels of governance. This specificity supposes also to organize these relations among these levels. The hierarchical regulation is a possible model and has been used for a long period of time to regulate the relations between levels of government. It is explicitly rejected by the idea of governance, which relates more on coordination and partnership rather than hierarchical authority. Another guiding rule has to be adopted to frame these multilevel relations. Supported by the EU and already experienced in most of federal countries, the idea of subsidiarity has been recognized as the main principle to organize these connections between territorialized sources of power.

Subsidiarity is an ancient guiding principle relying on the idea according to which the level of governance closest to the citizens should exercise the power over their problems. It then also provides a way to put in order levels of regulation. The rule suggested/promoted by the subsidiarity principle consists in giving the priority to small regulation organizations and only allow superior authorities to intervene in case of failure or incapacity of the smaller ones to take in charge problems they cannot assume. This rule has been adopted as the principle guiding relations between the EU and national and subnational entities. It is defined as such by the Union Treaty (art. 5): “Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level.”

The subsidiarity principle is a key notion to MLG as a way to rule relations between levels of government. In fact, it is interesting to observe that it rules precisely the field of MLG insofar as it applies firstly to matters that are not assigned to the jurisdiction of a specific level of government.

As a ruling principle, subsidiarity supposes that political matters that are not exclusively regulated by a specific territorial level should be regulated in an upward order through which political authorities intervene from the lowest to the highest level. The higher levels should only act when the lowest one cannot assume the duty and in a coordinated way. In so doing, it supports the territorialization of policies.

But it also strongly supports a growing individualization of public policies. Indeed the dynamic of empowering the smallest level of intervention puts the individual at the starting point of public policies. This is particularly true for social policies. As an inheritance of the Aristotelian, Christian, and ordoliberal tradition, the subsidiarity principle supports a growing individualization, whether it is based on accountability or empowerment.

It is with regards to this individualization dimension that the subsidiarity principle can be connected to the CA. This principle relies on three conditions: “The confidence in the capacity of social actors to support the general interest; the intuition that the authority is not by nature owning the absolute skill to qualify and realize the general interest; the will of actors to be autonomous and capable of initiative which supposes that they have not been broken at first by totalitarism or made childish by a paternal State” (Millon-Delsol 1993, pp. 37–38, our translation).

Starting from the emphasis put on the individual's freedom and capability to act as a social actor, one of the main issues where MLG's subsidiarity principle and the CA can have a fruitful discussion is about the mechanism of tasks redistribution. "Because free action contributes to existential dignity, and because proximity action is estimated to be more efficient, the competency will be at first devolved to the individual or the closest social group, to raise by degrees to the further in case of insufficiency. For a limited number of cases, the competency will be devolved to the superior level (...) if the exercise of the competence by the inferior level should be harmful for the general interest" (Millon-Delsol 1993, p. 69, our translation). Individual's capability comes first and can only be compensated if it is estimated insufficient to fulfill its role. This process is then applied upward to all levels of government. Looking at it from the upper level, it means also a right or a duty to interfere if necessary to help and support or if not possible to act in the place of the inferior level. Of course, one of the questions raised by this logic of action is who decides the appropriate level and assess its insufficiency. But more important is to distinguish between two sides of the interference process: a *negative dimension*, which is to prevent political authorities to act in the place of social groups or individuals if it is not necessary, and a *positive dimension* claiming that each level must help and support the inferior one, and as a last resort to compensate for failing actors. This positive/negative dimension of the subsidiarity principle shows many similarities with Isaiah Berlin's positive and negative freedom that is one of the main subsumption of Amartya Sen's capability model. In both cases, individual's freedom should be prevailing on or protected by organizational rules. Collective responsibility is deemed to be protective and incentive, while individual empowerment is promoted inside a set of real opportunities offered by societal commodities and can only be compensated when the individual's failure is clearly assessed.

Conclusion

At the philosophical level, common starting points of both the CA and the subsidiarity principle are the recognition of the importance of the individual's empowerment and the identification of the social responsibility to promote the individual's capability to be an expert of himself first.

But this cognitive dimension of multilevel governance is generally ignored to the benefit of its sole organizational dimension.

At the operational level, the subsidiarity principle – as a core component of multilevel governance – is generally understood only as a mechanism of devolution at the exclusion of its positive dimension to promote the individual's role. In fact, the notion of subsidiarity is most often understood at worse as preserving the national governments from UE's intrusions in their field of competency and at best as a way to give more power to subnational authorities. As such, its compatibility with the CA is only limited to the promotion of

(continued)

territorialization and hybridization. As argued earlier, these two dimensions clearly present some interesting opportunities to promote some capability friendly policies, but they most certainly are not sufficient to argue that MLG and CA are strongly interconnected. It is only at the cognitive level that interesting bridges can be launched between these two theoretical frameworks. Regarding its theoretical proximity with the founding principle of MLG – the subsidiarity principle – it could be argued, to conclude this chapter, that the capability approach represents a good opportunity to provide some meaning to a predominantly managerial conception of multilevel governance. The theoretical and practical strength of the capability approach related to its normative dimension derives from the orientation given to MLG. In other words, the CA provides to MLG a framework of perspectives as well as a set of means and goals to achieve related to the fulfillment of individual capabilities. In other words, it gives a sense to the policymaking process regarding social and professional integration of European youngsters.

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Chapter 4

New Conditions of Professional Work or the Fall of Professions? On Managerialism and Professionalism

Holger Ziegler and Niels Rosendal Jensen

4.1 A Changing Society: From Welfare to Competition

The point of departure is to understand capitalist society as a society being in a permanent crisis of accumulation. This encompasses a crisis in service provisions influenced by or reflecting the economic development. In this case we focus on professionalism as an example of the impact of that crisis. When discussing professional work, we need not to forget societal conditions outside the field of social work which constitute the scope of the public intervention. Basically, we assume that social work and capitalism are still parts of a mutual intersection.

In the following paragraph, the intention is to present some of the main features of what may be labelled a societal change.

4.1.1 *The Competitive State*

The concept ‘competitive state’ reflects deep-going changes of the economic, political and cultural institutions which for instance characterise current Danish as well as European political economy. The concept of the competitive state points partly to another state and partly to another political culture compared to the years after WWII. Those years became more and more dominated by discussions on

H. Ziegler (✉)

Faculty of Educational Science, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany
e-mail: hziegler@uni-bielefeld.de

N.R. Jensen

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
e-mail: nrj@dpu.dk

the welfare state, introduced as a concept in 1953 in Denmark. The left wing criticised the welfare state of being a sign of repressive tolerance, whilst the right wing thought it as a threat to individual freedom, and to the family as the kernel institution of society and as dependence, a kind of political discussions which has now disappeared. The political debate of today is oriented at enlarging the welfare state. Instead, the critique of the state taking over civil society is replaced by a discussion on the welfare state as a burden for the private sector (cf. a broader discussion in Sect. 4.3 of this chapter).

The argumentation above emphasises why the welfare state is changing, though the question is: are we observing a modification of the welfare state, or are we in fact seeing the emerging of a new type of state?

If so the *competitive state* is something different from the *welfare state*. Whereas the welfare state aimed at protecting the population and the companies against the international conjunctures, the competitive state aims at mobilising the population and the companies to participate in the international or global competition. Further, the competitive state aims at making every person responsible, whilst the welfare state weighted moral education (general education), democracy as community and freedom as the possibility to participate in political processes.

The competitive state aims at making the individual responsible for his/her own life, understands community as community of work and interprets freedom as being identical to the freedom to fulfil one's own needs, whereas the welfare state stressed the moral education or Bildung, democracy as community and freedom as the possibility of participating in political processes.

The competitive state improves dynamics on the cost of stability and has developed a never-ending process of reforms. A central trait of the competitive state is the balance between accumulation and regulation which is presented and discussed in the next paragraph.

4.1.2 Accumulation and Regulation

An approach to understand state and market will be offered in the following pages. Our emphasis is placed on two points: every state is a product of a social practice, and social practice has a lot to do with production, reproduction and conduct. The first dimension is labelled accumulation (of capital, culture, power, etc.). The second dimension is labelled regulation (by means of law, norms, etc.). By means of this model, we are capable of looking at educational policy as a matter of socialisation. This is concerned with two analytical levels:

- A regulationist perspective
- The welfare regime perspective (cf. Esping-Andersen 1990)

Education and educational policy are seen as a part of the general process of socialisation.

Within the *regulationist perspective* the analysis would usually focus on four central mechanisms: (1) accumulation regime, (2) mode of regulation, (3) life regime and (4) mode of life. Bob Jessop defines that the regulationist approach is looking at:

regulatory mechanisms, i.e. institutional forms, societal norms and patterns of strategic conduct which successfully expressed and regulated these conflicts until the inevitable build-up of tensions and disparities among the various regulatory forms reached crisis point. When this occurred there would be an experimental period from which a new accumulation regime and a corresponding mode of regulation might – or might not – emerge. (Jessop 1990: 308)

Then, the accumulation regime is defined as '*a particular combination of production and consumption which can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies*' (ibid.). This goes hand in hand with a specific mode of regulation, i.e. '*an institutional ensemble and complex of norms which can secure capitalist reproduction pro tempore despite the antagonistic character of capitalist social relations*' (ibid.).

Life regime and life mode are defined in parallel to the economic dimensions. Thus, under life regime we understand a combination of factors regarding the individual, locating him/her in the physical and social environment that can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies. On the other side, the mode of life is defined as an ideological and psychological constellation of various and complex norms that can secure the individual's integration into the capitalist circle of production. This allows understanding processes of socialisation as a matter of the 'conflation' of structure and agency. Socialisation is in social science generally approached by looking at two dimensions, namely, the socialisation of production on the one hand and the socialisation of the personalities on the other hand. Though the perspectives on each have been very different, the core dividing line had been one of the objective processes around production in the widest sense and subjective processes on the other hand, the latter by and large seen as educational processes.

Based on the leading values and beliefs plus the cultural power structure, normative theories are designed and developed. In the next step, such theories imply normative regulations and normative institutions (the rules are so to say an outcome of a compromise of interpreted values, moral and power). Besides or below such theories, one will find the social and economical power structure. From the normative regulations and institutions, one may also point to social practice and the distribution of power belonging to social practice. And then in turn the outcomes or products are assessed from the perspective of legitimacy as well as the perspective of utility (or use on behalf of one's own interests). This is a question widely discussed in educational sociology. Althusser's article on ideological state apparatuses can be seen as an answer to the question: how is it possible to provide a contradictory society with social cohesion? Why don't people revolt? Althusser points to the mechanisms of the ideological apparatus of state (like family, church, school, workplace) and the concept of interpellation (Althusser 1970). Boltanski and Chiapello point to the

‘new spirit of capitalism’ as an answer to the same question. Just to emphasise their argumentation we quote:

In many respects, capitalism is an absurd system: in it wage earners have lost ownership of the fruits of their labour and the possibility of pursuing a working life free of subordination. As for capitalists, they find themselves yoked to an indeterminable, insatiable process, which is utterly abstract and dissociated from satisfaction of consumptions needs, even of a luxury kind. For two such protagonists, integration into the capitalist process is singularly lacking in justification. (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 7)

In addition, they point to how activities or projects are justifying this system. This means doing networking and being engaged in a discontinuous process of project planning, project implementation and project finishing. If they are right, this feature offers a plausible explanation for challenges of the professions.

4.1.3 A Dialectical Viewpoint

By underlining this new social practice the intention is to avoid being bound or tied to limited ranges of challenges and understandings. In epistemological respect practice – encompassing the simultaneity of the societal, social and individual dimension – has to be seen as key feature in overcoming the dichotomy between structure and action as it is suggested in mainstream social science. The social is then understood as the outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment. With this in mind educational and social policy refers to people’s productive and reproductive relationships. In this perspective the constitutive interdependency between processes of self-realisation and the processes of the formation of collective identities is a condition for the social, realised by the interactions of actors, being – with their self-referential capacity – competent to act and their framing structure, which translates immediately into the context of human relationships.

In other words, we deal with some contradictions. Processes of self-realisation are contradictory to processes of the formation of collective identities. From self-realisation we derive the self-referential capacity and thus further the competence to act. From collective identities we derive the framing structure – which in turn is in contradiction with self-referentiality – and further the context of human relationships, which may or may not support or impair the individual competence to act. All of these contradictions form the social.

4.1.4 Outline of a New Society?

The welfare society is much discussed in the press, among politicians and citizens. Some politicians are promising to develop ‘the world’s best level of health’ or aiming at becoming in the top five of the PISA ranking, etc. Are the promises close

to realities, or are they distant from realities? Are such promises simply used to cover that, for example, Denmark is no longer a classical welfare state? A similar tendency is obvious all over Europe. To find an answer, one must ask questions like: are we undergoing deep societal changes? Where are those changes heading and for what purpose? A serious analysis is developed by Joachim Hirsch. He demonstrates the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism and from classical welfare to neoliberalism. Fordism was characterised by the assembly lines, mass production aimed at a growing domestic market and an increasing mass consumption. The state played the major role in the governance and development of a national economy, and economic theory was primarily influenced by Keynes. In contrast to Fordism, post-Fordism is characterised by an individual production, a consumption based on lifestyle and oriented at a global market. The state maintains an important role, but governance takes place as a negotiated interaction of state and organisations. At the level of the nation state, there is a shift from government to governance where the state becomes one agent among others operating in subnational, national and international domains. This change is often labelled paradigmatic, shifting from a strategy influenced by Keynesian Welfare National State (KWNS) to a strategy influenced by a Schumpeterian Welfare Postnational Regime (SWPR) (cf. Hirsch 1995; Jessop 2000; Antikainen 2008). The realm of the state, which was formerly ‘exterior’ to civil society, becomes localised and hence ‘interior’ to the realm of private interests (civil society) which becomes global – through transnational capital. One consequence is that the nation state cannot sustain social welfare and thereby may lose its cohesion.

4.1.5 Education Is a Central Vehicle in the Transition

In order to better understand these contradictions, we use further Pedersen’s analysis which is inspired by Joachim Hirsch (1995). Pedersen frames the hegemonic trend in Western societies by means of ‘the societal illusion or assumption of economy’, e.g. a certain understanding of the relationship between state and economy. The old state is changing and a new state is emerging. Pedersen differentiates between welfare state and competitive state. The competitive state does not any longer protect citizens and companies against oscillations of the international economy, but intends actively to mobilise the population and the companies to participate in the international competition. This shows a move from compensation to mobilisation defining the individual as responsible for his/her own life. Freedom, then, means to realise own needs and no longer as a possibility to participate in political processes. The new state promotes a dynamic which can be seen in never-ending processes of reform. Further the new state tries to influence international environments (among other things EU). In brief this is a state ‘*which is organized with the purpose of influencing and adapting in order to mobilize and reform to take care of national interests*’ (Pedersen 2011: 12 – own translation). Drawing on Gramsci (1972), Pedersen assesses school to be the most important factor. The new task of schooling

is to educate competent individuals possessing skills and put them at the disposal of the labour market – on the conditions of the market and at best a lifelong process. The basic idea is: work will shape the community and not education, participation, democracy or equal possibilities (ebenda: 170). In particular he underlines a change of the person from being irreplaceable to become opportunistic. By opportunistic it meant at least two interpretations: first, the economic one means that the person already is what he should be, namely, selfish and motivated by incentives (Bobbitt 2002: 228–235). Second, the opportunistic version means that the person is surrounded by incentives (technological, financial, social) but at the same time has to be educated in order to use these by means of acquired skills (Pedersen 2011: 190–191). As stated above Pedersen presents an argumentation heavily based on ideas.

4.2 A Changing Concept of Professionalism: A New Kind of Socialisation of Professionals Leads from Professionalism to Managerialism

We are in this section going to show how these ideas are shaping the contours of a new socialisation moving from professionalism to managerialism. This shift is closely connected with neoliberalism. ‘Neoliberalism is a vision of society in which competition for wealth is the only recognised value and virtually all social decisions are left to unregulated markets’ (Faux 2006: 5). Essentially, the same thing is said by Treanor when he writes: ‘Neoliberalism is not simply economic structure, it is a philosophy. This is most visible in attitudes to society, the individual and employment. Neo-liberals tend to see the world in terms of market metaphors’ (Treanor 2009: 9). We should add that neoliberalism is more than an economic theory or political philosophy; it is a way of seeing reality in terms of quantifiable transactions.

In his history of neoliberalism, David Harvey uses the term ‘commodification’ to describe this process. Harvey defines neoliberalism as follows: ‘Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. ... Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects in ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world’ (Harvey 2005:2–3).

However, we have to be conscious that there are many ways of conceptualising neoliberalism. The approaches have been varying: is it a policy paradigm? Is it more broadly understood as a hegemonic ideology? Or is it a distinctive form of governmentality? For our purpose, the most important point is to avoid a totalising interpretation of neoliberalism. Instead of that, we follow the lead of Clarke (2004),

who highlights variation in the manifestation of neoliberalism. First and foremost, Clarke maintains the possibilities of contradiction and contestations as well as form of resistance (Clarke 2004: 30).

Summing up our considerations, we turn to Hood (1995) who has identified seven principles of NPM:

1. Reorganisation of the public sector into corporate units organised along product or service lines – a shift from a unitary, functional form to a multi-divisional structure
2. Emphasis on contract-based competitive provision, with internal markets and term contracts – the introduction of ‘managed markets’ with public agencies as funder and contract manager and private for profit and non-profit providers as contractors
3. Stress on private-sector styles of management practices, including more flexible hiring and firing, greater use of marketing and improved budget policies
4. Stress on discipline and frugality in resource use, including a focus on cost and revenue accounting
5. More emphasis on visible hands-on top management, fewer middle managers and increased span of control for executive management
6. Greater use of explicit, formal standards and performance measures
7. Greater emphasis on output rather than input controls

By implementing these principles, the professions seem to be forced to drop their own criteria of professionalism, first of all their professional estimate of situations of interference with users, in favour of economisation, e.g. market criteria. Walker states f.e.:

the professionals are described in a new way by emphasizing three basic, but interdependent changes of the modern state. First is the introduction of a new discourse aiming at both preparing and improving public servants to handle reorganizations while those are made. Thereby the new discourse becomes governing and manipulating. Second: the driver for changing the discourse is originated in the need of modernization which in turn changes the social relationships between the leaders of the state, citizens and professionals. A modern state aims at governing the employees, making them flexible and mobile. The outcome of this process is or will be a loss of status, professional creativity and autonomy. Third: behind the project of modernization lies coercion originating from globalization of markets and the processes of accumulation of capital. (Walker 2004: 87 – our translation)

Walker adds that Ford succeeded in ‘splitting up working processes in smaller items and organizing them and similarly the social relations in new ways, too’. Like Ford the modern state gets rid of the semi-professions. The outcome is ‘post-Fordist flexible accumulation of capital’ (ebd.: 112). Summing up the critique Walker emphasises some key words: performance, strategic plans of action, leadership, continuous evaluation, external control of finances, competition and profiling of institutions. Social relations are expressed in terms of teams, supervision, control of quality, wages linked to performance, manuals and modules, internal evaluation, differentiation between core and peripheral labour force, differentiation of levels of work, etc. We would like to draw attention to the consequences of the

welfare reforms as involving the reshaping of social pedagogical and educational practice. This reshaping seems to involve the fragmentation of educational work, deprofessionalisation, the increased technicism and managerialisation of the role and the loss of professional autonomy. Fragmentation has already occurred in more ways, e.g. social pedagogical work has been undermined as work with young people with special needs has been removed to a ‘specialist area’ requiring different qualifications, based on supposedly its own knowledge and practice competence. But fragmentation has also occurred in relation to ordinary tasks as specialist teams are becoming responsible for contact, assessment and service provision to young people. Deprofessionalisation has occurred as its claims to a certain knowledge base or specialised body of knowledge have been eroded. The role of the social pedagogue or the teacher has itself become more technicist and managerial with practitioners assessing need and then coordinating the work of others as opposed to engaging to direct encounters with young people. In terms of professional autonomy, professionals of the past decades enjoyed a relatively high degree of freedom to analyse the circumstances of their users, choose the preferred method of working and organise their time accordingly. Since the middle of the 1980s, this has been undermined. In brief, the reshaping of educational work does not only concern knowledge, skill and fields of responsibility and expertise but also the increased importance of managerialism.

The consequence of the changed working conditions is a new socialisation within the professions.

Similarly societal values have been changed. Jørgensen (2004) mentions four basic values for the public sector:

1. The public sector bears the responsibility for society in general.
2. There should be public control and supervision.
3. Protection of the law should be safeguarded.
4. Autonomous professional standards should be followed.

Jørgensen underlines important changes as the state draws back from earlier responsibilities. Our hypothesis is that points 1 and 4 of the above-mentioned values are under the hardest pressure. Citizens are no more in the focus of state interventions, and we observe how old distinctions between worthy and not worthy poor or unemployed are re-entering the public debate. The focus is moved to underpin the ability of competition of private companies. Likewise one could point to a discourse of bio-political governmentality emphasising the responsibility of the citizen in all fields (employment, health, education, etc.). This individualisation of responsibility becomes a decisive value in the public sector, and the population is over the years getting used to ‘full freedom’ and ‘full responsibility’ (Beach 2010: 555; see also Beach 2009).

Concerning point 4 the trend seems to be blurring the borders between professional standards and political intentions. The outcome is a sharpened demand of identification with the values of the leadership in the institutions and municipalities. One could talk about ‘the encircled institution’ (Pedersen 2011: 246), characterised by a number of governing and controlling systems (accountability, etc.). We sum up what we label the discursive formations within this issue, namely, the discourse

of performativity, the discourse of accountability, the discourse of standards (or commodification) and the discourse of surveillance and control (cf. Jensen and Walker 2008, Ch. 10).

Having presented an overall framework above, we continue by getting closer to the professions to show how the overall societal changes impact the professionals.

4.3 Changes in Professionalism

The described discursive formations are accompanied by enhanced strategies of standardisation and bureaucratic rationalisation which reflect a pursuit of ‘measurable’ results. Practically therefore, a key characteristic of the current organisational culture are efforts to quantify goals, practices and outcomes. This is performed through the development of a multitude of more or less sophisticated indicators (cf. Power 1997; Otto et al. 2009). This organisational culture is at conflict with the organisational culture which governed welfare professionalism in the Fordist welfare state. A central feature of the decline of traditional welfare professionalism is an eroding trust in the discretion of front-line professionals in favour of the allegedly higher accountability of managerialist rule (cf. Scott 2000).

In order to elaborate this suggestion, it is instructive to bring to mind the close relation between the properties of the state and the peculiarities of welfare professionalism.

Typically, welfare professionals deliver services within both state and non-governmental agencies. Yet most of these non-governmental organisations have contracts with and are financed by state agencies. Insofar they used hardly to be organisations beyond the state but rather a part of the enlarged state. Against this background welfare professionals might be described in terms of what Terrence Johnson (1972) used to call ‘(state) mediated professions’. This term points to professions, in which the state or a state agency acts as a mediator between the profession and its clientele, deciding in broad terms who the clientele will be and what should be provided for them through a legal framework and through the overall allocation of resources and powers. The state legislation embodies particular perspectives on the way people with ‘problems’ and ‘needs’ are defined and subsequently outlines the ways and modes in which welfare services may respond to them and are obliged to respond to them.

Given the fact that a central feature of projects of professionalisation is to gain monopoly of credibility with the public which restricts the control by outside agencies over the actual ethicality of the transaction of professional services, professional theories often assumed that a key trait of professionals is their autonomous decision-making. This was suggested to be underscored by a distinct, scientifically founded knowledge base and relatively unhindered by pressures from either the state or the clients themselves. In reality however this has always been only a part of the truth. What is valid however is the fact that in the context of the Fordist welfare state, the typical form of rule, i.e. bureaucratic hierarchy, was compatible with considerable

(technical) discretion of welfare professionals. Welfare professionals were capable of determining specific responses to service users' needs, and also the determination of what clients' needs are was basically a product of interpretations and categorisations of the professionals. It were basically the welfare professionals (rather than managers or the clients themselves) who had the power to define who their clients were, what they needed and which measures for which aims should be taken. Such broad discretionary realms opened up as, even though bureaucratic rules were typically rather unambiguous, their practical implementation necessarily involved interpretation and judgement and thus at least technical autonomy. Factually decision-making in service provision took place through combining of bureaucratic rules and discretionary professional judgement. It is thus convincing when for instance John Harris (1998) argues that for the 'mediated' welfare professionals, the bureaucratic hierarchies were as much a basis for the power exercised by welfare professionals as they were a mode of exercising power over welfare professions. Against this background it is applicable to argue that the dominant form of appearance of professionalism within the Fordist welfare state was bureau professionalism, i.e. it was a kind of 'organisational settlement' between the rational administration of bureaucratic systems and professional expertise in control over the content of services as two different but interconnected modes of coordination.

Service provision in the Fordist welfare state was insofar basically founded on two pillars: firstly, a legalistic, conditionally rather than target programmed, hierarchically structured bureaucratic administration and, secondly, a largely self-regulated professionalism with a broad realm of professional expertise in control over the content of services (cf. Rüb 2003; Otto and Ziegler 2011; Clarke and Langan 1993). Based on a state-regulated training, the professionalism of service providers was considered to be by and large sufficient for a rational and effective steering of services, whilst other tools of governance seemed to be rather non-essential. On the fundamant of a hierarchical bureaucracy and professionalism, the Fordist welfare state was considered to be able to perform its functional tasks more or less successfully and appropriate. Yet in particular since the early 1980s, the Fordist welfare state was increasingly accused to be both omnipresent and impotent, i.e. excessively large and costly and at the same time inefficient in performing its proper task. The diagnosis was that the Fordist welfare state faced a two-folded challenge which it was incapable to resolve. On the one hand, the welfare state was challenged by an alleged 'demand overload' and notoriously escalating expectations. On the other hand, it was challenged by its own institutional insufficiency. The notion of 'ungovernability' became a central buzzword: 'The condition of ungovernability results from institution allowing for the rise of kinds of problems and conflicts that these very same institutions later turn out to be incapable of processing in orderly and routinized ways, such as in models of *endogenous* demand overload' (Offe 2011). The notion of ungovernability was basically tantamount to the presumption that the more or less social-democratic 'Big Government' has generally failed. In particular the logics of bureau professionalism were now considered to be 'too cumbersome, too inefficient, too unresponsive, too unproductive' (Simmons et al. 2006) and too little adaptable to the normative demands of individualism and the market.

The allegedly too large influence on public policymaking of the ‘new class’ of bureaucrats, intellectual consultants and particular welfare professionals which was derived out of the Fordist welfare state and their personal commitment to expanding the role of welfarism was considered to be a part of the misery.

4.3.1 *The Cultural Basis*

This perspective dispossessed the cultural fundament of professionalism. This becomes particularly obvious when we keep in mind that professionalism does not only contain a cognitive but also a cultural dimension. The cognitive dimension of professionalism includes a body of knowledge and skills which is officially recognised as one based on abstract concepts and theories and requiring the exercise of considerable discretion. The cultural dimension of professionalism points to an ‘ideology serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic reward’ (Freidson 2001: 180).

Whether professionals themselves believe that they possess these virtues is a relevant issue. However, even more important is the question whether the public and public policy believe that professionals have these virtues. Political and public confidence in professional competence and virtue was essential to support a mode of service provision which finds its pillars in the axiomatic assumptions that at least case-specific welfare judgements are and should be embodied in the person of the professional and that the regulation of professionals is and should be enshrined in the ethos of the profession and its bodies. There is a reason to suggest that the public confidence in professional competence and virtue can no longer be taken for granted. Rather this confidence has been sustainably shaken. In the last decades there has been a substantial change in the interpretation of the role of professionals. As Mike Bottery (2004: 9) puts it: ‘views of professionals have changed over the last 50 years, from ones of high trust, peer-based accountability, mystique, and autonomous practice, predominantly low-trust, involves extensive external quantitative accountability, and grants only limited professional discretion’. Academically and political professional was substantially criticised. The political left *inter alia* criticised that professional power over clients was demeaning and patronising, whereas the political right suggested that bureau professionalism does not resolve but create dependency and that it serves the interests of service providers rather than the clients or the welfare of the population. In particular the relative autonomy of professionals and the broad realm of professional discretion were accused for failing of guaranteeing clients the highest standards of service provision, but rather leading to an unacceptable and unregulated arbitrarily variability in the nature and quality of interventions. Instead of relying on the arbitrary and subjective decisions of professionals, the augmentation of statistical diagnosis by judgements embodied in intelligent devices such as tests, norms, tables, charts and risk levels promised a more rational fundament for effective welfare provision.

4.3.2 *The Challenge of Governability*

This tendency was enhanced by the suggestion that a general suggested solution of the supposed failure of ‘Big Government’ of the Fordist welfare state was to redefine the central state functions: instead of providing common goods in terms of services, the new task is to supervise and monitor sectors beyond the state which should provide these services. In other words, state functions should be shifted from ‘rowing to steering’ (Osborne and Gabler 1992): patterns of direct service delivery (i.e. rowing) are to be transformed into modes of governance based on setting policy direction and providing requirements and incentives for others to provide services. To resolve the problem of ungovernability, an overall shift towards the use of regulation over other governmental tools deemed to be necessary. The Fordist redistributory (or ‘producing’) welfare state which provided money and social services through state bureaucracies or agencies close to the state should be at least partly replaced by measures which mandates welfare tasks to non-state providers and agencies, whilst at the same time it should be more than ever the state which regulates the activities of the non-state providers and agencies. Thus, processes of ‘deregulation’ go alongside new regulatory measures ensuring that privatised spheres operate safely. These measures are in particular rankings, ratings, inspection, ‘Aufsicht’, audit, and licensing. ‘Less state’ (in particular less redistribution) should go alongside with ‘more state’ in terms of more regulation and monitoring of the spheres beyond the state. A further central dimension of the new philosophy of governing welfare was fostering competition among service providers. This was sometimes called devolution or ‘privatisation’. Yet there was hardly much ‘private’ about this privatisation; in effect the developments rather come close to a reassertion of the central state or more specifically the idea of a core executive, control over policymaking. Most of all it allows the state to perform an alternative mode of governing: ‘governing at a distance’ (cf. Rose and Miller 1992). This governmental mode seems to allow governments to replace their propensity to reach their aims with governance by directing and thus to put more social institutions into motion and do more regulating whilst shifting the operative task responsibility away from the central state.

Against this background the figure of the mediated bureau professional does not seem to fit in the political landscape of welfare provision. This seems to be an important background for a process of successively replacing bureau professionalism by managerialism. A major feature of managerialism seems to be that it replaces trust in professionals as well as the trust relationships between practitioners and clients by organisational forms of regulation such as target setting, performance managements, audits and accountability but also by market forms of customer relations. The Australian sociologist Pat O’Malley (2009) delivers an instructive interpretation of this process. O’Malley argues that what we currently observe might be interpreted as a general shift from ‘social liberalism’ to ‘advanced liberalism’. In social liberalism, O’Malley argues governmental welfare programmes were closely linked to the esoteric knowledge of the positive sciences of human conduct.

Advanced liberalism transferred these powers to an array of calculative and more abstract technologies, including budget disciplines, audit and accountancy. These require professionals and experts to translate their esoteric knowledge into a language of costs and benefits that can be given an accounting value and made ‘transparent’ to scrutiny. In the form of marketisation, the authority of experts is determined not by their own professional criteria, but by the play of the market.

Whereas in classical liberalism markets were understood as ‘natural’ phenomena, these natural markets are displaced by the conception of markets as purposively created as techniques of policy, in order to maximise efficiency, accountability and competition. O’Malley’s analyses of advanced liberalism dovetail well with the basic ideologies of managerialism. In other words managerialism seems to be the central policy programme of advanced liberal policies.

4.3.3 Where Management Misses the Point?

There is no doubt that professional welfare practice was always conducted in organisations and that management coordinates and facilitates professional practice but also controls welfare professionals by supervisory mechanisms which ensure work-force compliance and task achievement. So on a surface level, there is no contradiction between management and professionalism. Yet the notion of managerialism does not simply point to the uncontested fact that professional welfare provision needs an efficiently and enabling management. Managerialism indicates something different. It legitimises a particular version of ‘how to manage’, for what purposes, in whose interests and with what knowledge. As Christopher Pollit (1990: 1) points out, managerialism is basically a set of expectations, norms, ‘beliefs and practices at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumption that better management will provide an effective solvent for a wide range of economic ills’. It is therefore a kind of general ideology that legitimises and seeks to extend the ‘right to manage’ and is composed of overlapping, and sometimes competing, discourses that present distinctive versions of ‘how to manage’. Most importantly managerialism is a normative system that is concerned about what counts as valuable knowledge and about who is empowered to work on this knowledge base. On this fundamental the ideology that the ‘the professional knows best’ is replaced by the belief that managers ‘do the right thing’ and that this right thing will provide the most effective and efficient solution for the kind of problems social work is engaged with.

Therefore, managers should have the power, agency and responsibility to provide solutions and the kind of value for money deemed to be lacking in professionally dominated welfare bureaucracies. In order to reach this, however, managerial judgement has to count more than professional judgement. Or, in other words, managerialism works at the expense of professional control and discretion. Instead of acting as the passive custodians of services controlled by front-line staff, managers should determine policy goals and actively seek to implement them. The basic idea is that it is through the agency of managers rather than professionals that services needed

to be delivered. This kind of managerialism is embedded within a shift towards a mode of public policy which denotes the importance of regulation relative to macroeconomic stabilisation and income redistribution. Based on an implemented division between the purchaser and provider of services, the idea is that the state should concentrate at controlling and steering welfare provisions – provided by the market, local communities, volunteers but also by local welfare agencies – rather than provide services itself. Budgetary management, audits, standards and the setting performance indicators are some of the fundamental regulatory instruments through which the central state tries to enhance its capacity to shape, monitor and steer local institutional practice. On the behalf of service providers, this is accompanied by the rise of a number of accountancy-derived concepts and technologies. In order to guarantee the accountability of the service providers – which is regarded as the core problem – evaluation, monitoring and performance management or more general auditable management control systems are the key tools.

4.3.4 Forms of Control

Functionally these tools are a kind of equivalent to trust in professional decision-making. Yet in terms of governing service provision, these tools promise to liberate the state from its dependence from unreliable professionals. The tension between managerialism and professionalism seems thus to be obvious: whilst managerialism seems to be devoted to the lure of the objectivity of numbers and calls for control and measurement in defining objectives and the quality of public service delivery by welfare professionals – who may insist on their professional autonomy – thereby having many uncontrollable features. The ungovernability of professionals who may be resistant to control from politics is suspected to leading to an exponential rise in costs of services and to diminish the quality and effectiveness of service provisions. Therefore, governing service provision from a managerialist perspective is most of all a mode of ‘management by measurement’, respectively, of governing by numbers. The corresponding audit cultures in service organisations represent most of all new modes for governing professionals.

The audit approach as a central element of managerialism profoundly alters professional relations to their organisations. There is a shift from trust and relative autonomy to measurement, standardisation and control which privileges a technicist, or ‘what works’ approach to policy that operates through adopting a seemingly ‘neutral technical’ stance to professional practice. As managerialism is based on the – unproven and empirically doubtful – belief that more managerial autonomy is better, the claim is that managerial accountability for results will improve performance and efficiency, decision-making should be the right of the management, and it is the management which is accountable for the practices and outcomes of service deliverance. As Bottery (2004: 9) points out, managerialism is based on the

‘measurement of professional work by external quantitative measures [...] emphasises a form of administrative control where professionals are ‘on tap’ to managerial strategic decisions rather than ‘on top’ autonomously deciding how their practice is best used’.

The managerial strategies of regulating professional practice and its pursuit of ‘measurable’ results depend on a largely quantitative information base which is required for documentation, regulation and finally also for reimbursement. This quantification has also implications for the construction of the client. Professional modes of working with the client are largely based on interpretive understanding of the individual needs and often changing personal characteristics of its clients as well as to fit the contextual constellations the clients are embedded in, in order to decide about every case specifically appropriate interventions and services. Professionalism was therefore based on the ‘practical or craft knowledge learned on the job through the experience of applying the logico-scientific knowledge to particular patients in concrete situations and verified through narrative’ (Cnaan and Dichter 2008: 280). Managerial modes which shift from the question ‘what is individually appropriate’ to the question ‘what is effective’ in order to reach numerically expressed performance indicators however do not depend on interpretative understandings of single cases but rather on standardised and more or less actuarial diagnoses of needs and classifications of clients. Clinical judgements and professional discretion should therefore be constrained and can be reduced to the algorithmic procedures of the actuarial assessments. Thus, managerial modes of service provision have important implications for the concrete professional practice and interaction with clients. The French sociologist Robert Castel anticipated these developments in the 1980s; however, he was not concerned with managerialism but rather with new modes of strategies of preventions. Castel (1991: 281) argues that new strategies of social administration are developed, which seem to me to depart in a profoundly innovative way from the traditions of welfare professionalism. The innovation is that these ‘strategies dissolve the notion of the *subject* or a concrete individual, and put in its place a combinatory of factors, *the factors of risk*. Such a transformation carries important practical implications. The essential component of intervention no longer takes the form of the direct face-to-face relationship between the carer and the cared, the helper and the helped, the professional and the client. It comes instead to reside in the establishing of *flows of populations* based on the collation of a range of abstract factors deemed liable to produce risk’. As a result specialist professionals with face-to-face contacts to clients are cast in a subordinate role, whilst managerial policy formations take over. What Castel describes seems to be exactly the modification of the relationship between front-line professionals and welfare administrators. The managerial technologies reduce the autonomy of front-line practitioners, deskill and subordinate professionals and finally also diminish the possibility for direct face-to-face work (cf. Webb 2001). The professional seems to be ‘reduced to a mere executant’ (Castel 1991: 281) whose primary task is generating low-level data inputs for managerial decision-making.

4.4 Short Concluding Discussion

We have tried to show that professionalism in managerial shape no longer functions as a societal ideal, but rather as a political one. The new regime of control and surveillance links the loyalty of the professionals neither to their professional work nor to their professional judgement, but to the economic interests of their employer. Consequently, professionals are more related to political aims and similarly constrained by public finances than to their clientele. Similarly, the power of the professionals like the power of the state had been reduced by cutting taxes and social insurance and by deregulating business and industry. Market forces were supposed to substitute state regulations, whereby national social capital and solidarity would start to erode (Svensson 2003: 325).

This new situation bears a risk, namely, that professional values and beliefs as well as knowledge and skills unintendedly sacrifice what they were meant to serve. We do not postulate an end of professional history as more scientists do (cf. Garrett 2009 as an illustration). We are still going to give professionalism so much of the benefit of the doubt, since the battle is not over. As shown in the first section, the competitive state is not fixed and solid at all. It may still be changed into a more human society, not exclusively oriented at economy and competition, but also at developing democracy and freedom. Some improvements have been made since new public management conquered the public services. Many professionals have protested or developed strategies to avoid the worst ills, partly protected by national ‘path dependency’. But even the positive aspects of resistance in such areas as health, education and childcare have sometimes become a mixed blessing, since the professional tail might not exercise a good deal of leverage on the NPM-dog.

We keep our optimism intact. Let us finally quote some ancestors: ‘All that is solid melts into the air’. This statement sheds light on the new conditions which are not lasting forever, as well as the professions which seem more fragile than before.

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Part III

Capability Perspectives

on Institutionalized Education

Chapter 5

Free Choice of Education? Capabilities, Possibility Spaces, and Incapacitations of Education, Labor, and the Way of Living One Values

Dirk Michel-Schertges

5.1 Introduction

Against the background of the continuously increasing demand of “knowledge production” in order to provide “efficient” labor force in contemporary modern (knowledge) societies, this chapter deals with the possibility of individual opportunities to choose one’s individual educational trajectory, *inter alia*, via the theoretical framework of the capability approach, in general, and the dialectical relation between individual and external capabilities, in particular, i.e., the relation between personal, socio-structural, cultural, as well as institutional conversion factors. Since the financial crisis and the continuing rising youth unemployment in Europe, an educational qualification is mainly considered as a (pre)condition to get access to the labor market. It is regarded as a matter of secondary importance that education provides a viable path leading to freedom to choose one’s educational way and thus to choose between different styles and ways of living. Following the Danish contemporary dominant discourse in education, i.e., the shift from a welfare to a competition regime, the paper discusses the implications for the weakest within this system, i.e., the vulnerable youth, the early school leavers, and disadvantaged, concerning their realistic opportunities to choose the kind of education they have reason to value in order to achieve the kind of life they have reason to value. Firstly, a theoretical framework will be presented showing related approaches dealing with the conception of freedom, i.e., the notion of positive and negative freedom, opportunity and processes of freedom, and the freedom to choose with the concept of the capability approach. Secondly, external and individual capabilities will be

D. Michel-Schertges (✉)

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark
e-mail: dimi@edu.au.dk

discussed in order to introduce the notion of incapacitations. Thirdly, the focus will be on education and labor and its relation to the question of possibility spaces of choosing one's education. The following paragraph presents the Danish case drawing from different empirical materials in order to analyze and discuss the findings of these studies within the given theoretical framework.

5.2 Opportunity and Processes of Freedom

The preconditions of contemporary neoliberal rationality – and thus hegemonic ideas of market ideologies and competition – are deeply embedded in the relationship between freedom and arbitrariness. The concept of freedom (or liberty) is generally described as freedom from domination, i.e., being free to the extent that one does not find oneself under the domination of others. “This notion of freedom, we may begin by noting, refers to a condition in which we can find ourselves, namely, the condition where we are not living under the thumb of another. It does not mean the exercise of a capacity, and so in particular it does not signify the control which an individual or community exercises over the shape of its own existence. Another way to put this contrast lies with the categories deployed by Isaiah Berlin in his classic essay of 1958, ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’. The idea of freedom as non-domination forms a ‘negative’, not a ‘positive’ conception” (Larmore n.y.: 2f.). According to Berlin the concept of negative freedom is a domain of action of non-interference by others, whereas positive freedom is to be understood as self-mastery (cf. Swan 2003: 117). And Pettit concludes that real freedom requires the absence of all forms of arbitrary interference, including both possible and actual interference by others (cf. Pettit 1999: 22ff) as well as structural interference deriving from the current formation of society. The limitation of the neoliberal concept of freedom lies, especially, in the exclusive promotion of positive freedom. With respect to social (in)justice, questions of responsibility are inevitable embedded within the interrelation of both positive and negative freedom, i.e., positive freedom has to be understood not just as self-mastery but as an ideology serving to transfer responsibility to the individual in the name of liberty as such. It is a question about the balance between the two different forms of freedom (or liberty) with regard to the individual and social (pre)conditions realized by institutions of society. “Whether men are free is determined by the rights and duties established by the major institutions of society. Liberty is a certain pattern of social forms” (Rawls 1999: 55f; cf. 1971). The question that has to be answered is whether major institutions of society are regarded as support or hindrance of (individual and/or social) freedom. Here it is crucial to understand that *real* freedom is inevitably related to the dialectics of negative and positive freedom. These two concepts are supplementary parts of *freedom as such*, i.e., parts of an intrinsic relation. “An intrinsic relation is a relation between two or a set of relata in which *both* or *all* are what they are in relation to each other. They refer to each other and form a unity or a totality ... Since in an intrinsic relation the elements form totality, they are necessary elements. They do not

‘function’ or ‘exist’ independently, but only in relation to each other. Conceptually this means that a pair in an intrinsic relation cannot be defined without referring to each other” (Israel 1979: 84). Thus, Berlin’s concepts of positive and negative freedom can only be understood as real freedom when both freedoms are intrinsically related.

On the background of the abovementioned notions of liberty, freedom, and social justice, it seems to be fruitful to introduce Amartya Sen’s idea of the freedom to choose. “In assessing our lives, we have reason to be interested not only in the kind of lives we manage to lead, but also in the freedom that we actually have to choose between different styles and ways of living. Indeed, the freedom to determine the nature of our lives is one of the valued aspects of living that we have reason to treasure” (Sen 2010: 227). In this context, Sen distinguishes between the opportunity and the process aspect of freedom. The first one is about the ability to achieve what one values, regardless of the processes that lead to its achievement; the latter one deals with the process of choice, i.e., to assure that the processes leading to the aimed achievement are not imposed by others or directed or forced by individuals and social or structural matters (cf. Sen 2010: 228f.). “The focus here is on the freedom that a person actually has to do this or be that – things that he or she may value doing or being. Obviously, the things we value most are particularly important for us to be able to achieve. But the idea of freedom also respects our being free to determine what we want, what we value and ultimately what we decide to choose. The concept of capability is thus linked closely with the opportunity aspect of freedom, seen in terms of ‘comprehensive’ opportunities, and not just focusing on what happens at ‘culmination’” (Sen 2010: 231f.).

5.3 External and Individual Capabilities

Freedom to choose is connected to both the concept of opportunity and the process of freedom that are inevitably related to (social) conditions in a given formation of society, on the one hand (including the vision and conception of mankind; aspects of socialization; societal organizations and social form of organizing economical system; societal norms, values, and belief system) and on the other hand the (unique) individual formation (i.e., agency, preferences, skills, consciousness, etc.). Referring to Gasper (1997), Otto and Ziegler point to the relation between *internal goods*, *practical use values*, and external resources as complementary parts in a capability set. “Analytically, however, one may suggest that the space of capacities, skills, abilities, and attitude may form the realm of ‘S-capabilities’ (with ‘S’ meaning ‘skill’ and ‘substantive’) (see Gasper 1997) which is empirically related to a particular and socially, culturally, politically and economically constrained set of life-paths which is (potentially) attainable to a given person. This socially structured set of attainable life-paths constitutes the realm of ‘O-capabilities’ (with ‘O’ meaning ‘option’ and ‘opportunity’) (Gasper 2002)” (Otto and Ziegler 2006: 272f). As well as the intrinsic relation between the concept of positive and negative freedom, S- and O-capabilities are constituted dialectically and thus are intrinsically related.

That means that trying to map individual (pre)conditions of freedom to choose, including the concept of S- and O-capabilities and the individual and external capabilities, includes to take the societal macro-, meso-, and microlevels into consideration, that is, the social formation of society, the organizational/institutional and organizing dimension, as well as the individual capabilities. With respect to the framework of the capability approach, Otto and Ziegler derive these three levels from the notion of conversion factors concluding that these factors are decisive in order to convert external and internalized social, cultural, and economic capital formations into particular personal functioning:

1. “Personal conversion factors” such as physical condition, literacy, competences, etc. that influence how a person is able to convert the characteristics, commodities, infrastructures, and arrangements into a functioning
2. “Socio-structural and cultural conversion factors” such as social or religious norms, gender roles, power relations and hierarchies, and discriminatory practices
3. “Institutional conversion factors” such as welfare and educational arrangements, collective provisions, etc. (Otto and Ziegler 2006: 279)

Even presupposing that there is no *inevitable* intrinsic relation between a successful conversion of all of these three factors into functioning and well-being, one can presume at least a minimum of successful conversion with respect to the above factors as a precondition for both the freedom to choose and well-being: The more social options and space of action, the more space of freedom and thus opportunity of well-being.

Thus, it makes sense to consider the role of welfare economics (cf. Sen 2010: 272) as an external factor including agents of socialization such as family and especially the education system because they deal with processes of (social) integration with respect to the given formation of society. Therefore, the aim of socialization is to be the human development of individuals to become well-functioning members of this society comprising a range from being passive obedient citizen to active subject in the framework of given norms and values including the rationality of the economic system of reproduction. These processes of socialization are perpetuated by social agents of socialization, such as the family, the kindergarten, schools, youth groups, peers, apprenticeships, military service, university, working place, and so forth. According to Sigel, who mainly works on political socialization, the internalization of societal norms and values are often perpetuated incidentally, and especially because of its incidental nature, it is much more efficient concerning the acquisition of values, norms, and (social) behavior than consciously directed influences of norms and values by others. “Norm internalization goes on casually and imperceptibly, often without either teacher or student being aware that it is taking place” (Sigel 1970: xii f.). With respect to the existence of a given society, it is crucial to mediate social values and behavior in order to preserve the sociopolitical status quo. Therefore, it is obvious that these institutions of socialization have a significant role in order to assign future life chances due to the different distribution of conversion factors. And Martha Nussbaum puts it as follows: “People come into the world with rudimentary abilities to lead a dignified life. These abilities, however,

need support from the world, especially the political world, if they are to develop and become effective. First, they need internal cultivation, usually supplied above all by a nation's system of education – together with whatever support people receive from their families and other voluntary institutions. I call the developed form of innate abilities ‘internal capabilities’” (Nussbaum 2006: s. 11).

The different interplay of socio-structural and cultural conversion factors, institutional conversion factors, and personal conversion factors does vary tremendously in providing possibility space related to the opportunity and processes of freedom. The notion of individual capabilities comprising of external and internalized social, cultural, and economic capital formations that are crucial in structuring the set of attainable life path refers undoubtedly to Bourdieu’s theoretical approach of capital formation (cf. Otto and Ziegler 2006: 273). Bourdieu relates the family and the institutions of education as major decisive factors of socialization and thus constituents of conversion factors. According to Bourdieu the education system among other things contributes significantly to the social conservation of the modern society. “I insist on ‘contributes to’, I say ‘contributes to conservation’. It is one of the mechanisms by which social structures are reproduced. There are others. There is the system of succession; there is the economic system, logic, which, according to the old Marxist formula, causes ‘capital’ to go to ‘capital’. But in modern societies the education system contributes more than ever before. An important part of what is passed on through the generations, an important part of the transference of power and privileges happens through the mediation of the school system, which connects other means of transference with each other and especially those which take effect within the family. The family is a very important transference entity that replaces the school system by ratifying the family interposition. The school system will say: ‘this child is mathematically gifted’ without seeing the five mathematicians in its family tree. Or that it is not gifted in Brazilian or French without seeing that it comes from an immigrant background. So the school system contributes to ratifying, sanctifying and transforming the cultural inheritance that comes from the family, as scholastic merit.” (Bourdieu 2001: 175; cf. Sünker 2006)

5.4 Education to Labor

Sünker stresses the outstanding importance of the education system while identifying the policy framework of the OECD: “(...) the emphasis is placed on the connection between ‘basic competence and way of life’, which is seen to be necessary ‘for active participation in social life’ (29); up until showing the life historical consequences of Bildung¹ in ‘early years’, or, the importance of a previously level of Bildung (31). This all ends with the crucial sentence: ‘Cultural engagement

¹ Bildung can be understood as the German conception of education and human development based on continental European philosophy of consciousness, emphasizing on competences to analyze, to judge, to reflect, and to act (socially).

and cultural development, value orientation and political participation co-vary systematically with the achieved level of Bildung over the entire life span' (32). In plain language: those who have the opportunity for Bildung taken away from them also have taken away from them, when there is a lack of 'class conscience', quality of life (from culture to political conscience/interest); this then has consequences for life circumstances and the chances for self realisation." (Sünker 2006: 3f.) It is crucial to highlight the notion of the capability approach that is directed towards both opportunity and processes of freedom including the freedom to deselect instead of just reaching goals that are (easily) accessible as well as the difference between "*doing something* and being *free* to do that thing" (Sen 2010: 237). Amartya Sen distinguishes between capabilities and achievements, stating that this "concerns the responsibilities and obligations of societies and of other people generally to help the deprived, which can be important for both public provisions within states and for the general pursuit of human rights" (Sen 2010: 238).

On the one hand this sets the question of social provision and individual, community, and state responsibility on the agenda; on the other hand, it raises the question with respect of how to attain the (pre)conditions to have "the freedom to choose how to live" and the "importance of capability, reflecting opportunity and choice, rather than the celebration of some particular lifestyle, irrespective of preference of choice" (Sen 2010: 238). The state's responsibility to ensure the preconditions for one to have the freedom to choose is deeply connected with access to education institutions because – following the argumentation above – education credentials belong to the crucial preconditions for broadening labor opportunities. The choice of labor one values might be seen as one of the factors that influence the life to a major degree because it also (de)regulates extensively one's opportunity space with respect to different matters. Having "the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others ... in work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers" (Nussbaum 2011: 33f.).

5.5 The Danish Case

Like Bourdieu, Mads Meier Jæger points to different decisive factors contributing to the likelihood of being provided with individual and social resources. Besides socioeconomic factors there is also the sibling effect, i.e., the sibling's choice of education and occupation that plays a decisive role with respect to one's social mobility. There is a clear relation between the parent's education and their children's educational and occupational ambitions although it is not deterministic, i.e., the higher the educational status of the parents, the higher their children's ambitions concerning their educational, resp. occupational, trajectory (Jæger 2003: 17). Even if a child has been raised in a family with a low social status and "equipped" with low-class habitus formations, there is still a probability that this child can break this social pattern and move upwards on the social ladder. According to Erik Jørgen Hansen,

this often is wrongly assumed as “pattern break” but he argues that this is an immanent part of the structure, its legitimization (cf. Hansen 2003: 120f.). However, besides family context, education can be considered as central with respect to the distribution of life chances, because having not or having a school graduation diploma and the connected grades is decisive for the placement on the labor market and thus (future) income (cf. Jæger et al. 2003: 19).

Against this background the following risk factors can be identified: growing up in a (financially) poor family, growing up in a family where one of the members is suffering from a prolonged severe illness, growing up in a divorced family or where one of the adults had a breakdown, or growing up in a family that moved a lot (cf. Jæger et al. 2003: 25). Undoubtedly one has to add that factors like gender and migration play a significant role. In this context Hansen relates individual resources and socially structured arenas such as labor market, education system, family, field of politics, etc. Hansen indicates that one’s life chances depend to a major degree upon how individual resources are used within these different social arenas. Thus, it is not just the quality of individual resources related to the specific social arena that is important with respect to one’s (possible) life path but also the number of others that “deal” with the same individual resources and conversion factors in the very same social arenas. Hansen formulates this situation that a person’s life chances and life conditions depend to a major degree on the profile of the sum of the total offer of the person’s resources set in relation to the sum of the social arena’s demand concerning specific individual combinations of resources (cf. Hansen 2003: 114).

As a result from the financial crisis, the worsened situation on the labor market reinforces the challenge to find meaningful education or labor. The youth unemployment rate does not mitigate the challenge, firstly, to get access to the education one values and, secondly, to get access to labor one values. Data from the Economic Council of the Labour Movement show that youth unemployment in Denmark is not only the highest for a long time but also that especially this employment group is the most affected by the current economic crisis. “Since June 2008, when unemployment figures were at their lowest, unemployment among 16–24 year old Danes has trebled to 13.3 % in April 2012. Among 25–29 year olds unemployment has risen almost as much. 12.6 % of them are now without jobs. This is a far greater share than among the population as a whole, where unemployment currently stands at 6.2 %” (Preisler 2012).

Besides the rising youth unemployment, the possibility to find labor one values got worse because a shift from the (social democratic) welfare state to a competition state has taken place in Denmark. From the 1980s the combination of a technologically oriented focus and the discourse about shaping working conditions for labor in Denmark has been the driving force that influenced the form and content of the education system (cf. Pedersen 2011: 134). In the 1990s, the focus changed to the structural competition skills and capacities resulting in shifting such cyclical-based measures to structural changes. At the heart of these changes was the aim to produce available labor, to improve the worker’s motivation as well as to promote an entrepreneurial way of thinking, and thus to broaden the worker’s capacity to acquire entrepreneurial competences. To sum it up, it was all about the mobilization of labor

(cf. Pedersen 2011: 135). This changed focus on creating requirements for effective labor affected public institutions and thus naturally institutions of education. The primary task of schools is to educate (technical) specialized individuals, individuals who are available for the labor market and are capable to adjust their capacities lifelong to the changing market conditions.

According to Pedersen the change from the Danish welfare state to the competition state took place with the publication of the IEA survey in 1991 (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) stating that the pupil's literacy, i.e., their ability to read and write, was below expectations and behind those of other countries (cf. Pedersen 2011: 170f.). Following the IEA survey, the PISA surveys have been regularly carried out by OECD resulting in the implementation of competence tests in Danish schools. Against that background Pedersen concludes that the primary educational task of the Danish school system changed for the first time in its more than 160-year-old history. Previously they focused on human development and educating each individual to strive for active democratic participation in society. Now the aim was to get the Danish pupils ready with respect to the international competition taking place in international surveys and thus to produce "soldiers" armed with knowledge that are ready for the (economic) competition between nation states (cf. Pedersen 2011: 172). "What for instance the PISA study identified as 'functional illiteracy' is therefore not primarily a 'lack of human capital' but a form of poverty in terms of a major 'capability deprivation', which points to subsequent 'voicelessness' and 'powerlessness'. Being assessed as to be relational to impairments of social arrangements, educational failures, deficiencies in the acquisition of literacy might thus be evaluated in terms of subsequent capability limitation (and their contextualisation in education)" (Otto and Ziegler 2006: 273).

5.6 Free Choice and Education?

Taking into account that public education is free of charge in Denmark, one could argue that there is a fair chance for everyone to get access to education one values, even to work one's way up to higher education. Formally it is possible. However, taking into account Erik Jørgen Hansen's work about education and social inequality, one gets other results. Hansen conducted a research consisting of one generation. He started to interview approximately 3,000 14-year-old interviewees the first time in 1968 and the last time in 1992, then 38 years old. The results corresponded with Bourdieu's approach dealing with social class, habitus formation, school system, and the (re)production of social inequality. According to Hansen the social environment one grew up is dominant or at least highly influential with respect to one's educational trajectory. Social mobility has not increased especially not by means of formal education because the education system is precisely the key to perpetuate social inequality (cf. Hansen 2003: 99ff, 1995: 144ff, 1983). According to Glavind the probability of a 25-year-old with parents without a completed education to fail the completion of his or her education or vocational

training was 4.8 times higher compared with a 25-year-old who grew up in a family with an academic background. In 2001, the probability of a 25-year-old with parents without a completed education not to complete his or her education or vocational training was 6.4 times higher in comparison to a 25-year-old who grew up in a family with an academic background (cf. Glavind 2005: 22). However, one can imagine that this situation got even worse taking into consideration the contemporary discourse of competition and its consequences concerning the (re)shaping of the education system in terms of individual competition by means of a test culture. To add on the education expansion or mass education that resulted in an inflation of education credentials (cf. Hansen 2003: 45ff), it is not surprising that a specific group of pupils actually ends up not participating in the education system and not graduating from their education. “The inequalities in early school outcome promote inequalities in their opportunities to *voice* their opinions and participate as democratic members of society. It promotes *less* valuable (from the individual’s perspective) *educational* and vocational opportunities than they are formally entitled to. It promotes *lesser opportunities to enter into the job market* and enjoy the mutual recognition with other workers that this entails” (Jensen and Kjeldsen 2012: 3f.).

The most vulnerable group is the young people who do not complete education, i.e., early school leavers and pupils who have given up for various reasons. According to Noemi Katzenelson the main characteristics of this group are (1) the social background, i.e., the capital formation perpetuated via the family plus the family constellation playing an important role in terms of stabilizing factor; (2) former school experiences, i.e., especially experiences in examinations carried out by the pupils, stating the more examinations completed, the higher the probability that these pupils will continue with further education or an apprenticeship or a vocational training; and (3) theoretical skills, i.e., the skills and competences to read, to write, and to do mathematics (cf. Katzenelson 2004: 23f.; Birch Andreasen et al. 1997).

But one question remains: Is the nonparticipation in the school system a result of conscious disaffirmation resulting in resistance or is it the reaction of young people who gave up the struggle and competition? What are the future dreams of young people and what makes young people choose their future (educational) trajectory? Jill Mehlbye deals with the question if the young people are free to choose the education they value and he concludes that they by no means are in a position to choose their future (educational) path according to their wishes and dreams. Besides the quality of school grades, i.e., the formal means of selection, he emphasizes the relation between the education path and ethnicity, social class, and the parent’s formal education, i.e., individual and socio-structural and cultural conversion factors. Because the latter two items have been already discussed above, it might be necessary to stress the relation between choice of education and ethnicity. The survey took place in four Danish communities via questionnaires from 1996 to 1999 including 800 pupils, and in the end of the project, some of the pupils have been finally interviewed. Mehlbye found out that young people from ethnic minorities choose typically manual-labor-related education, while Danes choose the theoretical track, i.e., especially the girls choose the gymnasium. Manual-labor-oriented education is to a great degree connected to practical training. Being confronted with a

high unemployment rate and a significant high competition, especially on the field of manual labor, it is another obstacle to find a traineeship. The lack of on-the-job training often results in dropouts affecting mostly young people from ethnic minorities who prefer this kind of education. Aggravating these circumstances, Mehlbye points to the fact that this group lacks Danish language skills, too (cf. Mehlbye 2000: 38f.). One has to add that this argument counts also for working class children, i.e., everyday culture that is not aligned to the dominant educational discourse. Interesting are the outcomes concerning the future expectations. The survey shows a close relation between the young people's ethnic background and their future expectations. While the Danish pupils see themselves as 25 year olds on the educational trajectory, the nonethnic Danes expect themselves to be unemployed. Mehlbye concludes that these negative expectations might lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and therefore serve as an explanation concerning the high dropout rate by nonethnic Danes (cf. Mehlbye 2000: 39). However, it is not as simple to conclude that it is just an ethnic problem. In Denmark it is also important if one lives in urban or outside urban structures because, for example, on-the-job training is rather difficult to find in nonurban areas because of the lack of companies providing practical training and internships. Besides this, immigrant girls do much better in school in comparison to male immigrants and they show similar and even better results than male Danes. However, Pless and Katzenelson contribute to the question of early school dropout and school leaving pointing to the fact that deciding about future education and vocational training is also deeply related to identity formation processes. It is a kind of rite of passage to a new part of life, and this decision has to be made while being in the time of adolescence where self-esteem might be challenged. On the one hand, the young people are aware about the educational hierarchies, i.e., the high appreciation of theoretical education trajectories in comparison to manual-labor tracks, but on the other hand they are tired of school because schooling reminds them often of negative experiences, conflicts, and defeats (cf. Pless and Katzenelson 2007: 20ff).

These school experiences that have an impact on the young people's motivation and ambition can be understood as S-capabilities having an effect on the O-capabilities. And one has to add that the mutual interplay of the S- and O-capabilities does not necessarily happen in an obvious and conscious way but also work as latent and unconsciously. This limiting effect of S-capabilities is incapacitations resulting from conflicting external capabilities, for example, institutions of socialization.

These incapacitations are diametrically opposed to what the capability approach stands for. The kind of incapacitation where the power of disposition is taken off the juvenile's hands by social agencies is what I call *manifest incapacitation*, whereas I speak about *latent incapacitations* where the individual itself unconsciously "chooses" to be incapacitated. Thus, *latent incapacitations* are internalized values and norms corresponding to social capital formations, i.e., class and milieu structures (cf. Bourdieu 1996, 2007) as well as incorporated governmentality structures (cf. Foucault 2005). To overcome these hindrances and gain consciousness about the possibilities concerning all variations of choices in order to live the life one would like to live, it is essential to draw the sphere of the possible into consideration.

It might be useful to explain the concept of *latent incapacitations* while operating with Ernst Bloch's concept of Not-Yet-Consciousness where he tries to extract senses of possibilities deriving from Freud's concept of unconsciousness and his own concept of day- and forward dream. The Not-Yet-Consciousness is to understand as the still-hidden notion of the (future) possible in today's realities (cf. Bloch 1986).

The Not-Yet-Conscious is admittedly just as much a preconscious as is the unconscious of repressedness and forgottenness. In its way it is even an unconscious which is just as difficult and resistant as that of repressedness. Yet it is by no means subordinated to the manifest consciousness of today, but rather to a future consciousness which is only just beginning to come up. The Not-Yet-Conscious is thus solely the preconscious of what is to come, the psychological birthplace of the New. And it keeps itself pre-conscious above all because in fact there is within it a content of consciousness which has not yet become wholly manifest, and is still dawning from the future. Possibly even content that is only just objectively emerging in the world; as in all productive states which are giving birth to what has never been there. The forward dream is disposed towards this, and Not-Yet-Conscious, as the mode of consciousness of something coming closer, is charged with it; here the subject scents no musty cellar, but morning air. (Bloch 1986, p. 116)

In alignment to social capital formations, i.e., class and milieu structures as well as incorporated governmentality structures – thus resulting in individual *latent incapacitations* – Klaus Holzkamp points out that actions carried out by individuals have to be specified on the background of the possibilities and limitations resulting from milieu-/class-related life conditions, i.e., to consider the societal context in its totality. He outlines that it is crucial to understand the individual's internalized and inherent *structures of meaning* as infrastructures of the wholly societal *meaning constellation* (cf. Holzkamp 1986, p. 398). In this context, Holzkamp emphasizes the importance of the notion of *condition dispositions*: the real extension of the individual's disposition about its societal life conditions (cf. Holzkamp 1986, p. 395). Following the notion of the importance of the disposition of action or rejection of action, it is clear that to broaden the individual's possibility dispositions helps to broaden the individual's life quality via condition dispositions and possibility spaces (cf. Holzkamp 1986). It is of interest to consider Bloch's concept of *Not-Yet-Consciousness* and Holzkamp's possibility spaces in order to face *manifest* and especially *latent incapacitations* thus contributing to the capability approach to emphasize on choices calling for attention on freedoms and possibilities rather than the actual achieved capabilities (functionings) (cf. Sen 1992).

This corresponds to the Danish case study² that has been carried out with pupils who have failed earlier schooling and with teachers and managers from the Basic Vocational Education and Training Program (EGU)³. This study has been conducted in four different EGU institutions in different cities, according to place and size, in Denmark. The interviewees are vulnerable young people having lost track in the transition from school to further education or work (cf. Jensen and Kjeldsen 2012: 1). The reluctance of theoretical school subjects gets obvious when "one of

²The Danish case study, chapter 10.2.5.

³The Danish case study is based on interviews carried out in different Basic Vocational Education and Training Program (EGU).

the young people phrases it: “*books or anything with mathematics – it has never been me, ever, so my school ended when I was in the 7th grade*” (I⁴: pupil 2). In the Danish context this illustrates a very early school leaver, since the Danish primary and lower secondary education is a comprehensive school covering the grades from at least 0–9 grade⁵ or as one of the professionals states it: “*EGU-pupils whom I have, they've been through some really, really hard things through life, with a bad school experience and they can't relate to their own age group*” (I: internship teacher).” (Jensen and Kjeldsen 2012: 3).

With respect to the freedom to choose one's education or vocational training, it is obvious that the EGU institutions are an important institutional conversion factor in order to help realizing the pupil's personal and socio-structural and cultural conversion factors, i.e., analyzing the chances to fulfill the pupil's dream and discuss other options when necessary. In this context one teacher says: “The youngsters we meet here at EGU do have the same dreams and wishes as other youngsters – a success, i.e., get married, have a small apartment and a car ... we could try to make these dreams real, but the problem is: either they are so unrealistic or they just don't have dreams ... We have some dreams, but we are not guided by just our dreams. There are also a lot of other things that play a role, and that is what we do then, we sit down and talk with the young people here” (I: teacher 2). And he summarizes that it often ends in analyzing the abilities, skills and education of the pupil to find a reasonable choice with respect to pupil's possibilities. Also the manager from the same institution admits that they sometimes have kind of “dream-crushing” discussions with the pupils, but according to their experiences it seems to be unrealistic to be a “horse masseur” or a photographer because of the missing traineeships and the competition with “good students” with more aligning competences that go also for exactly these occupations (manager II). This manager points to the fact that some pupils are disconnected from their (societal) situation and cannot see their opportunities in a realistic way. “Oh, they also think, that they can be pop-stars and that this has nothing to do with reality, it is difficult to understand that” (manager II). Besides the young people that would like to become a pop star, there is also a group that has no inspiration and wishes at all and a last group that do have realistic dreams. The young people showing no wishes for their education and future life seem to have given up. They might be disillusioned by “accepting” the realistic perspectives. Concerning the last group, one teacher states: “Ja, that is typically some craftsmen-occupation as dream job: mechanic. We have four pupils that are fine with the idea to be a brick-layer, it is really not the fact that they would like to become pilots or police officers, it is not like that” (II: teacher 1). According to this teacher's statement, one pupil says that: “I have never had a specific dream-job, I have always thought about the possibility to be a pedagogue, also a veterinarian but I am not intelligent enough and that means that I will never become one of these” (IV: pupil 1).

⁴This refers to the number of the case in this case study.

⁵Grade 0–9 covers approximately the age span of 6–16 years of age. Pupils in the 7th grade will be 13–14 years of age.

To be a pupil at an EGU institution means already belonging to a group with conversion difficulties – not at least resulting from latent incapacitations. It is a combination of social disadvantages and different sources of deprivation (cf. Sen 2010: 257). Even if the institutional approach of the EGU is to help these young people is at most a great offer to help, it shows at the same time that it is just an attempt to balance the social disadvantages and deprivations resulting from social conditions of social inequalities that have their structural reason mainly in the contemporary formation of society.

Conclusion

Considering Isaiah Berlin's notion of the relation between positive and negative freedom, i.e., self-mastery and the domain of action of noninterference, it seems to be obvious, now, that to attain the possibility to choose the education one values, it is not sufficient enough to require the absence of arbitrary interference by others or societal structural interference. It is crucial to understand the societal conditions and existing realities that are embedded in the social structures related to education and education institutions as such. It makes sense to work with the framework of the capability approach in order to adopt the personal, socio-structural, as well as institutional conversion factors not ignoring the (intrinsic) relations serving as constituents in the interplay between decisive dimensions – such as family background, education institution, social demands, etc. – having a deep impact on the opportunity space with respect to attain the freedom to choose one's educational trajectory. Even education institutions, like the EGU, that are encouraging and very well disposed towards their pupils are confronted with insurmountable problems resulting from former individual experiences (in the family, education institutions, etc.), structural demands, and (financial) restrictions and are influenced, at least to a certain degree, by dominant discourses. Concluding that one's life chances depend to a major degree upon how individual resources are used within different social arenas, the societal and institutional conversion factors especially in the form of coagulated experiences revealing themselves as latent or manifest incapacitations should be emphasized while analyzing possibility spaces and contingencies to choose the educational or occupational trajectory one values.

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Chapter 6

European Universities and Educational and Occupational Intergenerational Social Mobility

Marek Kwiek

6.1 Theoretical Contexts

European higher education systems in the last few decades have been in a period of intensive quantitative expansion. Both participation rates and student numbers in most European countries are still growing – but are the chances of young people from lower socioeconomic classes to enter universities higher than before? Under massification conditions, are the chances of young people from poorer backgrounds actually increasing, relative to increasing chances of young people from higher socioeconomic classes and wealthier backgrounds? Are both overall social mobility and relative social mobility of underrepresented classes increasing at the same rate? That is a question about changing social mobility *relative* to the share of particular socioeconomic classes in the population as a whole. Social mobility in increasingly knowledge-driven economies is powerfully linked to equitable access to higher education. And the question of inequality in access to higher education is usually asked today in the context of educational expansion:

the key question about educational expansion is whether it reduces inequality by providing more opportunities for persons from disadvantaged strata, or magnifies inequality, by expanding opportunities disproportionately for those who are already privileged. (Arum et al. 2007: 1)

Educational expansion, in most general terms, and in the majority of European countries studied, seems to be reducing inequality of access. There are ever more

M. Kwiek (✉)

Center for Public Policy Studies and UNESCO Institutional Research
and Higher Education Policy, University of Poznan, Poznan, Poland
e-mail: kwiekm@amu.edu.pl

students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds and ever more graduates whose parents had only primary education credentials. The chances of the latter to enter higher education are increasing across Europe but are still very low. The intergenerational patterns of transmission of education are still very rigid across all European systems: the offspring of the low educated is predominantly low educated; the offspring of the highly educated is predominantly highly educated. Structurally similar patterns can be shown for occupations: the offspring of those in the best occupations predominantly takes best occupations, and the offspring of those in the worst occupations predominantly takes the worst occupations, across all European countries (“best” being structurally similar and linked to both middle-class earnings and lifestyles in Europe).

Equitable access to higher education is linked in this chapter is empirically linked to the social background of students viewed from two parallel perspectives – educational background of parents and occupational background of parents – and studied through the large-scale EU-SILC (European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions) dataset.

It is generally assumed in both current scholarly and policy literature that major higher education systems in the European Union will be further expanding in the next decade (Altbach et al. 2010; King 2004; Morgan et al. 2009; Trow 2007; Attewell and Newman 2010; EC 2011). Expanding systems, in general terms, tend to contribute to social inclusion and equity because the expanding pie, as argued in a recent cross-national study, “extends a valued good to a broader spectrum of the population” (Arum et al. 2007: 29). More young people go to universities and graduate from them, across all socioeconomic classes. At the same time, as Anna Vignoles argued in the UK context of high fees,

It remains the case that young people from poorer backgrounds are very much under-represented, relative to their share of the population as a whole. The need to further widen participation for these poorer students ... therefore remains a pressing policy issue. (Vignoles 2013: 112)

In the knowledge economy discourse, the expansion of higher education systems is key and high enrolment rates in the EU have been viewed as a major policy goal by the European Commission throughout the last decade, at least since the Lisbon Strategy was launched in 2000, followed by the Europe 2020 strategy launched in 2010. The European Commission’s recent Communication (September 2011) states again that attainment levels in higher education in Europe

are still largely insufficient to meet the projected growth in knowledge-intensive jobs, reinforce Europe’s capacity to benefit from globalisation, and sustain the European social model. (EC 2011: 3)

The empirical data from both the EU-27 and the OECD area demonstrate that indeed educational expansion has been in full swing across the whole developed world in the last two decades (and that educational contraction in the next decade is a serious policy issue for only several countries: most notably, Poland in the European Union and Korea and Japan in Asia. The three countries are exceptions to the general rule in which further educational expansion is expected, though,

as discussed further in Kwiek (2013a, b)). The expansion has several new dimensions which may include, to a degree depending on a country, nontraditional routes to higher education, nontraditional age students, shorter study programs (bachelor level rather than masters level), and lifelong learning opportunities. The expansion in Europe thus includes both new students and returning students, and the social base of higher education systems is expected to be further enlarged.

The starting point in research into equity in access to higher education for young Europeans, from a European policy perspective, could be the London Communiqué of the Bologna Process (2007) which states (reflecting current social sciences research on equitable access to higher education, social stratification, and social justice) that “the student body … should reflect the diversity of our population” (London Communiqué 2007). Similarly, the Bucharest Communiqué (2012: 2) stresses that

The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe’s populations. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning.

Cross-national comparisons of equitable access to higher education and its changing patterns over time can be shown based on the EU-SILC and, in particular, based on its 2005 module on “The Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty.”

Equity in access to higher education, or, in other words, more open intergenerational social mobility through higher education, is positively correlated with human capital development (as well as the development of human capabilities) and with the economic competitiveness of nations (Kwiek 2012b). As is well known from comparative studies conducted by both the World Bank and the OECD, both the long-term social and long-term financial costs of educational failure are high: those without skills, to fully participate socially and economically in the life of their communities, generate higher costs in the areas of healthcare, income support, child welfare, and security. Equitable access to higher education enhances social cohesion and trust and increases democratic participation (and all those dimensions are systematically measured by the OECD through their indicators). There is a positive correlation between the highest levels of education attained and democratic participation, voting patterns, health, and other indicators of well-being. This is what human capital approach stresses.

But the same positive correlations are shown, in a different social science vocabulary and based on different founding principles, in the capabilities approach. The capabilities approach – as an “alternative perspective” (Schneider and Otto: 2009: 8; see Walker 2006: 144) and a “fundamental alternative to neoliberalism” (Otto and Ziegler 2010: 232) – rightly stresses that education is “far more than human capital,” “expands capabilities and functionings,” “enlarges valuable choices,” “influences democratic social change by forming critical voices,” “involves obligations to others,” “requires pedagogical process freedom,” and “fosters agency and well-being” (Walker 2010a: 159–167; see Otto and Ziegler 2010; Nussbaum 2010, 2011; Walker and Unterhalter 2007). What Melanie Walker terms fundamental

elements of a “just education” are far more resistant to be measured than the traditional OECD indicators. The difference between the human capital approach and the capabilities approach in their account of education is clear: “if education makes someone a better producer able to contribute more to national income then education is deemed successful. In the capability approach a human capital basis for education is useful but limited” (Walker 2010a: 159). Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom* makes a clear link between capabilities and freedom: “a person’s capability refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations” (Sen 1999: 75). The notion of capability is central for Sen because someone’s “*actual functionings* do not, in themselves, tell us very much about how well off she is. ... The capability approach captures differences by looking behind the actual functionings at the opportunities or freedom people have to function” (Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010: 199–200). Or as Hans-Uwe Otto (2009: 48) put it succinctly,

instead of looking at the means, the capabilities approach focuses on what individuals are capable of doing. ... The capabilities approach distinguishes between the individual’s dispositions and the external conditions that help these dispositions to manifest in reality.

Functionings refer to whether individuals actually do or do not do something specific. In contrast, the capabilities perspective “addresses the objective set of possibilities of realizing different combinations of specific qualities of functionings” (Otto 2009: 49). In the capability approach, there is a rich understanding of agency: “each person is a dignified and responsible human being who shapes her or his own life in the light of goals that matter” (Walker 2010a: 167).

A particular strength in the capabilities approach, as Elaine Unterhalter and Melanie Walker (2007: 251) argue, is that

while broadly oriented to justice, through its emphasis on capability (potential to function) it does not prescribe one version of good life but allows for plurality in choosing lives we have reason to value. The approach emphasizes the importance of capability over functioning – not a single idea of human flourishing, but a range of possibilities and a concern with facilitating valuable choices. Above all, the capability approach offers a freedoms-focused and equality-oriented approach to practicing and evaluating education and social justice in all education sectors and in diverse social contexts.

The capability approach, as opposed to resourcist approaches, looks at a relationship between the resources people have and what they can do with them. Consequently, a person’s capability refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for the person to achieve (Unterhalter and Brighouse 2007: 74). As they emphasize, defending the capability approach against Thomas Pogge’s objections,

One of the apparent advantages of the capability approach over its rivals is its sensitivity to inequalities of natural endowments. The value of resources is usually defined without regard to what their holder can do with them; but the capability approach always looks at how well an individual can convert her bundle of resources into functionings. (Unterhalter and Brighouse 2007: 75)

One important remark has to be made, though. The human capital approach has been providing ideas, standard vocabulary, and related empirical data through large-scale datasets about higher education for more than four decades. The capability approach, in contrast, has been more systematically applied to higher education relatively recently (see especially Walker 2006, 2010a, b; Flores-Crespo 2007; Unterhalter 2010, 2013; Brighouse 2010; Boni and Walker 2013). Although Amartya Sen was never focused on universities, Martha C. Nussbaum was, with her recent *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010) in the forefront. Consequently, the capabilities approach could potentially provide new interesting intellectual tools to deal with old higher education concerns, including both equity and social mobility. As Walker concludes in her book on what she terms “higher education pedagogies,”

the capability approach addresses both processes and outcomes of learning and pedagogy. It robustly challenges the narrowness of human capital theory in which human lives are viewed as the means to economic gains. ... Above all, it points to a problem and suggests a practical approach. It requires not only that we talk about and theorize change but that we are able to point to and *do* change through the focus on beings and doings in and through higher education. (Walker 2006: 144, emphasis in original)

Although at the moment the capabilities approach does not seem to contribute significantly to mainstream higher education research, and the community of capability approach researchers in higher education is small and limited to a few countries, its future potential should not be disregarded. So far, the number of both books and papers linking, sometimes indirectly, higher education and capabilities approach is very small: by the end of 2013, their total number available in English does not seem to exceed 50, and they come from mostly the same scholars. But higher education research as a field of studies has always been open to theoretical and methodological influences of new approaches. The future will show how this approach can contribute to the field and whether a human development and capabilities approach perspective are indeed powerful enough to inform “policies and practices” of higher education (Boni and Walker 2013: 7). As Alejandra Boni and Melanie Walker stress, “human development values, capabilities, agency, all are key concepts to re-imagine a different vision of the university, beyond the goal to prepare people as part of a workforce” (Boni and Walker 2013: 5).

The influence of capabilities approach on national politics and welfare policies, in contrast to its influence on research into higher education, can already be substantial, becoming in some countries (e.g., Germany) a part of the “official political agenda” (Otto and Ziegler 2010: 232). It might be possible that the capabilities approach is useful for changing social practices, not only or not exclusively for theorizing about social practices. Such a possibility is clearly suggested by Walker (2010a: 168) when she argues that “capability formation in and through education would widen possibilities and struggle against inequality. It would have an orientation to global justice,” especially if Karl Polanyi’s “pendulum effect” (swinging back and forth between the state and the market) is at work in European societies, as suggested elsewhere (Walker and Boni 2013: 22–24). Elaine Unterhalter’s (2010: 95–108)

three types of pedagogies need to be distinguished: “pedagogies of consequence” (linked to human capital approach and an instrumental view of higher education), “pedagogies of construction” (higher education asserting and practicing the importance of moral equality and justice as supreme values), and “pedagogies of connection” (concerned with equality). An instrumental view of higher education no longer suffices in reimagining an institution of the university under globalization pressures.

Interestingly, Elaine Unterhalter and Vincent Carpentier (2010: 3–9) refer to inequalities in and through higher education not as a “dilemma” but as a “tetralemma” that might guide what is to be done in four rather than in two different directions. The tetralemmas of higher education, or the four different elements pulling higher education apart, are the following: economic growth, equity, democracy, and sustainability. And the question is: how can we hold together aspirations for all of them at the same time? Each of them is pulling higher education in different directions so that resolving one dimension means “compromising or abandoning at least one other” (Walker and Boni 2013: 16). Equality (and inequality) is at the very center of the tetralemma and inequality may produce instability which undermines democracy. Without suitably educated citizens, no democracy can remain stable (Nussbaum 2010: 10). Equitable access to higher education and social mobility through higher education are a fundamental part of the tetralemma. As they argue, “higher education is both potential source and solution to inequalities which confront us” (Unterhalter and Carpentier 2010: 16).

Traditionally, education, and in knowledge economies especially higher education, is the main channel of upward social intergenerational mobility. It enables individuals to cross class boundaries between generations. Education, and higher education in particular, enables intergenerational social mobility to a higher degree in more equitable societies and to a lower degree in less equitable societies.

An equitable or mobile society seems to be a relational (or positional) notion: some societies are clearly more equitable or mobile than other societies, and some clusters of countries seem to be more equitable or mobile than other clusters of countries. Intergenerational social mobility reflects the equality of opportunities. Younger generations “inherit” education and “inherit” occupations from their parents to a higher degree in less mobile societies. Young Europeans’ educational futures and occupational futures look different in more and in less mobile European societies. As defined by the OECD:

Intergenerational social mobility refers to the relationship between the socioeconomic status of parents and the status their children will attain as adults. Put differently, mobility reflects the extent to which individuals move up (or down) the social ladder compared with their parents. A society can be deemed more or less mobile depending on whether the link between parents’ and children’s social status as adults is looser or tighter. In a relatively immobile society an individual’s wage, education or occupation tends to be strongly related to those of his/her parents. (OECD 2010: 4)

In the majority of higher education systems in Europe, higher educational credentials lead to “better jobs” and better life chances (for “good jobs” in the USA, see Holzer et al. (2011)). Nevertheless, from a theoretical perspective of “positional

goods,” developed for the first time in the 1970s by a British economist, Fred Hirsch, there is always “social congestion” in every society: the number of good jobs (for instance, prestigious white-collar jobs leading to high incomes or to stable middle-class lifestyles) in a labor market system is always limited, and top jobs in a given system will always be limited, no matter how well educated the workforce is (see Kwiek 2006, 2010). The division of economy in particular EU member states into major sectors (e.g., manufacturing, services, agriculture in OECD categories, or into major nine occupations, and “professionals” vs. all other types of occupations in a United Nations terminology in particular) and its changes over time should be an important point of references in all “new skills for new jobs” theoretical exercises presented by the European Commission linking the growth in jobs requiring high skills with the growth in students numbers. In general, European societies, interested in skills and jobs, should bear in mind that higher education is a powerfully positional good: it may define the position of its possessors only relative to others in the labor market. Educational expansion leads to an increased number of highly qualified people who find it increasingly difficult to have stable, middle-class jobs, across the whole developed world.

Harry Brighouse and Elaine Unterhalter (2007: 78–83, 2010: 207–212) presented a model to measure justice in education, grounded in both Rawl’s social primary good theory and Amartya Sen’s and Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach and treating both approaches as complementary. In their model, the three overlapping fields that intersect with freedom (agency freedom and well-being freedom) relate to three different aspects of the value of education. These are the instrumental value of education, the intrinsic value of education, and the positional value of education. The instrumental value helps to secure work at a certain level and political and social participation in certain forms; the intrinsic value refers to the benefits the person gets from education which are not merely instrumental for some other benefit they may be able to use to get it. And the positional value of education, most important to us here, is

insofar as its benefits for the educated person depend on how successful she has been relative to others. For example, for any individual child aiming to enter a prestigious university, for which there is a fixed number of places, what matters to her is not at all how successful she has been in school, but only how successful she has been *relative to her competitors*. (Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010: 210, emphasis mine)

In a very similar vein, educational expansion in labor markets already saturated with higher education graduates has certainly different consequences than educational expansion in labor markets which are still far away from a state of saturation (the best example being monetary rewards from higher education in such clusters of countries as Central Europe on the one hand and the Nordic countries on the other). On average, CEE countries still have considerably less educated labor force, so – one can assume – monetary rewards from higher education, or wage premium for higher education, are higher. Nonmonetary rewards include, for instance, low levels of unemployment for higher education graduates, combined with relatively faster transitions from unemployment to employment, as analyses of the EU-SILC data demonstrate.

Also, any research, including present research based on EU-SILC microdata, should be cognizant of the potential limit to individual benefits from higher education attainment level as an individual shield against unemployment or as an individual life strategy inevitably leading to traditional middle-class lifestyles. From the theoretical perspective in which higher education credentials are “positional goods,” while collective, or public, benefits from educational expansion are increasing, individual, or private, benefits from educational expansion, as viewed, e.g., through the proxy of wage premium for higher education, do not have to be increasing. In some European systems, as reported by the OECD, the wage premium has been consistently high, and increasing, on a global scale, in the last decade. These are postcommunist Central European economies, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary (Kwiek 2001). In other systems, where educational expansion has started (much) earlier, the wage premium for higher education is much lower and either stable or decreasing (for instance, in the Nordic countries). There are several interrelated explanations but one of them is the “positional goods” argument according to which the advantage of higher education credentials in the labor market is relative or positional: if collective efforts of ever-increasing numbers of young people are focused in the same direction, individual gains from individually rational life strategies do not lead to expected results (Brown et al. 2011; Hirsch 1976).

The EU-SILC dataset offers the possibility to study inequality of educational outcomes and relevant coefficients: contrasting those young Europeans whose father (and/or mother) had tertiary education credentials with those whose father (and/or mother) had compulsory education credentials or less. In more equitable national educational regimes, not only educational trajectories of young Europeans with different social backgrounds will be more similar – but also their labor market trajectories will be more similar. By contrast, in less equitable national educational regimes, both educational and labor market trajectories of young Europeans with different social backgrounds will be markedly different. In short, the chances of young Europeans from lower socioeconomic strata to attain higher education will be closer to the chances of young Europeans from higher socioeconomic strata in more equitable systems and in more equitable societies. Alternatively, higher education will be less “inherited,” that is, less dependent on parents’ (father’s or mother’s or both) education in more equitable societies.

Two questions need to be separated. One question is about labor market trajectories of young Europeans (aged 15–34, for the purposes of the present research). Another question is how labor market trajectories are determined by social circumstances and family background in particular. In relatively more equitable (just, fair, open, mobile, etc.) systems, the role of social background is less important than in relatively less equitable (just, fair, open, mobile, etc.) systems. (There are long-standing discussions in social science research what social “justice” and “fairness” in access to higher education mean and what “openness” of higher education which leads to higher “intergenerational social mobility” means.) Consequently, the EU-SILC data allow to study both the “inheritance” of education and the “inheritance” of occupations: occupations will be less “inherited,” that is, less dependent on parents’

(father's or mother's or both) occupations in more equitable societies. Cross-country differences can be shown, and especially two contrasting clusters of countries, with very low as opposed to very high social mobility, can be identified.

Different lifetime additional earnings depending on the highest level of education attained by individuals, consistently reported for the OECD area, refer not only to higher education degree taken (usually from the arts and humanities at the bottom end and medicine at the top end of the spectrum) but also to open or closed access to occupations and professions based on social and economic strata of origin (including different labor market aspirations and values and beliefs originating also from social environment in the pre-higher education periods of study). Consequently, while lifetime additional earnings refer to levels of education attained, the EU-SILC data provide clues about intergenerational mobility both in terms of educational levels of respondents and their parents and in terms of occupations of respondents and their parents.

The theoretical underpinning of the present research is the idea that higher education credentials, in the times of massification, should be increasingly viewed as (Fred Hirsch's) "positional goods": they increase the chances of better labor market trajectories only to a certain point of saturation behind which they become a must, a starting point in competition between individuals holding it, rather than a clear competitive advantage. As "social congestion" increases, that is, the number of higher education graduates increases, the role of credentials as signaling mechanisms (about abilities of graduates) is changing: as in Hirsch's memorable metaphor, standing on tiptoes in a stadium does not help to get a better view if all others around also stand on tiptoes. At the same time, *not* having higher education credentials, like not standing on tiptoes, is a serious drawback in the labor market. So credentials are sought by an ever-increasing share of young Europeans, even though their economic value may be, in many systems and increasingly so, questioned. Stable or increasing participation rates in higher education mean a bigger share of populations with higher education credentials seeking traditional white-collar occupations. What especially matters is the question whether the share of students from under-represented strata in the higher education population is increasing (as we know that their numbers are increasing).

As OECD data for the last decade show, the overall higher education attainment for the population aged 25–64 has been increasing throughout the OECD area in the 1997–2009 period, with the OECD average annual growth rate of 3.7 % and with the EU-21 average annual growth rate of 3.9 %. Average annual growth in the proportion of those with a tertiary education has exceeded 5 % in four European countries: Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, and Portugal. The proportion of the population that had not attained upper secondary education decreased by 5 % or more per year in five European countries: Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and the Slovak Republic. Most of the changes in educational attainment have occurred at the low and high ends of the skills distribution, largely because older workers with low levels of education are moving out of the labor force and as a result of the expansion of higher education in many countries in recent years. As OECD's *Education at a Glance* explains, this expansion has generally been met by

an even more rapid shift in the demand for skills in most OECD countries: the demand side can be explored in labor market indicators on employment and unemployment, earnings, incentives to invest in education, labor costs and net income, and transition from school to work, all covered in this OECD volume (OECD 2011).

What works on an individual basis, and especially before the level of massification or universalization of higher education is reached, does not seem to work from a larger social perspective: individual efforts may be largely lost if all young people undertake the same efforts of getting higher education credentials, as the efforts finally may not lead to increasing individual life chances. The pool of “good jobs” seems to be restricted in Europe, as elsewhere, and the idea that higher education is leading to middle-class lifestyles and standards of living for everyone may be increasingly misleading, as Brown et al. (2011) demonstrate (for Poland, see also Kwiek (2012b)).

Both in the USA and in Europe, the standard of living of young people is threatened to be lower than the standard of living of their parents, especially for those from the middle classes, as Robert Frank argues in *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Is Harming the Middle Classes* (2007). The “positional goods” perspective (represented by Fred Hirsch and Robert Frank among labor economists, and Phillip Brown and Hugh Lauder among sociologists of education; for the first time applied to education in Simon Marginson’s landmark study from 1997, *Markets in Education*) Marginson (1997) needs to be born in mind in any cross-country research based on the EU-SILC data.

The initial hypothesis of the present research was that in those European countries where higher education has been more expanded, there is more equality in achieving higher education by social background – but there are also accompanying diminishing occupational and wage returns from higher education. The OECD data do not suffice to research the interrelations between the two and it is useful to strengthen this line of research by the empirical evidence derived from the EU-SILC. The EU-SILC dataset thus provides new opportunities for Europe-wide mapping of inequality.

6.2 Intergenerational Social Mobility: A European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)

The European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) collects microdata on income, poverty, and social exclusion at the level of households and collects information about individuals’ labor market statuses and their health. The database includes both cross-sectional data and longitudinal data. For most countries of the pool of 26, the most recent data available come from 2007 to 2008. The 2005 module on “The Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty” of the EU-SILC provides data for attributes of respondents’ parents during their childhood (age 14–16). The module reports the educational attainment level and the occupational status of each respondents’ father and mother. As reported by the OECD,

in almost all European OECD countries, there is “a statistically significant probability premium of achieving tertiary education associated with coming from a higher-educated family, while there is a probability penalty associated with growing up in a lower-educated family” (Causa and Johansson 2009b: 18). We shall follow these intuitions, well known from comparative social stratification studies. Fairness in access to higher education in Poland, a country taken as an example, is linked in this section to intergenerational transmission of educational attainment levels and occupational statuses of parents from a European comparative perspective. If Polish society is less mobile than other European societies, then the need for more equitable access to higher education in Poland is greater than elsewhere in Europe. While absolute numbers can speak by themselves, I assume here that the numbers tell us more in a European comparative context.

In technical terms, I conduct a brief assessment of the relative risk ratio of “inheriting” levels of educational attainment and “inheriting” occupations in transitions from one generation to another generation in Poland from a cross-national perspective. Relative risk ratios show how many times the occurrence of a success is more probable in an individual with a given attribute than in an individual without a given attribute. In the case studied here, “success” is the respondent’s higher education and the attribute is parents’ higher education. Relative risk ratios (presented in Fig. 6.1) show how an attribute of one’s parents makes it more likely that the respondent (offspring) will show the same attribute (see Causa and Johansson 2009a, b).

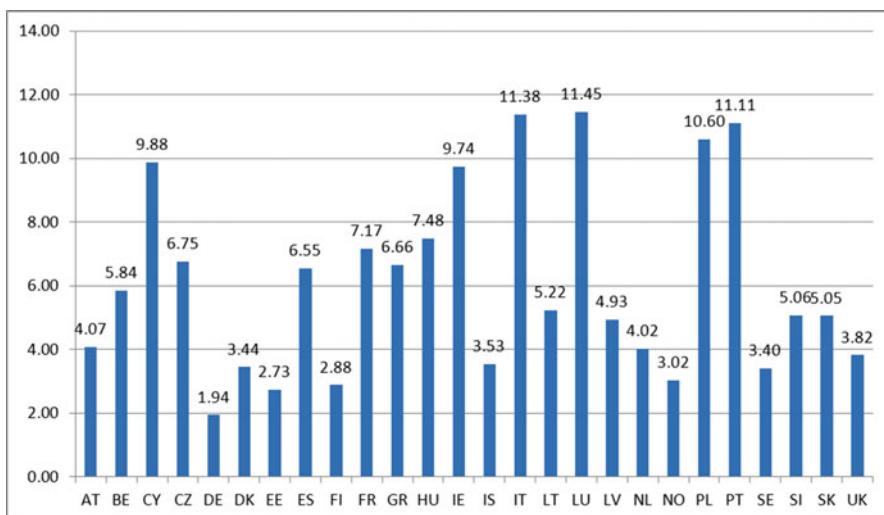


Fig. 6.1 Relative risk ratio for persons with *higher* education in relation to their father’s *higher* education (Source: own study based on EU-SILC 2005 module on “The intergenerational transmission of poverty.”) (The cross-country results are presented for the 35–44-year-old cohort. The module is based on data from personal interviews only. Variables analyzed were PM040: “Highest ISCED level of education by father,” PM060: “Main activity status of father,” and PM070: “Main occupation of father”)

Similarly, in OECD analyses, the risk ratio of achieving tertiary education is defined as “the ratio of two conditional probabilities. It measures the ratio between the probability of an offspring to achieve tertiary education given that her/his father had achieved tertiary education and the probability of an offspring to achieve tertiary education given that her/his father had achieved below-upper secondary education. Father’s educational achievement is a proxy for parental background or wages” (Causa and Johansson 2009b: 51).

Relative risk ratios were estimated using logistic regression analysis for the weighted data. A binomial model was used. Multinomial-dependent variables were dichotomized and separate models were constructed. The choice of independent variables was conducted using a backstep method and the Wald criterion.

Generally, there are four educational intergenerational social transitions and two occupational intergenerational transitions of interest to us here. The probabilities of educational transitions are calculated for the following cases: fathers with primary education and respondents with primary education, fathers with tertiary education and respondents with primary education, fathers with primary education and respondents with tertiary education, and fathers with tertiary education and respondents with tertiary education. And the probabilities of occupational transitions are calculated for two cases only: respondents with an elementary occupation, in relation to their fathers’ occupation (ISCO groups 1 through 9), and respondents with an ISCO group 1 occupation ((1) legislators, senior professionals, (2) professionals, and (3) technicians and associate professionals), in relation to their fathers’ occupations.

Among European countries, Poland has one of the highest relative risk ratios (10.6) for persons with higher education to have their parents with higher education, meaning that it is highly unlikely for children to have higher education if their parents did not also achieve the same level of education. In Poland, for a person whose parents had higher education, the probability of attaining higher education is 10.6 times higher than for a person whose parents had education lower than higher education. There are only four European systems that markedly stand out in variation (Poland, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland, plus two tiny systems of Luxembourg and Cyprus): in all of them, the probability that an individual who has attained higher education has parents who have attained higher education is about ten times higher than a person whose parents did not. While higher education is being “inherited” all over Europe, in Poland, the probability is on average almost two times higher than in other European countries (the average for 26 countries is 6.06, and the average for 8 postcommunist countries is 5.97). The details are given below in Fig. 6.1.

On the basis of the EU-SILC data, one can follow the transmission of *education* and the transmission of *occupations* across generations and see to what extent parental educational and occupational backgrounds are reflected in their offspring’s educational and occupational backgrounds. Educational status and occupational status are strong attributes carried across generations (Archer et al. 2003; Breen 2004).

Figure 6.2 below shows the probability of respondents achieving higher education given that their parents had achieved a primary level of education. In more mobile societies, the probability will be higher; in societies in which intergenerational mobility is lower, the probability will be lower. As can be seen, there is a major

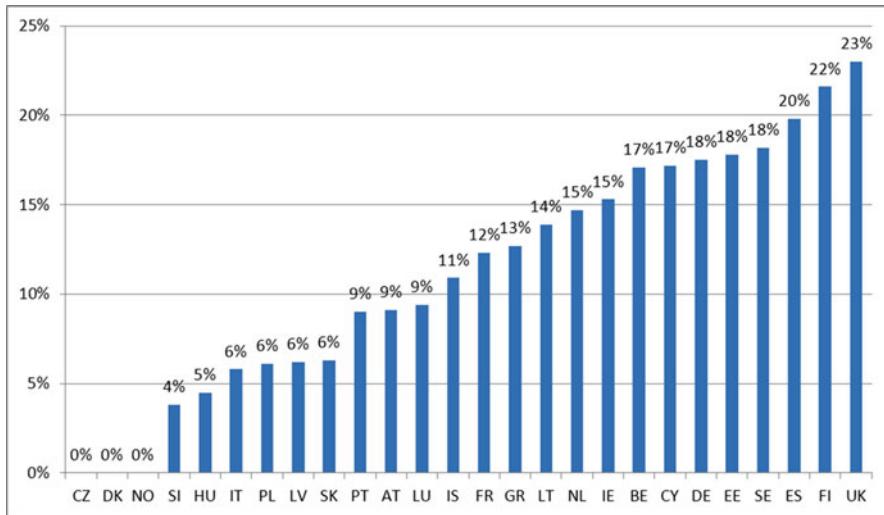


Fig. 6.2 Transition from parents' *primary* education to respondent's *higher* education (Source: own study based on EU-SILC 2005 module on "The intergenerational transmission of poverty" (0 % for CZ, DK, and NO results from a too low number of respondents in these countries))

divide between a cluster of countries in which there is low probability of upward mobility for this subpopulation – in the range of 4–6 % – and a cluster of countries in which the probability of upward mobility for the same subpopulation is three to four times higher and the probability of a "generational leap" in education between generations for those born in low-educated families is three to four times higher, in the range of 17–23 %. The "low probability" cluster includes Poland and several other former communist countries, as well as Italy. The "high probability" cluster includes the Nordic countries, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Spain, and the UK (no distinction in the dataset can be made between various *types* of higher education so that the question of "access to what" from an intergenerational perspective cannot be answered on the basis of the EU-SILC). Other countries are in the middle. The probability of upward intergenerational mobility for young people from low-educated families through higher education, from a comparative perspective, is clearly very low in Poland. The percentage of people with higher education whose parents had primary education is only 6 %; the remaining 94 % of people whose parents had primary education never attained higher education.

One can also look at the rigidity of educational backgrounds across generations or the transmission of the same level of education (from primary to primary, from higher to higher) across generations. What is particularly relevant here is the inheritance of higher education across generations. Figure 6.3 below shows that in all 26 European countries studied (except Slovenia), the probability of having attained higher education if one's parents have also attained higher education is more than 50 %. The lowest range (50–60 %) dominates in several postcommunist countries,

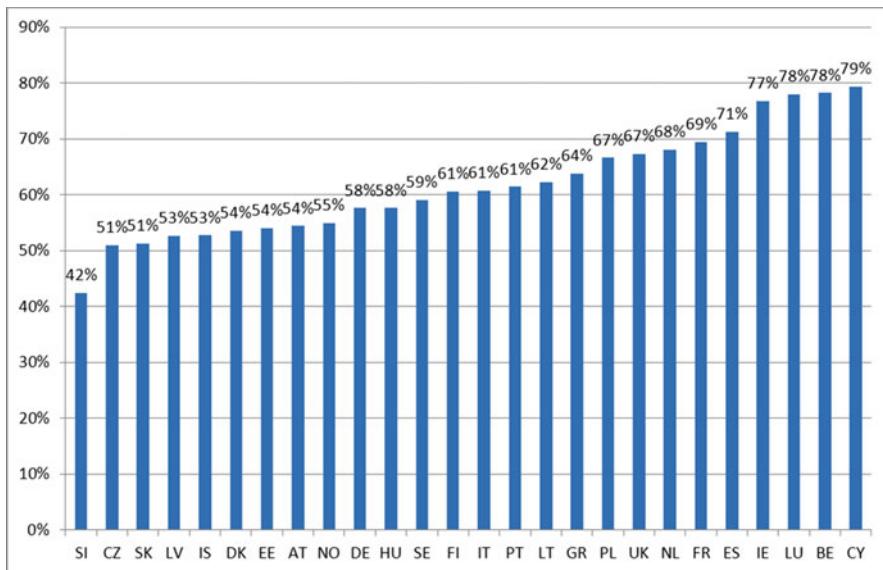


Fig. 6.3 Transition from parents' *higher* education to respondent's *higher* education (Source: own study based on EU-SILC 2005 module on "The intergenerational transmission of poverty")

as well as in Denmark, Austria, Norway, Germany, and Sweden. The highest range (70–79 %) is shown only for Spain, Ireland, and Belgium, as well as two small systems of Luxembourg and Cyprus. Poland (67 %) is in the upper-middle range of 65–70 %, and ninth from the top: 67 % of people whose parents had higher education managed to attain higher education. The remaining 33 % attained the level of education which was lower than higher education.

Analyses of the transmission of *levels of education* across generations can also be supplemented with analyses of the transmission of *occupation* across generations, with similar results for Poland. This article uses ISCO-88 (International Standard Classification of Occupations) basic occupational groups (nine major groups) and, following recent EUROSTUDENT IV study (2011), applies the following hierarchy of workers:

- *Highly skilled white-collar* ((1) legislators, senior professionals, (2) professionals, and (3) technicians and associate professionals)
- *Low-skilled white-collar* ((4) clerks, (5) service workers and shop and market sales workers)
- *Highly skilled blue-collar* ((6) skilled agriculture and fishery workers, (7) craft and related trades workers)
- *Low-skilled blue-collar* ((8) plant and machine operators and assemblers, (9) elementary occupations)

Analyses performed with reference to ISCO-88 group 1 occupations ("legislators and senior professionals," translated in Fig. 6.4 into "highly skilled white-collar")

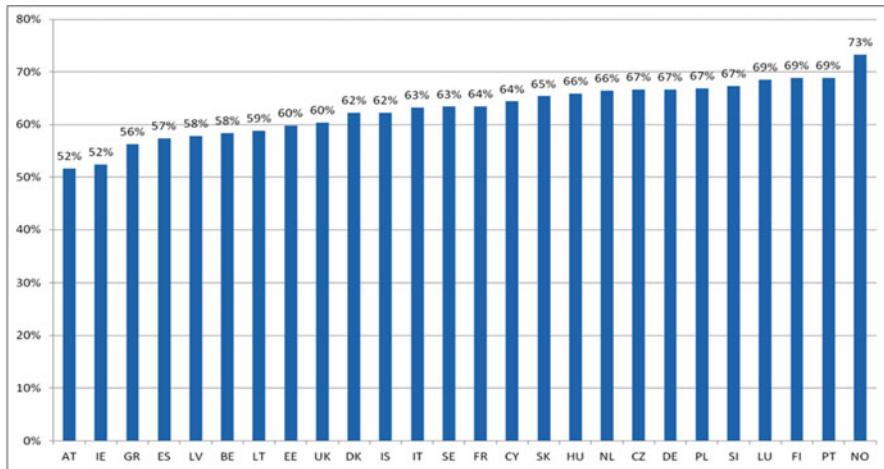


Fig. 6.4 Transition from parents' *highly skilled white-collar occupation* to respondent's *highly skilled white-collar occupation*. (The analysis presented in Figure 12 aggregated the nine ISCO-88 basic occupational groups, following recent EUROSTUDENT IV study (Eurostudent 2011: 55), into the following four groups of workers: "highly skilled white-collar" (1 legislators, senior professionals, 2 professionals, and 3 technicians and associate professionals), "low-skilled white-collar" (4 clerks, 5 service workers and shop and market sales workers), "highly skilled blue-collar" (6 skilled agriculture and fishery workers, 7 craft and related trades workers), and "low-skilled blue-collar" (8 plant and machine operators and assemblers, 9 elementary occupations)) (Source: own study based on EU-SILC 2005 module on "The intergenerational transmission of poverty")

in relation to parents' occupation show that while overall in Europe the "inheritance" of highly skilled white-collar occupations is high, and it is generally in the 50–70 % range, in Poland it is very high and reaches 67 %.

In the case studied here, the success is respondent's group 1 occupation and the attribute is parents' group 1 occupation. Relative risk ratios show how an attribute of one's parents makes it more likely that the respondent will show the same attribute. Table 6.1 in the Data Appendix shows the relative risk ratio for persons from ISCO-88 *highest occupational group* ("legislators and senior professionals" or LE, shadowed) in relation to their fathers' occupation. For instance, for Poland, the probability that a person whose father was a legislator or senior professional will have the same category of occupation is 3.32 times higher than in the case of a person whose father had a different occupation; the probability that a person whose father had an "elementary" (EL) occupation will have a legislator or senior professional occupation is 1.49 times lower than in the case of a person whose father had occupation other than EL. Table 6.2 in the Data Appendix shows the relative risk ratio for persons from ISCO-88 *lowest occupational group* ("elementary" or EL, shadowed) in relation to their fathers' occupation. For Poland, the probability that a person whose father had an elementary occupation to have the same category of occupation is 2.11 times higher than in the case of a person whose father had a different occupation. Figure 6.4 shows that, for Poland, 67 % of persons whose fathers had highly skilled white-collar occupations also have the same occupation.

The remaining 33 % of those persons have different occupation. In Poland, the level of “inheriting” higher education and highly skilled white-collar occupations is high, and successful transitions across generations from primary education to higher education and from low-skilled blue-collar occupations to highly skilled white-collar occupations are rare.

Thus, upward educational social mobility in Poland (from a longer perspective and despite the 1990–2005 expansion period in higher education) is still limited, and the level of inheritance of both educational status and occupational status across generations is quite high, compared with other European countries. The changes in mobility among social strata are long term, and the recent expansion period in higher education is still short enough to change the basic social structure in Poland (on the role of privatization of higher education in the expansion, see Bialecki and Dabrowa-Szeffler (2009), Kwiek (2014)). Both the highest educational attainment levels and the most socially and financially rewarded occupations (“highly skilled white-collar”) are inherited in Poland to a stronger degree than in most European countries, except for most postcommunist countries. Based on above analyses, Poland seems to differ more from more socially mobile Western European systems and less from most socially immobile postcommunist systems in its educational social mobility than traditionally assumed in the research literature (e.g., Domański 2000; Mach 2004; Baranowska 2011). Polish society in general is less mobile compared with most Western European systems because the links between parents’ and children’s social status as adults (in both educational and occupational terms) are tighter. While the expansion period substantially increased equitable access to higher education in Poland, upward social mobility viewed from a long-term perspective of change across generations is still limited. Consequently, from a European comparative perspective, there is much greater need for further fair and increased access to higher education than commonly assumed in educational research (for a Polish higher education massification context from which the above data are derived, see Kwiek (2012a, 2013b), and for a European context, see Kwiek (2009a, 2013a)).

Conclusions and Directions for Further Research

There are at least three major directions for further research.

One research direction is linking higher education with labor market trajectories through academic fields of study, with additional lifetime earnings different for different academic degrees viewed horizontally (masters in one study area vs. masters in a different area) rather than vertically (masters in all areas vs. bachelors in all areas). The difference between following labor market trajectories by educational levels and by fields of study within the same educational level (e.g., at the bachelors and masters levels in different fields of study) is significant. The second research direction is a combination

of insights from the EU-SILC dataset and from two large-scale European datasets about European university graduates and about European professionals, as studied through surveys in 12 European countries in the 2000s, CHEERS and REFLEX. And the third research direction is a study of lifelong learning.

Thus, the first task for future research is linking higher education with the labor market and labor market trajectories (including transitions between employment, unemployment, and inactivity) through academic fields of study. Not only the status of being employed/unemployed/inactive in the labor market is linked to the level of education (which EU-SILC data clearly show) – but the labor market status and its transitions are also substantially linked to fields of study. The national average wage premium from higher education, private internal rate of return (IRR) in higher education, and other related indicators measured over the years by OECD do not show the difference between fields of studies. So far, this dimension has *not* been systematically explored, mostly due to the lack of European data in a comparable format. And average additional lifetime earnings are substantially different for different degrees, as various national or global labor market studies show. While overall average additional lifetime earnings for higher education seem substantial in most countries, they are very low or nonexistent for graduates in such fields of study as arts and humanities in many systems.

Exploring labor market trajectories of young Europeans from an equity perspective may mean not only linking their labor market trajectories with educational trajectories. It may also increasingly mean linking them with fields of study taken and consequently degrees obtained and used in the labor market. The initial hypothesis is that the socioeconomic background of students and graduates may be positively correlated with fields of study taken: the SES quartiles of origin may be a determining factor for the choice of fields of study, from a continuum of those generally least demanding and least competitive (and leading to the lowest financial rewards in the labor market) to those generally most demanding and most competitive (and leading to best paid jobs).

Researching labor market consequences of studying different fields seems fundamental to linking higher education to the labor market successes and failures (changing employment status and changing occupational status over time) both in individual EU member states and in Europe as a whole. The research literature analyzing the impact of the specific field of study (and its importance for social stratification studies) on occupational prestige, job mismatches, employment status, and income has been growing (see Reimer et al. 2008). As they argue, “with increasing numbers of university graduates in the labor market, the signal value of a university degree from less-academically challenging and less selective fields like the humanities and social sciences will deteriorate” (2008: 234). This is an important additional dimension of studies

linking higher education to labor markets and labor market trajectories and levels of educational attainment by field of study with wage premium for higher education by field of study. Unfortunately, the EU-SILC dataset does not allow to explore the issue – but it can be approached through the analyses of the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS). The EU-SILC data can also be combined with the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002–2008 data to further explore the issue of linking educational outcomes and occupational outcomes with social background (see Bernardi and Ballarino 2011). At the same time, this is the line of research which can go hand in hand, in empirical terms, with a more fundamental, theoretical issue raised recently by Martha Nussbaum in her *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs Humanities* (2010): that our being in the midst of a “crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance” means a “worldwide crisis in education.” In practical terms, the humanities and the arts (as fields of study) being cut away from curricula and are losing their place “in the minds and hearts of parents and children” (Nussbaum 2010: 2). Any research into fields of study should refer to this alarming, global phenomenon. The fate of graduates from those fields in the labor market, from a European comparative perspective, might shed new light on the phenomenon analyzed so far mostly in the American context of liberal education gradually losing its ground.

The second research direction is to study labor market trajectories of young Europeans based on the EU-SILC dataset in combination with other datasets currently available about university graduates and professionals (and can be informed by theoretical underpinning of two large-scale, European comparative research projects of the 2000s – CHEERS and REXLEX, surveys of higher education graduates in Europe (CHEERS) and survey of professionals in Europe (REFLEX), with large theoretical output resulting from both projects. CHEERS studied about 40,000 questionnaires from graduates in 11 European countries and Japan on their socio-biographical background, study paths, transitions from higher education to employment, early career, links between study and employment, job satisfaction, and their retrospective view on higher education (Teichler 2007 and Schomburg and Teichler 2006)). REFLEX studied demands that the modern knowledge society places on higher education graduates and the degree to which higher education equips graduates with the competencies to meet these demands, based on 70,000 surveys of higher education graduates in 15 European countries and Japan (see Allen and van der Velden 2011). The higher education exit point is thus as important as the higher education entry point in current research, so that both students and graduates already present in the labor market are explored.

And the third research direction is to review the determinants of inequality in workers' lifelong learning (LLL) opportunities on the basis of the EU-SILC. The probability of undertaking lifelong learning (adult learning) can be studied for each EU country, and a European comparative study can be performed directed at LLL incidence, as self-reported by survey respondents. The participation in LLL (and its intensity) is an important dimension of different labor market trajectories of young Europeans, and clusters of countries can be identified on the basis of high/average/low LLL participation – which can be explored through socioeconomic strata of origin of young Europeans. The impact of class origins on LLL participation can be explored although it is unclear whether any links can be shown and whether the equity perspective employed can lead to any statistically significant results. Such dimensions as age, sex, attainment levels, working full or part time, and type of occupation can be researched too, to explore national variations. The EU-SILC data can be combined with such data sources as IALS (the *International Adult Literacy Survey*), LFS (*EU Labour Force Survey*), the *European Working Conditions Surveys*, and the *Continuous Vocational Training Survey*, as well as OECD aggregate data (see Biagetti and Scicchitano 2009). Lifelong learning is of critical importance for the success of the Europe 2020 strategy, and its role increases with ongoing work in Europe on both National Qualifications Framework and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which link all levels of (and all routes to) education in EU countries (see Kwiek and Maasen 2012 and Kwiek (2009b)).

Equitable access to higher education and educational and occupational intergenerational social mobility can be studied cross-nationally in Europe through the EU-SILC data, following previous highly successful global research in educational attainment and social stratification (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993; Shavit et al. 2007). Consequently, Europe is consistently becoming a “data-rich” area; a new role of social science research is to use this newly available, large-scale quantitative (and often self-produced) empirical material.

In this new “data-rich” environment, higher education research may increasingly use theoretical insights from the capabilities approach, as it has been using insights from the human capital approach for the last four decades. One of the major obstacles to develop further the capabilities approach in higher education research is the current construction of both national and European datasets, especially their underlying theoretical concepts leading to specific social research vocabulary in data-driven studies. Current datasets “measure” higher education and its multilayered dimensions according to the human

capital paradigm and therefore, it is hard *not* to refer to its major concepts, always present behind measures used. And the capability approach in higher education should not rely on qualitative material only, as has been mostly the case so far. If the capability approach is to be applied further to higher education as a sector, it has to highlight not only the need to measure different things but also the need to measure them differently. The whole (national and international) statistical architecture of higher education is currently embedded in the human capital approach. If a new approach is to be further developed within higher education studies, it needs to support both new vocabulary and new statistics, based on new, and most often merely complementary, theoretical concepts.

The paper presents strong support for the “education for all” agenda in Europe: in all European countries, as our data show, access to higher education for young people from lower socioeconomic strata is severely restricted, despite ongoing powerful processes of massification of higher education. For young Europeans from poorer and low-educated backgrounds, the chances to get higher education credentials and to work in highly skilled white-collar occupations are very low indeed, across all European systems (and in Central European systems in particular). It is a shame that in nine European countries, the percentage of people with higher education whose parents had primary education is below 10 %; the remaining 90 % of people whose parents had primary education never attained higher education. A major recommendation for EU strategies is to introduce more effective mechanisms to enable new routes of access to, preferably more differentiated, higher education. More diversification in higher education is needed so that a higher proportion of young people from lower socioeconomic strata will be able to move up the education and career ladders in the future.¹

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Annex

Table 6.1 Relative risk ratio for persons from ISCO-88 *highest occupational group* (“legislators and senior professionals”) in relation to their father’s occupation (*shadowed*: “legislators and senior professionals”)

Country	Father's occupation								
	1. LE	2. PR	3. TE	4. CL	5. SE	6. AG	7. CR	8. PL	9. EL
AT	3.36	2.33	1.24	1.15	-1.18	-2.08	-1.37	-1.72	-1.43
BE	2.59	1.29	-1.41	-1.14	-1.67	-1.00	-1.37	-1.30	-1.89
CY	4.21	2.58	1.47	1.18	1.33	-1.75	-1.11	-1.14	-1.61
CZ	2.30	2.41	1.39	1.60	-1.41	-1.12	-1.52	-1.45	-1.23
DE	1.64	1.23	1.15	1.10	-1.18	-1.10	-1.16	-1.32	-2.00
DK	1.98	-1.15	1.20	1.02	1.16	-1.45	-1.19	-1.85	-1.04
EE	1.60	1.41	1.72	-1.27	-6.25	-2.44	-1.18	-1.09	-1.54
ES	4.12	1.13	1.21	-1.00	-1.32	-1.22	-1.47	-1.35	-1.52
FI	2.12	1.35	1.06	-1.01	1.09	-1.33	-1.05	-1.28	-1.79
FR	2.09	1.69	1.49	-1.30	-1.28	-1.89	-1.03	-1.64	-1.52
GR	2.38	-1.08	-1.15	-1.32	-1.19	-1.22	-1.16	-1.08	-1.22
HU	2.38	2.14	1.68	1.45	1.44	-1.75	-1.18	-1.27	-2.22
IE	1.61	1.04	2.17	-1.09	-1.08	-5.26	-1.37	-1.23	-2.04
IS	1.42	1.08	1.19	1.14	-1.64	-1.59	-1.00	-1.05	1.24
IT	2.83	-1.37	-1.10	-1.59	-1.06	-1.18	-1.28	-1.27	-1.15
LT	3.00	1.93	1.61	1.52	1.13	-1.85	-1.11	-1.45	-1.52
LU	3.26	1.79	-1.12	-1.67	1.04	-1.14	-1.69	-1.54	1.03
LV	1.24	2.23	1.22	1.06	1.83	1.04	-1.11	-1.23	-1.43
NL	1.56	-1.19	-1.09	1.03	-1.01	-1.00	-1.56	-1.23	-1.00
NO	1.77	-1.23	-1.03	1.14	-1.01	-1.54	-1.06	-1.15	1.02
PL	3.32	2.10	1.30	1.34	1.07	-1.67	-1.00	-1.25	-1.49
PT	2.58	1.58	1.02	-1.52	1.31	-1.28	-1.20	-1.43	-1.00
SE	3.44	1.07	-1.64	1.77	-2.13	1.70	-2.22	-1.69	1.34
SI	2.36	2.03	2.27	-1.08	1.67	-1.69	-1.09	-1.85	-2.38
SK	1.86	1.62	1.28	1.31	-2.22	-1.67	-1.18	-1.27	-1.02
UK	1.71	-1.14	1.25	1.31	1.07	-1.75	-1.56	-1.23	-1.59

Source: own study based on the EU-SILC 2005 module on “The intergenerational transmission of poverty.” ISCO-88 occupational groups (International Standard of Classification of Occupations, 1988, used in EU-SILC) are the following: (1) *LE* legislators, senior professionals, (2) *PR* professionals, (3) *TE* technicians and associate professionals, (4) *CL* clerks, (5) *SE* service workers and shop and market sales workers, (6) *AG* skilled agriculture and fishery workers, (7) *CR* craft and related trades workers, (8) *PL* plant and machine operators and assemblers, (9) *EL* elementary occupations

Table 6.2 Relative risk ratio for persons from ISCO-88 *lowest occupational group* (9. “elementary”) in relation to their father’s occupation (*shadowed*: (9) “elementary” to (9) “elementary”)

Country	Father's occupation								
	1. LE	2. PR	3. TE	4. CL	5. SE	6. AG	7. CR	8. PL	9. EL
AT	-1.23	-2.94	-1.96	-2.63	-1.12	1.22	-1.43	-1.09	2.45
BE	-2.08	-3.33	-2.63	-2.22	-1.43	-1.37	1.16	1.45	3.10
CY	-2.56	-6.25	-4.76	-3.85	-1.79	1.67	-1.19	-1.11	1.77
CZ	-1.89	-14.29	-3.03	-2.86	-1.30	1.51	1.01	1.20	3.06
DE	-1.47	-2.27	-1.30	-1.69	-1.23	1.60	1.07	1.56	2.03
DK	-1.61	-4.17	-1.54	-1.45	-1.35	1.25	-1.05	1.77	1.83
EE	-1.64	-2.86	1.08	-1.25	-1.39	1.27	-1.00	1.02	1.95
ES	-2.33	-4.55	-2.22	-2.50	-1.61	1.20	-1.33	-1.47	2.47
FI	-2.63	-1.82	-1.25	-1.69	1.16	1.21	1.15	-1.00	1.87
FR	-1.41	-4.00	-2.08	-2.56	-1.19	1.36	1.10	1.13	2.09
GR	-2.17	-2.63	-1.89	-1.47	1.31	1.04	-1.05	1.20	2.23
HU	-2.94	-9.09	-4.76	-2.00	-1.19	1.76	-1.14	-1.04	2.34
IE	-1.54	-1.85	-1.45	-2.04	-2.22	1.86	1.06	1.17	2.10
IS	-1.32	-5.56	-1.96		1.52	1.46	1.12	1.41	1.45
IT	-2.22	-1.67	-2.78	-2.08	-1.28	1.37	-1.10	-1.22	2.39
LT	-2.50	-3.57	-2.78	-1.23	-1.04	1.15	-1.15	1.05	1.63
LU	-2.04	-20.00	-2.44	-5.00	-1.10	1.83	1.38	1.31	1.65
LV	-1.47	-2.08	-1.79	-2.78	1.40	1.44	-1.27	-1.09	2.04
NL	-1.30	-10.00	-1.82	1.10	-1.08	1.49	1.17	1.91	2.43
NO	-4.35	-2.70	-1.30	-1.89	2.08	1.81	-1.01	1.53	-1.10
PL	-2.08	-7.14	-2.50	-1.92	-1.64	1.11	1.03	1.03	2.11
PT	-3.57	-3.70	-3.13	-2.04	-1.67	1.16	-1.02	-1.18	2.35
SE		-3.45	1.13		1.61	2.33	1.07	-1.23	4.91
SI	-4.55	-3.03	-1.72	-1.22	-2.38	1.45	-1.00	1.08	1.78
SK	-3.03	-2.63	-3.03	-1.61	1.04	1.31	-1.16	-1.09	2.16
UK	-2.63	-4.00	-1.82	-2.00	1.08	2.49	1.26	1.52	1.73

Source: own study based on the EU-SILC 2005 module on “The intergenerational transmission of poverty.” ISCO-88 occupational groups (International Standard of Classification of Occupations, 1988, used in EU-SILC) are the following: (1) *LE* legislators, senior professionals, (2) *PR* professionals, (3) *TE* technicians and associate professionals, (4) *CL* clerks, (5) *SE* service workers and shop and market sales workers, (6) *AG* skilled agriculture and fishery workers, (7) *CR* craft and related trades workers, (8) *PL* plant and machine operators and assemblers, (9) *EL* elementary occupations

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Part IV

Capabilities, Labour Market

and Education in Europe

Chapter 7

Operationalisation of the Capability Approach

**Enrica Chiappero-Martinetti, Valerie Egddell, Emma Hollywood,
and Ronald McQuaid**

7.1 Introduction

While the Capability Approach offers a rich, comprehensive and innovative way to measure well-being, its operationalisation is a demanding task. This chapter starts by broadly discussing some central issues related to the operationalisation of the Capability Approach and providing an overview of how these have been addressed in the recent empirical literature. Applications of the Capability Approach in labour market and education research are then explored, discussing how quantitative and qualitative methodological and empirical challenges have been tackled. The chapter then moves to present the methodological and empirical strategies used in a project concerning the capabilities of young unemployed people in different European countries, highlighting issues of how to suitably capture and measure young people's capabilities were addressed and outlining lessons learned that are relevant to those using the Capability Approach in the future. Finally conclusions are presented.

E. Chiappero-Martinetti (✉)

Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Pavia, Pavia, Italy

Human Development, Capability and Poverty International Research

Centre (HDCP-IRC), Institute of Advanced Study, IUSS-Pavia, Pavia, Italy

e-mail: enrica.chiappero@unipv.it

V. Egddell • E. Hollywood

Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

e-mail: V.Egddell@napier.ac.uk; emmahollywood46@gmail.com

R. McQuaid

University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

e-mail: r.w.mcquaid@stir.ac.uk

7.2 Issues in Operationalising the Capability Approach

Since early seminal contributions in the mid-1980s, the Capability Approach has been widely recognised by its supporters as one of the richest and most complete approaches to well-being analysis and a comprehensive and suitable framework for describing and investigating the multifaceted nature of individual well-being. It has also been conceived of as an innovative ‘way of thinking’ that is able to embrace relevant aspects such as freedom or agency that are generally neglected or inadequately formulated in traditional approaches to well-being (e.g. Anand et al. 2005; Bonvin and Orton 2009; Chiappero-Martinetti and Roche 2009). These strengths of the Capability Approach have been interpreted by some others in the reverse manner, casting doubts about the possibility of making effective use of this theoretical framework. Indeed, the complex, multidimensional and context-dependent nature of this approach, the lack of specificity as to how these dimensions should be selected and assessed, the absence of a rigorous formalisation, a definite metric, and a specific algorithm or index for measuring, ranking and comparing interpersonal conditions can limit the practical application of this approach (see Sugden 1993; Srinivasan 1994; Roemer 1996).

The aim of the current section is to discuss some central issues related to the operationalisation of the Capability Approach and to provide a (non-exhaustive) overview of how these issues have been addressed in some consolidated contributions and in recent empirical literature.¹

It is largely acknowledged by capability scholars themselves that the operationalisation of the Capability Approach is a demanding task, posing several conceptual, methodological and empirical challenges that are not easy to resolve. Nonetheless, despite its ‘underspecified’ nature, this framework plays a central role in the current debate on individual and societal well-being, and despite the methodological difficulties, a large and growing body of empirical studies based on the Capability Approach is now available showing that measuring functionings ('beings and doings', such as having a good job) and capabilities (the combination of functionings that an individual can feasibly achieve and substantive freedoms and opportunities to choose them) remains a challenging but achievable exercise.

Even if the scope and focal points are broad and largely heterogeneous, researchers interested in making empirical use of the Capability Approach have usually to address a series of choices and decisions with regard to (1) the evaluative space to be chosen (capability and/or functionings typically but also agency, autonomy or empowerment); (2) the number of dimensions, indicators and scales (quantitative or qualitative) to be measured; (3) the unit of analysis (individuals, households or

¹ For a review of the attempts to operationalise the Capability Approach and a comparison of different methods and techniques applied, see Chiappero-Martinetti and Roche (2009). See also Lessman (2012) on the empirical application of the Capability Approach in labour-related studies. An extensive and in-progress database on the empirical literature managed by the thematic group on quantitative methods is available on the Human Development and Capability Association website (<http://hd-ca.org/>).

subgroups of population) and the elements of heterogeneities that differentiate these units (typically, gender, ethnicity, age or any other relevant characteristics); and, finally, (4) the variety of socioeconomic, geographic, institutional contexts that can affect the well-being process, the capability set and the achievement of functionings.

Most of these choices (that incidentally do not pertain exclusively to the Capability Approach but are common to other multidimensional approaches to well-being) are not merely technical or empirical but are primarily normative, since they characterise the core meaning of well-being that we want to describe and analyse. An element of distinction in this literature has been its capacity to endorse a broad and intensive debate at each single step. For instance, considerable discussion has focused on which capabilities should be considered, who should compile this list, whether or not there should be a scale of priority amongst them and how should all of this be done. The positions range from Sen's view that it is inappropriate to make any *a priori* list, since the definition of what people value should be open to diverse conceptions of good, justice and advantage (Sen 2004, 2009), to that of Nussbaum, who argues forcefully in favour of a universal list of capabilities and formulates a specific list of ten human capabilities (Nussbaum 2000, 2003, 2011).

Other authors have contributed to this discussion: Robeyns (2003) identifies a procedure and a set of criteria for selecting dimensions and reaches a consensus on a list of capabilities or functionings; and Alkire (2007) matches some existing lists and compares the methods adopted in several studies for selecting these dimensions. Many authors argue that 'the list of things people have reason to value' should reflect people's values and priorities and therefore it should be effectively drawn from deliberative and participative processes (Crocker 2006, 2007, 2008). Each 'bottom-up' list may vary, depending on the views of people in different circumstances, times and locations. Hence these two perspectives of how to identify capabilities result in either a single list or multiple lists.

This debate, which is primarily philosophical and methodological, nevertheless affects empirical analysis: Nussbaum's list, or reduced versions narrowed down to a set of basic capabilities, has inspired several empirical papers (see, amongst others, Anand et al. 2005). Similarly, bottom-up participative procedures have been implemented to empirically derive a list of capabilities (see Biggeri et al. 2006; Burchardt and Vizard 2011).

The question of whether capabilities or functionings can be measured has also been debated at length, ranging from those who argue that substantive freedoms and opportunities (i.e. capabilities) should (and potentially can) be considered and those who think that these are neither comprehensively observable nor measurable and hence only a person's attainments (i.e. functionings) can be assessed.

Looking at the empirical literature we can see that both evaluative spaces, i.e. capabilities and functionings, have been considered (even if the latter is more common than the former) and that in most cases this choice is primarily based on the empirical strategy adopted by the researcher. In particular, secondary data, both micro-individual (e.g. household surveys) or macroaggregated data (such as UN, OECD or EU indicators), are more frequently used as a proxy for measuring functionings (and less frequently for estimating capabilities as latent variables),

while primary analysis is generally used for gathering capability-related information (Anand et al. 2005, 2009).²

The type and nature of indicators and scales used, as well as the amount of human and contextual diversity accounted for, is also affected by the evaluative space selected, as well as by the empirical strategy chosen (e.g. secondary or primary analysis). There is a large prevalence in the use of quantitative, large-scale surveys and cross-sectional data when available datasets are used for measuring functionings (see, amongst others, Chiappero-Martinetti 2000; Klasen 2000; Lelli 2001; Kuklys 2005; Roche 2008), while qualitative analysis conducted through interview, focus group and participatory methods is usually required for gathering information related to values and freedom of choice, agency and empowerment and for assessing capabilities (Anand et al. 2011).³

Finally, the choice of the unit of analysis, even if affected by the scope of the analysis and the kind of data used, in principle should mainly refer to individuals, as the Capability Approach is an ethically or normatively individualistic approach where ‘individuals, and only individuals are the *ultimate* units of moral concern’ (Robeyns 2008, p. 90).

Looking at the large amount of empirical evidence based on, or inspired by, the Capability Approach, it can be noted that a wide range of methodological tools and statistical techniques have been used. Roughly speaking it is possible to classify these methods into four main clusters:

1. Standard statistical methods traditionally used in the social sciences, such as regression analysis and multivariate data reduction techniques, have been applied in order to select dimensions and aggregate variables, to analyse the interrelations amongst dimensions and to investigate the role of contextual variables or socio-demographic characteristics. Most of the empirical applications that make use of large representative household surveys adapt and combine these consolidation techniques for dealing with the methodological requirements of the Capability Approach. However, even if much progress has been made in operationalisation, some distinctive features of this approach (such as the distinction between opportunities and achievements, the freedom of choice, the agency aspects), its intrinsic complexity and the heterogeneity of conditions and situations that characterises an individual’s well-being are partially lost or difficult to capture with these techniques.

² Household surveys and aggregate indicators provide an extensive amount of information allowing for the assessment of a broad spectrum of well-being domains. Nevertheless, some relevant dimensions still remain unexplored as outlined by Alkire (2007). The OPHI project on missing dimensions aims to fill this gap and identifies five dimensions of poverty that should be integrated into surveys (informal employment, empowerment, physical safety, ability to go about without shame, psychological and subjective well-being).

³ This distinction between functionings measured generally using quantitative data, on the one hand, and capabilities measured using qualitative collected data, on the other hand, can be appropriate for clustering most empirical studies, but not every study. There are, for instance, interesting attempts to estimate capabilities using micro-data household surveys (see, for instance, Burchardt and Le Grand 2002; Krishnakumar 2007), and similarly there are ad hoc surveys conducted for measuring functionings (see Qizilbash and Clark 2005).

2. Scaling techniques and aggregative strategies have been used in order to obtain a single multidimensional measure for ranking comparisons. The most famous example is the Human Development Index, calculated by the UNDP since 1990 using aggregate data at the global level, while the Alkire-Foster method represents a recent attempt to formulate multidimensional poverty indices calculated on micro-data related to more than a hundred developing countries. An advantage of this method is the possibility to rank and compare the units of analysis (e.g. countries or regions), to assess and monitor their performances in a relatively easy manner, to catch ‘the public’s eye’ (Streeter 1994, p. 235) and to raise public awareness and public debate on poverty and development issues. There are, however, some serious limitations related to the choice of indicators, their comparability at a global level, the procedures used to normalise the data and the weighting structure chosen for their aggregation. All these steps are to some extent arbitrary, and each of these methodological choices can have a significant effect on the results.⁴ In addition, very little of the richness of the Capability Approach is preserved by this methodology, which is basically an attempt to go beyond unidimensional income-based measures and include some other dimensions of well-being at aggregate level.
3. A range of nonstandard methods of analysis, such as fuzzy methodologies (Chiappero-Martinetti 2000, 2006; Lelli 2001; Baliamoune-Lutz and McGillivray 2006; Vero 2006; Berenger and Verdier-Chouchane 2007; Roche 2008), partial ranking (Brandolini and D’Alessio 2008) and super-valuationist approaches (Qizilbash 2002; Qizilbash and Clark 2005), have been adopted with the aim of preserving the richness of this approach and of handling its complexity and vagueness. These methods, while innovative and promising, are not traditionally part of the ‘tool box’ of social scientists and require some analytical and methodological effort. Moreover, more work needs to be done on testing and consolidating these methodologies in this field of investigation.
4. Finally, qualitative analysis, participatory methods, focus groups and ethnographic research are now extensively used by capability scholars, particularly in fieldwork conducted in developing countries, in order to investigate what ‘people have reason to value’, to develop and agree on capability lists through deliberative consultations, to investigate the role of social and cultural norms in shaping preferences and choices and to evaluate how participatory methods themselves can impact on people’s capabilities. There are some undeniable merits in this kind of analysis, which seems to fit well with some distinctive principles of the Capability Approach, first and foremost that people’s views matter and it is essential to allow them to express their opinions, values and priorities. There are equally and evidently some limits: since such methods are expensive and time-consuming, their validity and reliability is generally difficult to verify, there may

⁴ Ravaillon (2010a) outlines that most of the ‘mashup indices’ of development and poverty currently available are rarely rooted into a prevailing theory or grounded on robust methodological assumptions. For a discussion on this issue, see also Ravaillon (2010b, 2011) and the contributions to the special issue of the Journal of Economic Inequalities, vol. 9, no. 2, 2011.

be differences in people's beliefs and what they say in an interview and how they actually behave, information on the full contexts of people's situations is not usually possible to gather in their entirety, researchers may misinterpret what people mean and the 'generalisability' and transferability of their findings may be limited.

Overall, the growing body of empirical literature and the variety of techniques briefly outlined above should dissipate concerns that the Capability Approach cannot be operationalised. Nevertheless, more research work still needs to be done in the direction of consolidating methodological tools and experimenting with new techniques and approaches, and an interdisciplinary effort might prove helpful in this regard.

7.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Applications of the Capability Approach in Education and Labour Market Research in EU Countries

In the early stages of its formulation, the Capability Approach was considered as an important theoretical framework for understanding poverty and development issues in economically developing countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first empirical evidence was mainly related to those countries (see Sen 1985). It is only during the last decade that this approach has become more significant in the debate on well-being in industrialised countries, with a corresponding and growing amount of empirical evidence in different sectors of analysis.

In this section we briefly review the current state of the art of the application of the Capability Approach in economically developed countries in two interrelated and relevant fields of investigation, namely, labour markets and education, and discuss how methodological and empirical challenges have been tackled. We limit our attention to some of the most relevant or representative contributions to this literature as well as to several European projects undertaken in recent years based on, or inspired by, the Capability Approach. The subsequent section discusses the contribution and added value of the approaches used in projects, including the European Commission-funded WorkAble project and those considered elsewhere in this book, to these subjects and to analysing in more detail the various methodological and empirical strategies used when operationalising the Capability Approach.

Concerning the first topic of investigation, i.e. labour market capability-related studies, one of the initial and finest attempts to apply the Capability Approach is the empirical analysis conducted by Schokkaert and Van Ootegem (1990) on a sample of Belgian unemployed people. In this paper, factor analysis is used to identify a list of six refined and relevant functionings (social isolation, happiness, physical functioning, micro-social contact, degree of activity and financial situation) for this specific group of people and to assess the impact of several individual and household characteristics on their living conditions. Similarly innovative and pioneering

is Burchardt and Le Grand's (2002) contribution, which proposes a two-stage method for measuring employment opportunities for women: in the first stage, the potential constraints women can face in accessing paid employment are considered, while in the second stage women's preferences in terms of labour choices are assessed in order to differentiate those who are voluntarily out of work from those who are involuntarily unemployed or inactive.

Since then, further analysis has been conducted adopting 'a panoply of different research methods' (Lessmann 2012) with the aim of investigating other relevant issues such as inclusion in, or exclusion from, the labour market (Strotmann and Volkert 2008) or the range of capabilities available over the life course (Bartelheimer et al. 2011).⁵

Any attempt to operationalise the Capability Approach for empirical purposes struggles with the difficulty of finding adequate data able to represent the richness of this framework and particularly to capture the opportunity dimension, which is particularly relevant in this field of investigation. The importance of using mixed methods (i.e. combining both quantitative and qualitative methods) and complementing quantitative information by providing a deeper understanding about the quality of employment has been underlined by, amongst others, Lugo (2007) who remarks on the need to gather data and indicators on aspects that are generally disregarded such as informal work, occupational hazard, under- and overemployment and discouraged unemployed people.⁶ The necessity to frame and extend the analysis to other relevant qualitative aspects such as job satisfaction, informal employment and reproductive work from a capability perspective has also been recently pointed out by Lessmann and Bonvin (2011).

An interesting corpus of conceptual contributions and comparative analysis of labour relations and working lives in European countries and policy recommendations for social protection policies has been developed within CAPRIGHT, an interdisciplinary research project supported by the European Commission.⁷ The main scope of this project was to frame a set of capability-based fundamental rights and identify a corresponding set of public policies and labour relations designed to support workers (see Bourguin and Salais 2011). Two elements of distinction characterise this project: first, the focus on opportunities, empowerment, rights and deliberative processes that are effectively available and exerted by European workers and,

⁵If these papers are deeply and deliberately rooted in the capability literature, there are other, no less remarkable, contributions frequently mentioned which are only weakly connected to it. For instance, Defloor et al. (2009) apply and interpret standard microeconomic methodological tools, such as the transformation curve, in terms of capabilities, while Schokkaert et al. (2009) measure well-being in a broad sense, including aspects such as job quality and job satisfaction.

⁶This proposal is part of a broader project promoted by OPHI (www.ophi.org.uk) on missing dimensions in assessing human development. They designed five short questionnaire modules to be integrated into national household surveys to obtain internationally comparable data on these dimensions, particularly in economically developing countries.

⁷'Resources, rights and capabilities: In search of social foundation for Europe' (<http://www.capright.eu>). The main findings and policy implications are synthesised in a downloadable policy report (www.capright.eu/News/?contentID=9048).

second, the attention paid to institutional conversion factors, industrial relations, collective responsibility and labour force management at company level.

The research experience developed within the CAPRIGHT project stimulated an interesting debate showing the potential of this framework particularly for analysing labour market policies and helping design the European social policy agenda. A couple of recently published journal special issues⁸ have been devoted to the discussion of issues currently of paramount relevance, such as unemployment policies (Berthelheimer et al. 2012; Olejniczak 2012), security and employment flexibility (Lehwess-Litzmann 2012; Pandolfini 2012; Vero et al. 2012), and collective action and collective responsibility (Bonvin 2012; Zimmerman 2011, 2012).

Equally interesting has been the discussion stimulated by RECWOWE,⁹ a European research network aimed at integrating two traditionally disjointed research areas: labour markets and employment analysis, on the one hand, and welfare regimes studies, on the other hand. In this case, the Capability Approach is not explicitly assumed as a theoretical framework of reference for driving the overall discussion, but some specific issues developed are directly related to it.¹⁰ A notable example is its application to analysing work-life balance across European countries and organisations and investigating whether, and to what extent, social policies enable working parents to balance professional careers and parental responsibilities and achieve a better quality of life (see Hobson and Fahlén 2009; Hobson et al. 2011).

The second topic of research, i.e. the application of the Capability Approach in the sphere of education studies, is less consolidated compared to employment research and still remains a field in need of further exploration. In this field of investigation, the consolidated role played by Human Capital theory largely dominates theoretical debate and empirical analysis. Nonetheless, several critiques of this theory have been advanced in recent years: first, for the narrow instrumental role that it assigns to education, disregarding other important aspects related to it; second, because it is often based on rather strong assumptions (e.g. markets work rationally, perfectly and efficiently and the only element of distinction amongst people being in the different amounts of human capital they have), although some developments do relax these assumptions; and third, because it does not seem to adequately reflect the multiplicity of personal and contextual factors that can generate different sets of individuals' opportunities or affect their educational choices.

It has been noted by many capabilities scholars that the framework formulated by Sen and Nussbaum can provide a wider perspective able to acknowledge not only the instrumental value of education in promoting productivity, economic growth and personal income and wealth but also the direct relevance that education can play

⁸See Transfer – European Review of Labour and Research, no. 18, 2012; and Management Revue – the International Review of Management Studies, vol. 23, no.2, 2012.

⁹'Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe' (<http://www.recwowe.eu>)

¹⁰See, for instance, Goerne's (2010) paper on the application of the Capability Approach for social policy analysis.

in increasing individual well-being and promoting social development (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2006; Robeyns 2006; Unterhalter 2009; Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash 2014, amongst others).

If all these authors argue for a more comprehensive understanding of education, some of them move a step further, suggesting how this approach can be operationalised and provide empirical evidence of its value and relevance in modern societies. Walker (2008), for instance, analyses the role of higher education and lifelong learning in relation to capability-related aspects such as agency, public values and global citizenship. By means of an empirical qualitative study conducted on lecturers and students, she also investigates the capability formation and the role of institutional conditions in the research/teaching nexus.

Another empirical study on how universities can enhance students' capabilities has been conducted by Boni et al. (2010). They elaborate a list of what they define as 'cosmopolitan capabilities', which include critical thinking, empathy, participation, intercultural respect, reflexiveness and curiosity, and interview a group of students in order to investigate the role of universities as a driving force for creating cosmopolitan citizenship.¹¹ Young (2009a, b) examines standard qualitative and quantitative income-based approaches for evaluating learning outcomes. In particular, she critically compares and discusses the relevance-based and performance-based methods and suggests combining them in order to integrate the local perspective into an evaluative framework sufficiently flexible to be adapted to different cultures and contexts.

Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash (2014) propose complementing the Capability Approach with some methodological and conceptual aspects developed in Human Capital Theory in order to measure the threefold role of education – namely, education as a means for other purposes, including: as an investment for the labour market, as an end in itself and as a crucial factor in the conversion process of means into well-being. Making use of the British Cohort Study (BCS70),¹² they map the variables that can be considered as good proxies for measuring both market and non-market benefits of education. The same dataset is also used by Burchardt (2009) for examining agency goals, education and work aspirations of British youth and operationalising the dynamic and broad concept of 'capability as autonomy'.¹³

¹¹ On higher education and the Capability Approach, see also the volume edited by Walker and Boni (2012).

¹² BCS70 is a longitudinal secondary dataset which provides detailed information on the educational and professional choices of a sample of individuals regularly tracked and interviewed since their birth in 1970.

¹³ A Marie Curie International Training Network project consolidated research on education and welfare and investigating young people's opportunities in three central interrelated dimensions of welfare (i.e. work, autonomy and participation) using the theoretical framework of the Capability Approach. The innovative research lines undertaken by the young doctoral students involved in this project sought to advance knowledge and empirical evidence on this specific topic and enhance the frontier of the operationalisation of this approach (see www.eduwel-eu.org).

Finally, a thematic issue on education, in relation to human development and capabilities, has been published in the Journal of Human Development and Capabilities (2012). The collection of papers offers an important theoretical, empirical and methodological contribution to the current scientific debate, showing the potential of the human development and human capability framework for education inquiry and education policies (see Walker 2012, for an overview of its contents). Having discussed the differing quantitative and qualitative approaches in this section, the following section presents examples where these methods have been used to apply the Capability Approach to specific issues.

7.4 Examples of the Application of the Capability Approach

In an EU context of high rates of early school leavers and young people who have not completed their upper secondary school education, as well as the recent transition from industrial to more knowledge-based societies, the ‘WorkAble: Making Capabilities Work’ project aimed to *‘provide knowledge on how to enable young people to act as capable citizens in the labour markets of European knowledge societies. It assesses the political and institutional strategies aiming to cope with the high rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education’* (<http://www.workable-eu.org/about-workable/objectives>). WorkAble used a comparative perspective to analyse employment and educational policies at the local, regional, national and European level. WorkAble had six work packages, although this section focuses upon the three where primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis was undertaken, specifically:

1. Identifying the educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe
2. Studying educational programmes from a micro-perspective
3. Understanding their effects on the transitional trajectories, from education to work, of young people

This section outlines the questions asked, the methods used and reflections on the lessons learned when operationalising the Capability Approach, based on the example of WorkAble.

Contextual information was collected as part of WorkAble in order to situate and shape the primary and secondary data collection and analysis undertaken in the rest of the research. The Capability Approach recognises that individuals are affected by the institutions that surround them (Bonvin and Orton 2009), and in order to understand an individual’s capability set, you need to examine the goods and services they may have access to and the social environments in which they are embedded, as these can hamper efforts to convert resources into capabilities (Bonvin and Moachon 2008). Contextual information also highlights the informational basis of educational and vocational policy-making by identifying what the information judgements are based upon, i.e. what is considered as a legitimate transition (from

education to work) and what behaviours and responsibilities are expected of young people (Sen 1990; Bonvin 2012). A purely informational basis of judgement is not sufficient in that it '*implies a selection of specific factual data or information which is then considered as the adequate yardstick for public evaluation and action. This data selection coincides with the exclusion, explicit or not, of other information seen as irrelevant*' (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006: 122).

The purpose of collecting contextual information in WorkAble was for the national research teams to describe and provide a critical analysis of the educational regimes in the countries investigated and analyse the standard paths of education and transition to employment and the labour market. The aim was not only to describe the educational and training systems but also to see how they were situated in the 'education-employment-community/social integration' nexus. As such the ways in which these educational regimes integrate labour market requirements were also explored, for example. In addition, those young people who typically fail in the standard routes of education and transition to employment and the reasons for this were explored. The strategies and methods employed by the various educational regimes to cope with these groups of young people were explored. In analysing the provisions for early school leavers and young people facing problems entering the labour market, knowledge was added to the discussion about educational regimes.

Two key methods were employed: (1) documentary analysis regarding legislative and administrative provisions at national, regional and local levels, collective labour agreement and other official documents and (2) interviews with key stakeholders in the educational system such as government policy-makers. Other methods were also adopted to add further depth including statistical overviews on education and unemployment and small case studies of the issues raised.

Qualitative case studies of innovative programmes supporting young people in their school-to-work transitions were also conducted in order to enhance understandings of successful ways in which to support young people (who encounter difficulties, or who fail, in the 'standard' routes of education and transition towards employment – identified through the contextual research) by empowering their capabilities for voice,¹⁴ work and education. In order to do this, case studies were conducted on new and/or innovative programmes that support (disadvantaged) young people in their transitions between education, training and work, and were provided by organisations across the public, private and third sectors. The transitions of young people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market, and who are not involved in any specific kind of programme, were also considered. The groups of young people of concern in the case studies were early school leavers (France, Italy, Switzerland), unemployed young people (Denmark, UK), those lacking skills and qualifications (Austria, Germany, Poland) and higher education graduates experiencing difficulties finding the work they wanted (Sweden). The case studies were analysed by applying the Capability Approach, in particular focusing upon

¹⁴Voice has been defined as '*the extent to which people are allowed to express their wishes, expectations and concerns in collective decision-making processes and make them count*' (Bonvin 2012: 15).

the young people's capability for voice, work and education. Details of the operationalisation of the Capability Approach in the qualitative case studies can be found in Hollywood et al. (2012).

A common survey framework was developed for use in all the qualitative case studies. The questions centred on the ways in which three capabilities in particular developed: voice, work and education. Rather than using a predefined list of capabilities (Nussbaum 2000, 2003), the approach focused on capabilities specific to the contexts of the wider aims of the WorkAble thus acknowledging that the Capability Approach is used for different goals (Robeyns 2005a, 2006; Alkire 2007). Four factors were identified as core to the development of these capabilities:

1. Resources: what resources are available for the initiatives in order to help develop the capabilities of young people and what resources do the beneficiaries bring with them to the programmes. It was acknowledged that individuals could achieve different functionings, as they have different conceptions of what they have reason to value (Robeyns 2005b).
2. Empowerment: are beneficiaries empowered to have autonomy, freedom and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the initiatives (Sen 1985, 1998) or do they have to comply with organisational expectations (Bonvin and Moachon 2008).
3. Individual conversion factors: whether individuals have the necessary conversion factors in terms of individual characteristics (e.g. gender, education, social status) to transform resources into capabilities (Robeyns 2005b; Bonvin and Moachon 2008).
4. External conversion factors: the role of external social and structural factors (e.g. labour market conditions, welfare policies, social stratification) in the conversion of resources into capabilities/functionings (Robeyns 2005b; Bonvin and Orton 2009).

In order to answer these questions, the focus was on individual accounts and these were used to examine the development of capabilities at: the micro-level (the subjective, professional and interactive level); the meso-level (the interactive, institutional and conceptual level) and the macro-level (the political and societal level).

Table 7.1 summarises the methods used in the qualitative element of WorkAble.

As well as the qualitative methods described above, a quantitative analysis of young people's transitions from education to work was undertaken. Using the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) longitudinal data as well as more in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries, the quantitative element of WorkAble sought to identify and understand transitions from the educational system to the labour market amongst young Europeans and whether educational strategies contribute to extending their capabilities for work and social participation. The quantitative element in particular analysed the degree to which comparable educational attainments amongst young people led to different labour market opportunities depending on the configuration of labour market and educational regimes as well as the relationship

Table 7.1 Summary of the methods used in the qualitative element of the research

Method	Rationale	Case study example
Interviews with programme beneficiaries/young people	Insight into young people's individual experiences of their transitions and/or the programmes they are enrolled in. The development of the capabilities for voice, work and education was focused upon by some	In the German case study, problem-centred interviews were conducted with young people. The aim was to examine how do young people experience, interpret and value aspects of the school-to-work transition and the programme they were involved with
Interviews with programme deliverers	Insight into the programmes in terms of organisational processes, every day practices and profiles, and how these affect the young people's transitions. This method also captured individual experiences	In the UK case study, interviews were conducted with service managers and project workers in order to get their insights into the programme delivery. In the Austrian case study, the explorative and expert interviews with managers, trainers and social pedagogues gave an insight into the logic, philosophy and ways in which the programme managed the beneficiaries' transition into employment
Interviews with policy-makers	To understand institutional processes, frameworks and policy involvement, and the impact of public action on the development of capabilities	The French case study included semi-structured interviews with the regional public authorities and in the Italian case study with policy-makers from the regional council. The case study team interviewed representatives from the head offices of the programmes (i.e. those responsible for the programme direction)
Interviews with employers, union representatives and employment office	To provide a labour market perspective	The use of this method was specific to the Swedish case study which focused on higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job
Interviews with employees at the university	To understand how students voice their opinion and make it count within the public policy process and how policy documents, texts and accounts are used in practice	The use of this method was specific to the Swedish case study
Group interviews with beneficiaries	Overview, evidence on how the youngsters interact, preparation for the face-to-face interviews and understanding the programmes' effects on capability development	The French case used both small group interviews of 3–5 pupils and larger class groups (greater than 10 pupils). The interview guide focused on capability for voice, education and employment

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Method	Rationale	Case study example
Group interviews/focus groups with policy makers and project workers	Understand the level of the organisational processes and interactions	The Italian case study team conducted focus groups with policy-makers from the regional council and project leaders/social workers from the programme organisation. In conjunction with the other methods, they facilitated the investigation of conversion factors and the implementation process. For the Danish case study, group discussions arose spontaneously when interviewing teachers
Participant observation	Understand the level of the organisational processes and interactions	The Italian case study team conducted participant observation of various phases of the programme. The Polish case study was unable to use participant observation due access and resource constraints
Documentary analysis	Contextual information. For some, documentary analysis aided case selection and was used for the purposes of triangulation	The Swiss case study used documentary analysis to understand the political and economic context of the programme and to identify the main stakeholders in the programme
Statistical data analysis	Case selection and triangulation	The Polish case study team used this method for the selection of a relevant educational initiative to study. It also helped plan the rest of the research as well as supplementing and controlling information from the interviews and the interpretation of results

Developed from Hollywood et al. (2012: pages 9–11 and pages 16–17)

between education, transitional trajectories and individual well-being and social exclusion and how this relationship varied between different EU member states.

EU-SILC data were used by the teams to make comparisons between countries, although in addition some studies focused on national data sources from a small sample of countries.¹⁵ EU-SILC comprises of cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional micro-data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. It is based on a common framework rather than a common survey. Variables are collected at the individual and the household levels (Eurostat 2010,

¹⁵ Some of the analysis made use of datasets other than EU-SILC data to make more in-depth studies of specific countries. The British Household Panel Survey was used to explore the effects of scarring on transitions of young people in the UK and the Northern Swedish Cohort study to examine the long-term mental health effects of two different forms of unemployment experiences in Sweden.

2011a). The minimum sample size surveyed every year for the cross sectional data is approximately 130,000 households and 270,000 persons aged over 16. For the longitudinal data, approximately 100,000 households and 200,000 persons aged over 16 participate (Eurostat 2011b). It must be acknowledged that EU-SILC does have certain limitations, e.g. varying approaches to data collection in different countries (Lohmann 2011). However, for the purposes of pan European Union research, the fact that EU-SILC is made up of representative samples of the total population in each country made it possible to compare the situation of young people with other age groups, which is essential in order to understand what characteristics in each country are specific to young people and what are more general country, or regime, characteristics. EU-SILC data have been previously used in research adopting a capabilities perspective. For example, Vero et al. (2012) examine European employment security indicators derived from EU-SILC data and Lehwess-Litzmann (2012) analyses the coincidence of employment flexibility and poverty using EU-SILC micro-data.

A range of analytical methods was used such as descriptive analysis, parametric statistics, OLS and logistic regression, cluster analysis and multivariate analysis. This is summarised in Table 7.2, along with the main conclusions drawn.

7.5 Reflections on Measuring Capabilities in Qualitative and Quantitative Research

This section summarises reflections on operationalising the Capability Approach (based upon the views of the different WorkAble teams).

The research teams highlighted some methodological issues that need to be considered when undertaking qualitative research, especially with hard to reach and vulnerable groups. While research ethics demand that careful consideration be given to working with such groups, in addition official approval may be needed to undertake research in some (national) contexts, and the possible delays that this may cause need to be factored into the research timetable. Gatekeepers (organisations through which the researchers access interviewees, such as agencies supporting young people) are often crucial in enabling research teams to get access to vulnerable groups. However, they can place conditions on the research team (e.g. when participants can be interviewed, whether audio recordings can be taken) that may have a great effect on access to participants and the ability to accurately record their accounts. The use of gatekeepers can also affect the relationship between the researcher and the participants (see, e.g. Sixsmith et al. 2003; Emmel et al. 2007 for further discussions on using gatekeepers to access hard to reach groups). Some teams noted that the young people they engaged with viewed them as part of the ‘establishment’ and therefore it was not always easy to develop trust with them. The importance of research participants being able to relate to the researcher should not be underestimated (Oakley 1990; Finch 1993; Sixsmith et al. 2003). While these are arguably more

Table 7.2 Summary of the questions asked and methods used in the quantitative element of the research

For example	Theme and main findings	Dataset	Analysis
A	Theme: Labour market trajectories of young Europeans and educational and occupational intergenerational social mobility in 26 European countries. Main findings: In the great majority of European countries, education systems and labour markets; higher educational levels lead to better jobs and better life chances; but the number of good and top jobs in a given labour market system is always limited, regardless of the educational level of its workforce, so the rewards from higher education vary	EU-SILC and matrices of the transitions between the three major labour market statuses (employment, unemployment and inactivity) were used following the OECD's Employment Outlook series	Descriptive analysis of labour market trajectories based on transition matrices Logistic regression to explore the relationship between the selected socioeconomic variables and transitions between non-employment (including both unemployment and inactivity) and employment. The reference country is the UK, the reference education level is first stage of tertiary education, the reference marital status is divorced, the reference health status is very bad and the reference gender is female
B	Theme: Effects of scarring on transitions of young people in the UK. Main findings: The results indicate that periods of unemployment while young lead to scarring in terms of pay and unemployment, but not significantly for well-being (measured by life satisfaction), with some other factors being important in different periods for the cohort. Second, the importance of people losing confidence appears to be important in all cases and indicates that such psychological factors need to be considered more carefully as they affect the capabilities of young people in the labour market	British Household Panel Survey waves H, which is mainly 1998, and R, which is mainly 2008. The cohort of those aged 18–24 in 1998 are followed for a decade, hence by 2008 they are 28–34 years old. Sample size varies by model, up to 565 participants	Pay: an Ordinary Least Squares regression model was used to fit the natural log of the last month's current pay. Further variables were included in the analysis in order to determine the scarring effects unemployment 5 and 10 years previously Unemployment: As the dependent variable was binary (employed or unemployed), a binary logistic regression was used to obtain the probability of being unemployed in the respective year Satisfaction with life: A binary logistic regression model was used to model satisfied with life versus not particularly satisfied. In this model, further financial related variables were included

C	The theme: Labour market trajectories and young Europeans' capabilities to avoid poverty, social exclusion and dependency in 23 European countries. Main findings: Young people are variously exposed to different types of labour market trajectories but this does not explain many of the differences in poverty, deprivation and independent living between EU countries. It is identified that Nordic countries have a system where young people have the capability to set up an independent household at an early age. It makes them relatively poor financially, but not particularly deprived; and it could be that they believe that such poverty is a price worth paying for being capable of living a life they have reason to value	EU-SILC from 2007–2008. The sample was restricted to those aged 16–65, focusing on the age span 16–25 (sample size of 26,755). A 3-year panel was selected: those who participated from 2006–2008 and those who participated from 2005–2007	Cluster analysis was used to derive labour market trajectories from monthly information about 'main activities', that is, cluster analysis was used to extract the main independent variables. The substantial analysis was carried out with a mixed model regression
D	The theme: The long-term mental health effects of two different forms of unemployment experiences in Sweden. Main findings: There are strong negative effects of open unemployment on mental health in the short term, with severe scarring effects at age 21; but participation in youth programmes seems not to cause the same negative short- and long-term mental health scarring as open unemployment when young	The cohort includes all pupils who at age 16 in 1981 attended, or should have attended, the last year of compulsory school in a medium-sized industrial town in northern Sweden (sample size of 1,083). The participants were revisited at ages 18, 21, 30 and 42. Register data was also used from the Longitudinal Integration Database for Sick Leave and Labour Market Studies	Pearson correlations for original descriptions of the relationship between the two exposure variables and mental health at ages 16, 18, 21, 30 and 42
E	The theme: A longitudinal study of parental social class, education and the non-market capabilities of subjective health, voice and agency. Main findings: First, class background matters for the non-market capabilities of agency and voice, but not for subjective health. Second, education, primarily university level, matters for the non-market capabilities of voice, agency and health. Third, social class of origin is strongly related to educational attainment. Finally, education matters more for youths with a blue-collar background and less for those with a higher white-collar background for all three non-market capabilities studied	The Swedish Survey of Living Conditions, an annual individual level survey of living conditions that is based on in-person interviews with a random sample of the population aged 16–74. A partial panel approach was used from 1979 and all respondents who were still teenagers and participating in one of the surveys 1988–1995 and reinterviewed 8 years later (1996–2003) were selected (sample size 1,058)	Multivariate analyses using standard techniques. The voice variable is treated as a continuous variable and OLS regressions are utilised. The regression coefficients represent the estimated difference on the voice scale between the study category and a reference category, all other control variables in the model being equal. For the agency and subjective health variables, binary logistic regressions are applied

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued)

For example	Theme and main findings	Dataset	Analysis
F	Theme: A comparison of the labour market outcomes of early school leavers in France, Italy, Poland and Sweden using a capability-based approach. Main findings: The jobs available to early school leavers are, for the most part, temporary or compulsorily part-time and they indicate that they lack the capability to enjoy work that they have reason to value. Second, the findings demonstrate the limitations of the category of people aged 18–24 when analysing school-to-work transitions	EU-SILC from 2007, not distinguishing between lower and upper secondary school	For the analysis of the labour market outcomes for early school leavers, the authors harmonised EU-SILC data. To provide figures that matched with the accounts categories and frames defined at the European level, they elaborated national sources either prior to or during the questionnaire design or later in statistical processing procedures
G	Theme: Empirical evidence from 21 European countries as to whether active labour spending would enhance the capability for work of entrants. Main findings: On average, active labour market policies have little, if any, effect on the capability for work	EU-SILC data from 2007. The sample was restricted to those aged 16–30 and who left the educational system prior to 2005–2006. A 3-year panel was used in order to have a sufficient sample: those who participated 2006–2008 and those who participated 2005–2007. The total sample size of young people was 20,909	The analysis starts from the hypothesis that people are nested within countries: it provides fixed effects, assumed to be homogeneous across countries, and random effects which capture differences between countries. Seven multilevel logit models reveal the relationship between labour market trajectories and the conversion factors that may influence these variables. Individual conversion factors are sex, level of education, residential autonomy and parental situation (when applicable). Social conversion factors include Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) expenditures, youth unemployment rate and early school leaver rate

general issues, they are important when operationalising the Capability Approach with such vulnerable groups.

The capability for voice was especially relevant when considering engagement with the young people in the qualitative research. Many of the young people were not used to having ‘voice’ so it was important for the researchers to develop trust with them. Equally the young people sometimes found it difficult to answer questions about what they would want to ‘change’ or ‘develop’ in their lives or where do they wanted to make a contribution to society because this is something they had never considered before as they had never been asked what they would like to do. Voice and choice may not have a role if the institutional focus is solely on the functioning for work. Due to the constraints in the labour market, young people may value any job rather than having no job at all (Taylor 2005; Schmelzer 2011), and they may have low aspirations (Morris et al. 1999; Schoon and Parsons 2002; Kintrea et al 2011; Spielhofer et al. 2011). The issue of adaptive preferences is relevant here as people’s choices may be ‘deformed’ by a range of factors (Nussbaum 2000, p. 114) with Bonvin and Farvaque (2005) arguing that institutions that do not promote the development of the capability for voice produce adaptive preferences. In addition research needs to consider whether the initiatives really encourage young people to choose a life they have reason to value or whether they encourage young people to choose a life as defined as valuable by social/organisational norms.

Qualitative research methods themselves can hamper the development of young people’s voice. Young people may not be used to expressing their views freely with adults (Shaw et al. 2011). Young people may find it hard to answer open questions; in group interviews the group dynamics may make it difficult for some participants to voice their opinions if others are more vocal; those with literacy needs may find it hard to answer questionnaires on their own; and low self-confidence, concentration problems, etc., may hamper young people’s ability to engage in the research process. But while young people’s unwillingness or difficulty to answer questions should be addressed through developing trust with them and using a range of innovative research techniques¹⁶ to enable them to have voice, it should also be considered that this lack of engagement itself can be a sign of young people voicing their freedom not to engage in the research process.

It is difficult to draw conclusions as to whether the qualitative case studies revealed essential features of the Capability Approach. The case studies highlighted and examined the contexts in which a young person’s capabilities might be formed. However, it is acknowledged in the literature concerning both the qualitative and quantitative operationalisation of the Capability Approach that while it is possible to observe outcomes (functionings), observing an individual’s freedoms (capabilities) is much harder (Miquel and Lopez 2011). One of the case study teams reflected of the capabilities for voice, education and work that the capabil-

¹⁶ See Hazel (1995), Punch (2002) and Barker and Weller (2003) who outline examples such as using vignettes and photographs to encourage discussion, and ‘secret boxes’ where participants can anonymously write down aspects of their experiences that they would not feel comfortable discussing directly with the researcher when researching the experiences of children and young people.

ity for voice was often the most evident and so was easier to find indicators for. A possible way to address this in future applications of the Capability Approach would be to disaggregate each of the capabilities into a series of indicators before undertaking the research rather than trying to identify them afterwards.

Reflections can also be made from the quantitative research. The Capability Approach invites researchers to conceptualise and examine the school-to-work transition in a different way that goes beyond focusing on a quantifiable measure like the employment rate at a given date. Measuring capabilities in quantitative research can be difficult. In the quantitative element of WorkAble, following the Capability Approach, the teams examined what young people wanted to do and emphasised the abilities of young people to do what they wanted. There was a focused search on variables linked to the Capability Approach. The lack of ‘capability variables’ in existing datasets such as EU-SILC and national surveys was emphasised, with teams better able to measure achieved functionings and outcomes rather than freedoms and capabilities. As outlined in Sect. 7.2, capabilities cannot be observed in relation to outcomes that individuals have reason to value, only in relation to factual outcomes. In order to address this, some partners did use proxies for capabilities, such as variables regarding a person’s financial situation as a surrogate for their financial capability – defined as being able to manage finances day to day, plan ahead, select financial products and seek financial advice and the motivation to efficiently manage finances and effect change (McQuaid and Egdell 2010) (see example B in Table 7.2). Others used data on labour market trajectories as an indicator of capabilities (see example C in Table 7.2) or the capability to appeal against a decision made by the authorities as an indicator of the capability of agency (see example E in Table 7.2). There are also other limitations of using EU-SILC data when undertaking research from a Capability Approach. The sample size at a local or regional level may be too small to make generalised statements about early school leavers, for example. One WorkAble team outlined the lack of information on work and labour market outcomes and that EU-SILC sees employment as the ideal functioning, without taking account of its quality or the person’s specific circumstances. Despite these limitations longitudinal data such as EU-SILC do enable researchers to tackle the functioning aspect of the capability for work in a dynamic way that goes beyond simply looking at the employment rate. Overall, however, given the basic restrictions described above, the Capability Approach adds some normative value (highlighting freedom to choose) but remains focused more on functionings in its quantitative empirical applications.

Therefore in order to conduct more effective research in the future, more measures of capabilities need to be collected. This could encompass direct questions on what people have reason to value in terms of their current outcomes, for example, using a scale measure to ascertain how much an individual values their current job. The employment quality issue would also need to be taken into account when studying the school-to-work transition. These perspectives could be achieved by developing new large scale, and preferably longitudinal, surveys specifically to measure capabilities. Otherwise capability questions could be added to existing surveys. Ideally an individual’s preferences before they achieved a certain outcome need to be identified (but even

if this were possible, there would need to be imposed strong assumptions about stability of preferences, as what people have reason to value may change over time). Further information is also needed relating to the context of people's lives in order to understand what they have reason to value. Future research from a Capability Approach could also use both longitudinal and linked data in order to tackle both aspects of freedom, i.e. opportunity and freedom.

Conclusions

Extensive and increasingly frequent empirical applications of the Capability Approach across a broad range of fields of investigation show that researchers can meet many of the challenges posed by this approach by adopting various empirical strategies and technical solutions. This chapter has provided an overview of some of the more significant contributions in research literature and recent related empirical studies on capabilities, labour markets and education in Europe, using examples from recent European projects inspired by, or based on, the Capability Approach. The intrinsic complexity and multilayered structure of this approach seems to be particularly suitable for conceptualising and contextualising the education-employment-community integration nexus. The quantitative and qualitative analyses presented here set out some of the major issues concerning the empirical application of the Capabilities Approach and put forward some interesting perspectives and examples for those who wish to make use of the Capability Approach for future investigation in this field.

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Chapter 8

Labour Market Trajectories and Young Europeans' Capabilities to Avoid Poverty, Social Exclusion and Dependency: A Comparative Analysis of 23 European Countries

Björn Halleröd and Hans Ekbrand

8.1 Introduction

Young people in today's Europe find it increasingly difficult to get a job, support themselves and establish an independent household. At the same time, although there are large differences between countries, the young generation is better educated and, hence, possesses more formal human capital than ever. European countries are also ageing societies, which means that relatively large cohorts are about to retire from the labour market and that we are facing an increasing support burden on those who are working. Hence, at the same time as young people find it increasingly hard to make the transition into adulthood, there is an elaborated discussion about a threatening labour shortage and that too few have to support too many. This paper builds on the not particularly bold assumption that young people want a life without economic hardship and want to establish an independent household. That is, we assume that these are functions that young people have reason to value. The question is why young Europeans to a large extent lack the capabilities to do so. More specifically, we want to investigate the link between young people's living conditions and their labour market-related position.

Our point of departure is that all people are in a transitional phase that a human life is a transition from birth to death that involves a string of more or less significant changes. It is only when we look at the society through a snapshot lens that we can make categorisations that provide a picture of, we would say, deceptive stability that makes it seemingly meaningful to talk about, for example, students, workers, single mothers and unemployed as if they were fixed entities. If we instead accept

B. Halleröd (✉) • H. Ekbrand

Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: bjorn.hallerod@sociology.gu.se; Hans.Ekbrand@socav.gu.se

the idea that transition is the normal state, we can also see not only that some periods in life such as adolescence are more volatile than others but investigate to what degree different types of trajectories have different implications on people's life.

At any point of time, people can be assigned a specific relationship to the labour market: full-time employed, self-employed, inactive, retired, student, unemployed, etc. These positions are, from a longitudinal perspective, more or less temporal as individuals move from one position to another. As a consequence every labour market position that from a cross-sectional perspective appears as fixed is from a life course perspective representing a more or less temporal situation. Once we acknowledge this, we also have to take into account that at any given point of time, there exist several different types of, for example, unemployment. It also follows that the unemployed and the employed should not be looked upon as two clearly separated categories. They should instead be looked upon as two heterogeneous groups of individuals that at one given point of time in varying degrees are included or excluded from the labour market (Furåker 2001; Strandh 2000).

Rather than dividing people into specific categories depending on their current labour market position, we should try to understand different employment positions as existing along a continuum of marginalisation from total integration to total exclusion (Svedberg 1997). But it is not only about, more or less, longer or shorter unemployment spells, it is also about types of transitions. It is one thing to be unemployed in the process of leaving higher education and establish oneself on the labour market, a completely different thing to start as a full-time worker and then be pushed into unemployment just to end up in an early retirement schema (Halleröd 2003). Hence, two individuals that during a given period of time are exposed to the same amount of unemployment can nevertheless be in very different labour market positions. One of them could be caught in a vicious circle, pushed out of employment and into poverty, while the other might be in a process from education into labour market integration and economic security.

Our aim is to answer four specific research questions:

1. What types of dominating labour market-related trajectories (LMRT) exist within the EU?
2. What kind of LMRTs are specifically common among young Europeans?
3. What kind of LMRTs are especially related to poverty, social exclusion and lack of independency among young Europeans?
4. Are there substantial differences between EU countries?

8.2 Data and Labour Market Trajectories

We use the EU-SILC longitudinal dataset from 2007 to 2008 from 23 EU countries (including the non-member Norway). Since our analysis builds on longitudinal data, we are forced to restrict our analysis to countries that are covered by the EU-SILC longitudinal dataset. The included countries are: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE),

Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), and the United Kingdom (UK).

Data makes up a representative sample of the total population, but in this case we have restricted our sample to the age spectra 16–65, focusing on the age span 16–25. The EU-SILC panel data follows a 4-year cycle, which means that every individual is followed for 4 years and that every year a fourth of the sample is replaced by a new panel section. An effect of this system is that the fewer years we are using, the larger sample we get. In order to have a sufficient sample, we have decided to use a 3-year panel. In a first step we have selected those who participated during 2006–2008. In order to further boast the sample size, we have also added the sample section that participated during 2005–2007. The total survey size is 148,619 and the age-restricted (16–25) sample size is 26,755.

8.2.1 Labour Market Trajectories

Longitudinal EU-SILC data contains monthly information about ‘main activity’. At every interview respondents are asked to give a retrospective description of their main activity. For every month nine alternatives are offered:

1. Employee (full-time)
2. Employee (part-time)
3. Self-employed (full-time)
4. Self-employed (part-time)
5. Unemployed
6. Retired
7. Student
8. Other inactive
9. Compulsory military service

Thus, all individuals included in our working sample have 36 consecutive monthly measurements of main activity. We use this information to derive clusters of specific labour market trajectories. As a first step, before moving on with the cluster analysis, we reduce the number of main activity position. The ninth category is very small and exists only in some of the countries and therefore this group is excluded from the analysis. We also collapse full-time and part-time self-employed. Hence, the analysis is based on seven main activity positions, which also means that seven clusters, those who do not change position during the observation period, are given from the beginning. Among the nonstatic, transitions are observed on a monthly basis during a 3-year period, which gives 7^{35} theoretically possible transitions. Even though the actually observed trajectories are considerably less, 7^{35} is a very large figure; there is a need to systematise observed data. In order to do so, a cluster analysis where each month was considered as one variable was conducted.

To be able to cluster categorical data, with a large dataset of tens of thousands of cases, the distance matrix used by the clustering algorithm ‘clara’ (Maechler et al. 2014) was based on a pseudo-Gower metric of dummy variables. The resulting clusters represent unstable labour market status, transitions, over the measurement period. The clustering analysis reduced the complexity of the data into 34 clusters that describe different labour market trajectories. We reduced data further by merging clusters with similar main activities onto a categorisation of 17 trajectories, of which seven were stable and, hence, ten are derived from the cluster analysis.

Table 8.1 displays the trajectories. The first seven are stable (EFT=employed full-time, EPT=employed part-time) with a straightforward interpretation: the EFT cluster has been employed full-time for 36 consecutive months, while Stud cluster has been students for 36 months, etc. In order to label the unstable trajectories, the following logic has been used. The first part of the name describes the most common position within the cluster at the beginning of the observation window, i.e. the 3-year period, while the second part of the name, consequently, describes the most common activity within the cluster by the end of the observation window. For example, the category ‘Stud-EFT’ consists of people whose main activity was ‘student’ at the beginning of the observation window and who predominately are full-time employed by the end of the period. Likewise, ‘EFT-Retired’ consists of people that retire during the observed period. There are five trajectories whose label ends with ‘us’. Within these categories the main activity is the same both at the beginning and the end of the period, but it has not been stable throughout the observed period. ‘Stud-us’

Table 8.1 Clusters of main activity trajectories in 23 European countries (16–64 years)

Trajectories	Frequency	Per cent	Per cent in poverty	Per cent of all poor
EFT	48,021	32.31	2.54	7.39
EPT	3,368	2.27	5.11	1.04
Self	7,987	5.37	15.66	7.57
Stud	7,771	5.23	13.37	6.29
Retired	13,603	9.15	8.47	6.98
Unemp	1,420	0.96	45.95	3.95
Inactive	9,422	6.34	23.57	13.45
EFT-EFT	10,500	7.07	6.41	4.07
Empl-us	8,739	5.88	10.09	5.33
Self-us	6,721	4.52	17.04	6.93
Stud-us	6,151	4.14	19.60	7.29
Unemp-us	7,780	5.23	31.90	15.00
Into-empl	3,045	2.05	9.08	1.67
Stud-EFT	3,436	2.31	7.37	1.53
EFT-retired	1,959	1.32	5.87	0.70
EFT-Unemp/inactive	2,363	1.59	19.84	2.83
Inactive-us	6,333	4.26	20.81	7.98
All	148,619	100	11.12	100

has mainly been studying during the whole period, but during the 3-year period they are also engaged in other activities, most predominately full-time or part-time work. 'EFT-us' has mainly been employed full-time but has mixed this activity with, for example, unemployment and/or inactivity. The group 'Unemp-us' consists of people that are moving back and forth between unemployment and other activities. We use a slash to indicate that there are two distinguished main activities, for example, people that are moving between employment (EFT or EPT) and unemployment or inactivity (EFT-Unemp/inactive).

8.3 Activity Trajectories and Income Poverty Among Young Europeans: Description

8.3.1 Clusters and Poverty

We start the descriptive part of the empirical analysis discussing poverty and LMRTs. The term poverty refers to income poverty, and a person is poor if he or she lives in a household with an equivalent disposable household income that falls below 60 % of the median equivalent disposable income in the member state where he or she lives. Hence, our poverty measure is equal to the measure of 'at-risk of poverty' used within the EU. The concept poverty is consistently referring to this definition throughout the paper.

Table 8.1 gives an overview of the total population (16–64 years of age), the size of the trajectories, the poverty rate in each group and the distribution of poverty between groups. Looking at this we can see that the poverty risk is clearly related to a marginal labour market position. Looking at the fourth column, we can, for example, see among full-time employed the poverty rate is below 3 %, while it is 11 % among those who are employed but on an unstable basis. The poverty rate is considerably higher among students, inactive and in particular among the unemployed; almost every third person in the Unemp-us and almost every second of the consistently unemployed are poor.

Table 8.2 gives the same information as Table 8.1 but is restricted to people aged between 16 and 25. Apart from the fact that there are very few who retired, we guess that the few, 25 cases, who are found in this category are measurement errors or young persons that suffer from some kind of disabilities; the picture looks largely the same among the young as in the total population, i.e. people with a marginal labour market positions suffer from the highest poverty risk. The huge difference compared to the total population is that almost every second young person in poverty are students, i.e. are found in the categories 'Stud' or 'Stud-us'.

It is obvious from Table 8.2 that there are very few young people in some of the main activity categories. For some categories, it is just a natural consequence of age-specific circumstances; very few young are, for example, retired or about to get retired. In other cases it is, even though the initial sample is fairly big, a result of the limited sample size. In order to continue the analysis and be able to give

Table 8.2 Clusters of main activity trajectories in among young Europeans (<26) in 23 European countries

Trajectories	Frequency	Per cent	Per cent in poverty	Per cent of all poor
EFT	3,196	12.05	2.55	2.17
EPT	96	0.36	8.33	0.21
Self	164	0.62	17.68	0.78
Stud	7,617	28.71	13.17	26.89
Retired	25	0.09	0.00	0.00
Unemp	224	0.84	50.45	3.03
Inactive	371	1.40	32.34	3.19
EFT-us	1,682	6.34	7.38	3.30
Empl-us	1,128	4.25	15.61	4.70
Self-us	428	1.61	16.86	1.93
Stud-us	5,626	21.20	19.45	29.31
Unemp-us	1,462	5.51	30.23	11.84
Into-empl	751	2.83	8.02	1.61
Stud-EFT	2,873	10.83	7.66	5.88
EFT-retired	3	0.01	0.00	0.00
EFT-Unemp/inactive	340	1.28	18.45	1.66
Other inactive	546	2.06	23.81	3.49
All	26,532	100	14.09	100

country-specific results, an additional reduction of LMRTs is made. Table 8.3 shows how the categories have been collapsed. The main rationale has been to put all unstable trajectories that involve some kind of employment in one category labelled ‘Empl-us’. In this category we find young people that are about, but not without difficulties, to establish themselves at the labour market. We have distinguished this group from those who are found in categories where the initial main activity is employment but where the end activity is inactivity or, in a few cases, retirement. Our assumption is that this is a group that risks a more permanent labour market exclusion. For the sake of simplicity, we have, even though it is not entirely accurate, labelled this group ‘Inactive’. Since very few, less than 1 %, are unemployed for 36 consecutive months, this category has been merged with the Unemp-us group, i.e. a category where unemployment has been the dominant but not sole main activity.

Looking at the overall European picture, in Table 8.4, we can see that almost 45 % of the young Europeans are either stable or unstable students. A fourth of all young people are in unstable employment, while only 13 % are in stable employment. About 6 % are in transition from education to full-time employment. Almost 5 % are in the inactive category and about as many are in a trajectory from full-time employment to unemployment. Less than 3 % are in a transition from education to unemployment. The distribution of LMRTs in single countries are shown in the Appendix, Table 8.8.

Table 8.3 Merged clusters of main activity trajectories

Trajectories	Merged trajectories
EFT	EFT
Student	Student
Unemp	Unemployed
Unemp-us	
EPT	Empl-us
Self-employed	
EFT-us	
Empl-us	
Self-us	
Retired	Inactive
Inactive	
EFT-retired	
Other inactive	
EFT-Unemp/inactive	EFT-unemp
Stud-us	Stud-us
Stud-EFT	Stud-EFT
Into-empl	Stud-unemp

Table 8.4 Merged clusters of LMT among young Europeans (<26) in 23 European countries

Merged trajectories	Frequency	Per cent	Per cent in poverty	Per cent deprived	Per cent not independent
EFT	3,196	12.05	2.55	16.41	70.46
Stud	7,617	28.71	13.17	16.62	96.01
Unemp-us	1,686	6.35	32.92	42.61	79.95
Empl-us	3,498	13.18	11.72	18.74	69.50
Inactive	945	3.56	26.43	39.35	54.92
Empl-unemp	340	1.28	18.45	28.85	62.94
Stud-us	5,626	21.20	19.45	17.90	90.38
Stud-empl	2,873	10.83	7.66	17.42	86.36
Into-empl	751	2.83	8.02	25.87	79.76
Total	26,532	100	14.09	20.12	83.83

The poverty rate among young Europeans varies, as can be seen in Fig. 8.1, a lot between different member states but the highest rate is found in a non-EU member Norway; every third young Norwegian lives in poverty. One has of course to notice that Norwegian poverty is measured in relation to the Norwegian median income. But our data shows, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, that following Norway in the upper end of the distribution is Finland, Denmark and Sweden. On the other hand, in the lower end of the distribution, we find the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ireland and Latvia. Thus, the results are clearly at odds with the general perception of living conditions and welfare differences between countries.

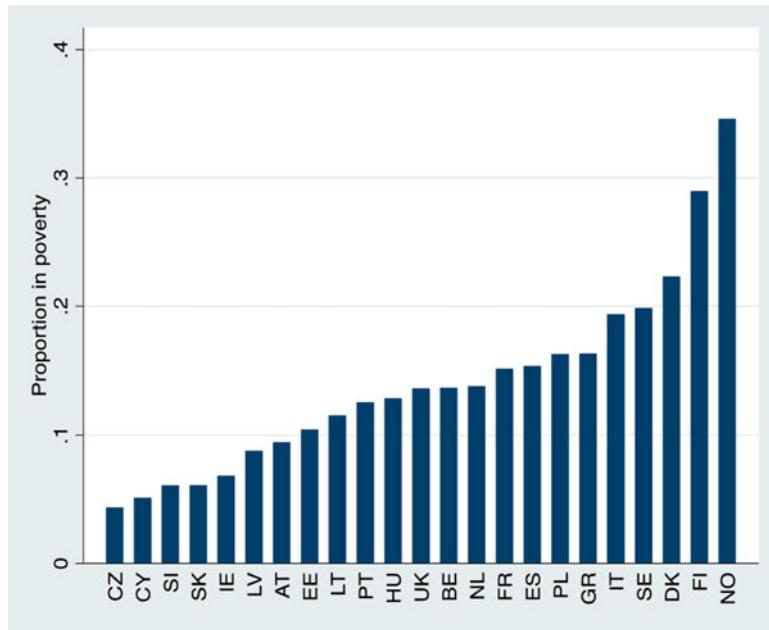


Fig. 8.1 Poverty rates among young (16–25) Europeans

In the following sections we shall shed additional light on these somewhat puzzling results. For the moment we just investigate whether there are any substantive country differences that relate to main activity trajectories.

Measures of relative income poverty give important information about the distributions of incomes within countries. In a more fundamental way, it gives information about ‘...Individuals, families and groups in the population // that // lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the society to which they belong’ (Townsend 1979, p. 31). However, it says very little about what, in this case, young people in different EU countries can or cannot do. It also builds on the assumption that young Europeans are comparing themselves with other people within their own country, not with young people within the EU as a whole. This is not the place to get lost in the seemingly endless debate about how to understand and measure poverty (Halleröd 1991, 1995, 2006); we just want to conclude that (A) it is far from clear that young Europeans are making mainly within-country comparisons when assessing their living conditions; hence it is not given that the nation state confines ‘the society to which they belong’. (B) We do not question that young people in Norway are facing a hard time, but when Norway, apart from Luxembourg, Europe’s richest country, has the highest youth poverty rate, we should at least look for other strategies to measure economic hardship.

8.3.2 Material Deprivation

Our measure of deprivation builds on a tradition that started with the work of Townsend (1979) and was developed by Mack and Lansley in the early 1980s (Mack and Lansley 1985). The method often referred to as the ‘consensual measure of poverty’ has subsequently been refined (Halleröd et al. 2006; Halleröd 1995) and found its way, in an albeit restricted form, into the EU-SILC. In this paper we largely follow the operationalisation suggested in a recent EU-report by Bradshaw and Mayhew (2011), which in turn are building on the work conducted by Guio (2009).

We use a set of indicators to identify what the household could not afford:

- To face unexpected expenses
- One week annual holiday away from home
- To pay for arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments)
- A meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day
- To keep home adequately warm
- To have a washing machine
- To have a telephone
- To have a personal car
- To have a computer
- No bath or shower
- No indoor flushing toilet for sole use of the household

Compared to the index used by Bradshaw and Mayhew, we have excluded the item ‘collar TV’ and added ‘computer’. The reason to exclude collar TV is that this particular item decreases the validity of the deprivation index. This is clear both from our analysis and Bradshaw and Mayhew’s own analysis. This result is also confirmed by analyses using a more comprehensive set of deprivation indicators (Halleröd et al. 2006). The reason to include computer is that it is an item that empirically contributes to the validity of the deprivation index and it is also an item that presumably is increasingly important, not least to young people. Making a simple additive index of the items results in a deprivation measure that ranges from 0 to 11. Again following Bradshaw and Mayhew, we set the dividing line between the deprived and non-deprived to three, i.e. anyone that scores 3 or higher on the deprivation index are defined as deprived. If this dividing line is more correct than any other or if we indeed need a dividing line at all is a more or less open question, which we won’t discuss further in this context (e.g. Bradshaw and Mayhew 2011; Halleröd et al. 2006; Halleröd 1995).

Figure 8.2 shows the deprivation rate among young Europeans in different EU countries. The ranking of countries is markedly different. Hungary, Poland and Latvia are now found in the upper end of the distribution, while the Nordic countries together with the Netherlands are found in the lower end. Thus, from a European perspective we can conclude that young people in poverty and deprived young people make up two fairly different populations. The question is then to see to what degree main activity trajectories relate to deprivation.

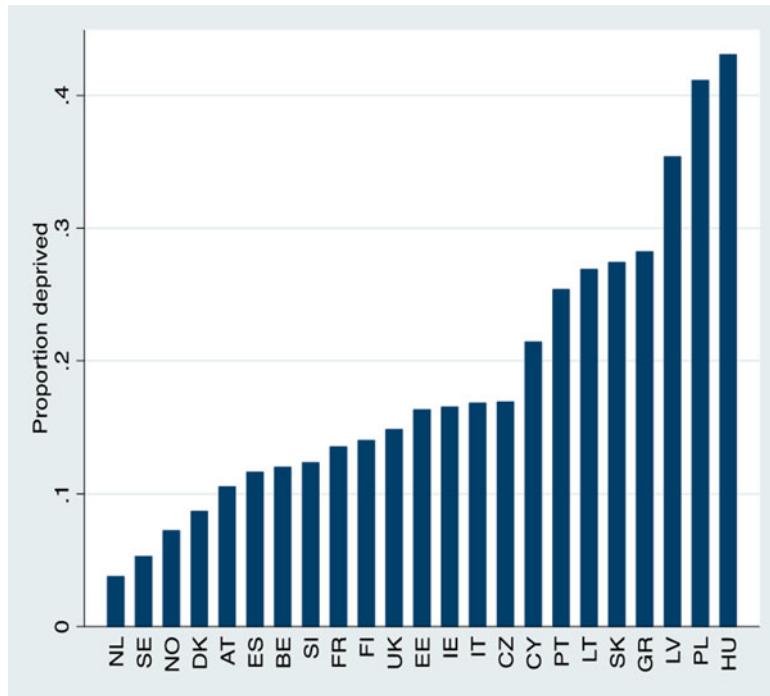


Fig. 8.2 Deprivation rates among young (16–25) Europeans

The most marked differences compared to poverty are, as can be seen from Table 8.4, that, compared to the poverty rate the deprivation rate is clearly higher among full-time employed (EFT). Otherwise, we can see that weak labour market attachment is closely related to deprivation.

8.3.3 *Independent Living*

Being able to leave the nest and forming an independent household is an important aspect of young people's capabilities. It is also important in relation to measures of both deprivation and poverty. One reason to why young people in countries like Norway or Denmark often are poor is that they have the capability to leave the nest early. As can be, the large majority of young Europeans are part of their parents' household. However, there are marked differences between countries: the Nordic countries followed by the Netherlands and the UK have the lowest fraction of young people living in the parental household. The differences between countries become much clearer if we divide the population into those below 22 years of age and those between 22 and 25 years of age. In the Nordic countries less than 20 % remains in

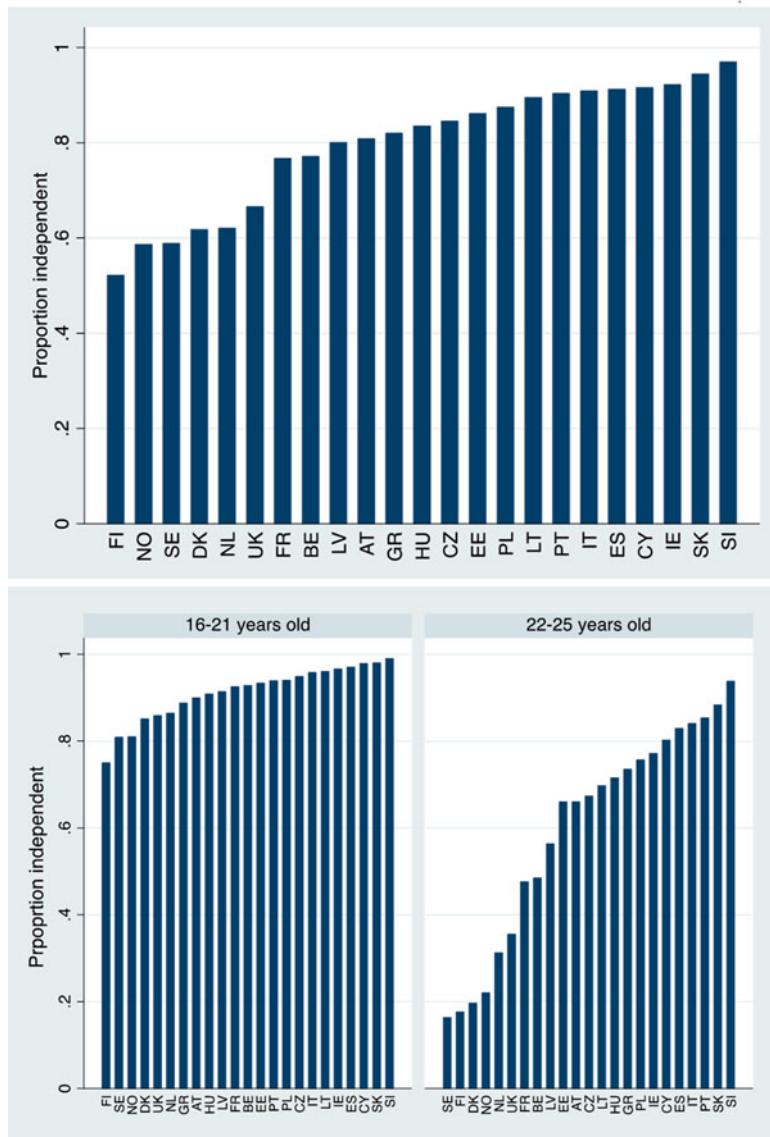


Fig. 8.3 Lack of independency rates among young Europeans (16–25 years)

the nest, while in the majority of countries, the figures vary from close to 70 % up to above 90 %. Hence, young Europeans live very different kind of lives (Fig. 8.3).

Relating nest leaving to LMRTs, we can see that students are overrepresented among ‘stayers’, while those who are working and, somewhat surprising, inactive more often have left the nest. But, since both nest leaving and LMRTs are highly age related, there is no reason to speculate further on the basis of a bivariate cross table.

8.4 A Mixed-Model Analysis of the Impact of Labour Market Trajectories

In the following a set of mixed-model analysis are presented. The analysis is based on the assumption that people are nested within countries and the analysis provides fixed effects that are assumed to homogenous across countries and random effects capturing differences between countries. Starting with analysing the relationship between LMRTs and household independency, i.e. whether or not young people have left the nest. We start with a null model, i.e. a model that only estimates country differences. We thereafter include LMRTs at the individual level in order to find out if and to what degree LMRTs affects individual probabilities and country differences. Thereafter we control for age, gender and education. In the final model we also control for GDP per capita. We thereafter repeat these steps using poverty as dependent variable. However, when analysing poverty in the third step we also control for nest leaving. Finally, we analyse deprivation in the same manner but in this case we in the third step include also poverty as control variable.

8.4.1 *Independent Living*

The estimated models are so-called linear probability models. There are two reasons why we have chosen a linear model instead of a logit model. First, the linear model allows a straightforward interpretation of the results in terms of proportions, and it has also been shown that a linear model basically presents identical significant estimates as the logit model (Hellevik 2007). Thus, the constant in the null model in Table 8.5 shows the proportion of young people that have not left the nest. This proportion is .79, i.e. 79 %, which differs a lot from the overall figure of 84 % in Table 8.4. The reason to this dissimilarity is that the regression model adjusts for differences in country sample sizes (basically assuming that all samples are equally large). Second, our stepwise approach means that we compare the effects of LMRTs between models with different sets of independent variables. Comparing logistic regression estimates, log odds or odds ratios, from different models is not unproblematic. Logistic regression estimates relate to an unobserved underlying latent variable y^* . The problem is that the variance of y^* is not fixed; it will change as variables are added to the model. It does so because the residual variance of y^* is fixed to the standard logistic distribution of 3.29. So, the variance of y^* is bound to increase as we improve our model, which means that we change scale and the size of the regression coefficient will be biased upwards as new variables are entered into the model (Mood 2009).

A mixed model produces both fixed effects and random effects. In this case it means the following: Fixed effects are assumed to be equal for all countries. Hence, the constant in the null model is the constant for all 21 countries. The first random parameter, ‘variance: constant’, tells us to what degree our 21 countries diverge

Table 8.5 Mixed model: LMRTs and independent living among young (16–25) people in the EU

	Null model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed effects				
Constant	0,789*	0,660*	1,500*	1,743*
Ref: EFT		0	0	0
Stud		0,240*	0,073*	0,073*
Unemp-us		0,077*	0,027*	0,027*
Empl-us		0,019*	-0,004	-0,004
Inactive		-0,155*	-0,161*	-0,161*
Empl-unemp		-0,067*	-0,072*	-0,072*
Stud-us		0,229*	0,095*	0,095*
Stud-Empl		0,185*	0,091*	0,091*
Into-empl		0,079*	0,042*	0,041*
Sex (male)			0,084*	0,084*
Age			-0,042*	-0,042*
Primary			-0,083*	-0,083*
Lower secondary			-0,048*	-0,048*
Upper secondary			-0,022*	-0,023*
Ref: Postsecondary			0	0
GDP				-0,002
Random effects				
Variance: constant	0,017*	0,016*	0,017*	0,011*
Variance: residual	0,123*	0,111*	0,101*	0,101*

* p< .05

from the overall constant. In this case we can see that the variance is 0.017 and significant; that is, there are statistical differences between countries. The other random parameter is ‘variance: residual’ that refers to the remaining within countries’ differences. Now, as we in model 1 add LMRTs, we can see in the fixed part of the model the average effect of trajectories on the probability to stay in the nest. They are fixed because they are supposed to be true – fixed – for all countries. If we assume that LMRTs explain differences between countries, we would like to see a decrease of the random parameter ‘variance: constant’. In this case this parameter only change marginally; hence, the fixed LMRTs effects only to a lesser degree explain country differences. However, they do explain more of the within-country variance, which is shown by the decrease of the residual variance. Adding additional individual level variables, sex, age and education, further reduces the residual variance but not the constant variance; hence, it explains some of the within-country difference but not differences between countries. The inclusion of age, sex and education substantially decreases the impact of LMRTs. Males are more likely to ‘stay home’, there is a strong age effect, and not having a postsecondary education decreases the probability to remain in the parental household. Thus, it is the well educated that tend to remain in the nest, which presumably is explained by their prolonged education. Finally, in model 3 we add the country level variable GDP per capita. This vari-

able does not affect the impact of the individual level variables but it does impact on the between-country variance. The effect of GDP is negative, i.e. the richer the country, the less likely that young people remain in the nest. If we make the assumption that young people across Europe have the same preferences when it comes to nest leaving, this result indicates that general economic constraints is an important factor restricting young Europeans capability to form an independent household.

8.4.2 Poverty

As in the analysis above, the null model and the fixed part of model 1 basically reproduce distributions that are already known from the descriptive part. The random part of Table 8.6 shows that inclusion of LMRTs explains part of the within-country differences but very little of the between-country differences. Hence, the different country compositions of LMRTs do not contribute in any substantive way to our

Table 8.6 Mixed model: LMRTs and poverty among young (16–25) people in the EU

	Null model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed effects				
Constant	0,140*	0,037*	0,613*	0,486*
Ref: EFT		0	0	0
Stud		0,115*	0,117*	0,117*
Unemp-us		0,289*	0,273*	0,273*
Empl-us		0,067*	0,064*	0,064*
Inactive		0,238*	0,194*	0,195*
Empl-Unemp		0,149*	0,129*	0,129*
Stud-us		0,145*	0,155*	0,155*
Stud-Empl		0,036*	0,048*	0,048*
Into-empl		0,053*	0,050*	0,050*
Not independent			-0,609*	-0,611*
Not independent*age			0,024*	0,024*
Sex (male)			0,001	0,001
Age			-0,024*	-0,024*
Primary			0,166*	0,167*
Lower secondary			0,064*	0,065*
Upper secondary			0,017*	0,018*
Ref: Postsecondary			0	0
GDP				0,001*
Random effects				
Variance: constant	0,005*	0,005*	0,003*	0,002*
Variance: residual	0,116*	0,111*	0,109*	0,109*

* p< .05

understanding of country differences in youth poverty. However, from model 3 we can see that there are other individual level variables that do contribute to our understanding of country differences. We can see that poverty is age related and is less common among older youths. There is also an education component that basically shows that the lower education, the higher poverty risk. The most important factor to understand country differences is, however, the ability to form an independent household. Staying in the parental home is a good insurance against poverty, or to put it more straightforward, parents' income offers protection against youth poverty. It is especially so among the youngest young; among the older young, parents offer less protection, which reasonably means that young people in poor families more than others lack the capability to leave the nest. Also, in relation to the findings about nest leaving, the results indicate that young people in richer countries become poor, relatively speaking, because they have the resources necessary to leave the nest.

8.4.3 Deprivation

Also when it comes to deprivation, we can conclude, by comparing the random part of the null model with model 1, that LMRTs explain part of the within-country residuals but to a lesser extent the between-country variation. Including additional independent individual variables, in this case including also poverty, reduces as expected the impact of LMRTs. Poverty increases the deprivation risk, while staying with parents decreases the risk, but just as the case with poverty, the older young are less protected by their parents. Among those who left the nest, deprivation is decreasing with age. Low education increases the deprivation risk. The final model shows that GDP reduces the between-country variance with about 50 % (this figure will in fact be even larger if we include an interaction between poverty and GDP, i.e. poverty in poor countries is worse than poverty in a rich country). Hence, the member states' economic development is much more important for deprivation among young people than their individual labour market trajectories (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7 Mixed model – LMRTs and deprivation among young (16–25) people in the EU

	Null model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed effects				
Constant	0,188*	0,157*	0,442*	0,736*
Ref: EFT		0	0	0
Stud		-0,013	-0,067*	-0,067*
Unemp-us		0,241*	0,139*	0,139*
Empl-us		0,032*	0,009	0,009
Inactive		0,210*	0,096*	0,096*
Empl-Unemp		0,107*	0,055*	0,055*
Stud-us		0,025*	-0,015	-0,015

(continued)

Table 8.7 (continued)

	Null model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Stud-Empl		0,009*	0,009	0,009
Into-empl		0,070*	0,044*	0,044*
Poverty			0,224*	0,224*
Independent			-0,268*	-0,267*
Independent*age			0,011*	0,011*
Sex (male)			-0,008	-0,008
Age			-0,015	-0,015
Primary			0,277*	0,276*
Lower secondary			0,141*	0,141*
Upper secondary			0,063*	0,063*
Ref: Postsecondary			0	0
GDP				-0,003*
Random effects				
Variance: constant	0,011*	0,010*	0,012*	0,004*
Variance: residual	0,150*	0,144*	0,134*	0,134*

* p< .05

Conclusion

Young people's living conditions vary greatly between European countries. The poverty rate among people varies from around 35 % in Norway to less than 5 % in the Czech Republic. In Hungary, more than 40 % of the youth population is deprived when it comes to consumption of goods and services. The corresponding figure in the Netherlands is less than 5 %. In Slovenia, around 90 % of the population in the age category 22–25 is still living in the parental household. In Sweden, the figure is less than 20 %. Thus, young people around Europe have very different capabilities to lead the life they have reason to value.

The main idea guiding the analysis is that people experience different labour market trajectories, i.e. their current situation can be related to previous experiences relating employment, unemployment, studies and other types of labour market-related activities. It is clear from the analysis that certain labour market trajectories are closely related to all three of our outcome indicators: poverty, deprivation and independent living. Unemployment, but also periods of unstable employment positions, is problematic all around Europe, and they certainly help us to understand how risks are distributed within a given population. However, labour market trajectories could only explain a fraction of the between-country differences. The differences when it comes to distribution of labour market trajectories could thus not explain much of the differences in poverty, deprivation and independent living between EU countries. Whether or not LMRTs have different effects in different countries, i.e. if the slopes are random, not fixed, is not explored in this paper. The research presented here do however open up for such an analysis.

(continued)

The analysis show that youth poverty, i.e. living in a household with an income below 60 % of the median income, is most common in the Nordic countries and much less common in countries with considerable lower GDP per capita. Looking at deprivation the picture was completely reversed and distribution between countries to a large extent follows the distribution of GDP per capita. The reason for this pattern is that young people in the Nordic countries leave the nest at early age and are hence not protected from poverty by their parents' income. But even though they leave the nest, they are to a lesser extent deprived than most other young people in Europe. So, one conclusion is that the Nordic countries have manage to build a system where young people have the capability to set up their own independent household in early age. It makes them relatively poor but not particularly deprived, and it might be that they think that poverty is a price worth to be paid for being capable of living a life they have reason to value.

Appendix

Table 8.8 LMRTs by country

	EFT	Stud	Unemp-us	Empl-us	Inactive	Empl-unemp	Stud-us	Stud-empl	Into-empl
AT	23.0	15.7	2.2	21.5	4.7	1.8	20.4	9.1	1.7
BE	11.9	33.1	7.1	8.9	3.7	0.7	22.2	10.8	1.7
CY	10.9	28.9	2.8	13.1	3.3	1.0	31.1	7.0	1.9
CZ	17.9	37.3	4.1	8.6	3.7	1.4	12.7	11.6	2.5
DK	16.6	27.4	1.9	12.1	0.0	1.3	22.3	17.8	0.6
EE	9.8	26.8	3.8	9.5	5.0	1.3	26.7	13.5	3.7
ES	12.4	23.1	8.0	17.0	2.3	1.9	20.9	11.5	3.1
FI	5.3	2.9	3.7	21.2	3.1	0.9	41.1	19.3	2.6
FR	9.9	36.5	4.9	12.6	3.1	0.9	20.2	10.4	1.6
GR	8.3	25.4	13.4	18.3	7.6	1.3	16.2	4.1	5.5
HU	13.1	32.8	5.6	11.9	6.2	1.8	14.9	10.8	2.9
IE	13.3	13.6	6.3	19.6	7.0	1.0	24.9	12.3	2.0
IT	11.5	26.7	13.2	12.5	3.3	0.9	22.6	6.2	3.0
LT	10.0	38.0	2.3	8.2	2.8	0.9	21.7	14.0	2.1
LV	16.7	27.3	3.8	8.8	5.0	3.6	16.5	14.8	3.6
NL	10.3	33.5	1.0	26.9	0.7	0.3	20.7	5.5	1.0
NO	8.1	12.4	2.2	21.0	1.7	1.4	36.3	16.2	0.8
PL	7.1	31.0	10.9	12.3	3.7	1.4	18.8	10.7	4.2
PT	18.4	30.5	4.5	11.0	3.0	1.5	16.4	10.7	3.9
SE	6.8	0.6	2.1	21.3	2.1	1.7	45.0	18.0	2.5
SI	8.8	52.7	1.9	5.5	3.4	0.5	14.2	9.8	3.3
SK	15.1	37.0	5.8	9.6	1.7	0.9	15.2	11.5	3.2
UK	26.5	10.8	4.7	24.3	6.0	1.7	14.3	10.5	1.2

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Chapter 9

Would Active Labour Market Policies Enhance Youth Capability for Work in Europe?

Marion Lambert, Josiane Vero, Hans Ekbrand, and Björn Halleröd

9.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to spell out the links between active labour market expenses and the capability for work of young entrants on the labour market. Active labour market policies (ALMPs) can help unemployed workers return into employment more quickly and are a prominent feature of, for example, Denmark's 'flexicurity' model. However, the overall cost-effectiveness of such measures is ambiguous. Using multilevel modelling, the paper highlights that while ALMPs may increase employment rates for targeted groups, this may be to the detriment of the capability for work. It is argued that the claims made for the beneficial effects of raising the employment rate turn out to be right while the effect on raising the capability for work with a dynamic view of this phenomenon is not substantiated; the effects are often relatively poor in practice as there is a lack of evidence that they are effective in achieving their goal of inserting people into a sustainable path of employment quality.

Activation policies have become a matter of growing importance in response to the converging pressure of economic globalisation and the political 'modernisation' of social welfare. Thus, employment policies have undergone strong reforms since the beginning of the 1990s in all developed countries. The main lines of these reforms relied on a theoretical paradigm resulting from the unemployment economic theory

M. Lambert • J. Vero (✉)

French Centre for Research on Education, Training and Employment (Céreq),
Marseille, France

e-mail: lambert@cereq.fr; vero@cereq.fr

H. Ekbrand • B. Halleröd

Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: Hans.Ekbrand@socav.gu.se; bjorn.hallerod@sociology.gu.se

in which income support policies must be made more incentive to job search while schemes which result in lower labour costs are developed (including cuts in social security contributions) in order to stimulate employment, as well as job search or training schemes for the unemployed. This set of reforms usually summed up by the word ‘activation’ plays out differently regarding the specificities of national institutions and policies. However, it has generally resulted in a reduced generosity of unemployment insurance, the development of social contributions related to employment (negative income tax), the strengthening of employment services (often involving institutional reforms meant to improve efficiency) and the incitation and even obligation to accept an active programme of employment policy after a certain unemployment period (Erhel 2009). This shift from demand-side policies to supply-side policies is determinant. It no longer comes to insuring macroeconomic conditions favourable to the capability for work, but to acting on work offers, assessing the individuals looking for a job and providing them with the measures considered as the most suitable to their reintegration into the labour market.

The inclusion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds has become a priority on the agenda of the European Union. In this perspective, the most vulnerable groups (namely, more particularly the unskilled youth, immigrants, etc.) are those who are the most targeted by activation logics. Young benefit recipients should be encouraged (via making work pay programmes) or constrained (via workfare schemes) to quickly reintegrate into the labour market (Bonvin 2008; Bonvin and Orton 2009). In this perspective, activation aimed at increasing people’s readiness to acquire the qualities that are needed for the labour market. This usually involves acquiring knowledge and skill, which makes the link between employment and education, put at the forefront, the issue of employability. The rationale that underpins these debates is the increasing demand for a more highly educated and skilled workforce in a knowledge-dependent economy. These evolutions are in line with the desire to raise employment rates, which lies at the heart of the European strategy (Salais 2006): it sees work as the ideal functioning, without taking account of work and employment quality or the person’s specific circumstances (i.e. his or her physical, psychological or other ability to work, to balance work and family life, etc.). This perspective therefore views activation from the angle of adapting to labour market requirements and issues related to quality of life or work are left aside. In addition, this trend is part of the more global transformation of public policies also characterised by a more frequent use of contractualisation, individualisation and accountability (Badan et al. 2004). Here the stress is put on individual responsibility and individual ability to manage their labour market trajectory and integration into the labour market.

The capability approach, drawing on Amartya Sen’s concept, provides a yardstick to assess both limits and dangers of activation policies. It also provides an alternative yardstick for the design, implementation and evaluation of labour market policies. The capability approach (CA), initiated by Sen, provides an analysis frame to reconsider the relationship between freedom and responsibility. It develops a demanding conception of freedom based on democratic participation, opportunity access and the power to act. Capabilities aim at giving an actual content beyond its formal aspects to the concept of freedom. One of the specificities of the approach is

thus to combine a descriptive assessment prospect of the freedom to act with a normative prospect which makes the equal distribution of this freedom a principle of justice (Sen 2009). At the core of the capability approach, exercising any responsibility requires a scope of choice between various possible options and a power to convert the chosen option into an actual achievement. As a consequence, if early school leavers are called to become ‘active players of their professional pathway’, this implies from a normative point of view that they are given the means which enable them to take this responsibility. From a descriptive point of view, it means thinking about the different factors that act on the exercise of the individual responsibility.

The paper is articulated as follows. In Sect. 9.2, the notion of capability will first be used to challenge the concept of activation on which the European Policy debate has been focusing and to explain the shift of emphasis involved by the idea of capability for work. In Sect. 9.3, using the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), we will shed light on the diversity of the young entrants on the labour market. Our aim is to answer three specific questions: (1) what type of dominating labour market trajectories exist among young Europeans who left school? 2) Are there substantial differences among early school leavers and the average population of this age group? Using multilevel models the fourth section assesses individual, social and environmental circumstances (i.e. the conversion factors) that enable young people to control their mobility with a specific emphasis on the role of ALMP on the capability for work viewed in a dynamic perspective. Do the ALMP expenditures matter in terms of their impacts on labour market outcomes? How far does it impact the various trajectories identified? Do they secure professional pathways? What other factors affect the capability for work? Section 9.4 provides an empirical analysis in order to answer these issues while Sect. 9.5 concludes.

9.2 Active Labour Market Policies and the Capability Approach

This section will be in two parts. First, the focus will be on a general introduction of the ALMP. Second, we will tackle the capability approach as an alternative yardstick against which public policies in this field are to be assessed.

9.2.1 On ALMP: European Policy Trends

Since the 2000 Lisbon strategy, policies that support active labour market policies have been increasingly favoured at the European policy-making level. The expectations raised by ALMP have never been higher: instituted as one of the components of the flexicurity, ALMP is intended not only to protect workers by improving their employability but also to promote employment as well as benefiting to the

community by boosting overall competition. Almost 10 years on, the Europe 2020 strategy and the related guidelines 7¹ and 8 on Member States' employment policies look like the Lisbon strategy regarding its instruments which call for strengthening, among others, ALMP (ETUI 2011). Having described the level of spending on labour market policies in different countries, we will emphasise the thinking behind ALMP.

9.2.2 Active and Passive Labour Market Expenditures

Over the 1990s, it was pointed out that most EU countries spent relatively little on active labour market policies as compared to 'passive' unemployment benefits. This has been advanced as an important explanation of unemployed persistence in these countries. Accordingly, several policy documents were endorsed a shift of expenditures towards spending on active labour market programmes (Calmfors and Skedinger 1995). As they were in the Lisbon strategy, active labour market policies are recommended in Europe 2020 as one important instrument for fostering labour market transitions (ETUI, Ibid.).

Eurostat's labour market policy (LMP) statistics provide information on labour market interventions, which are government actions to help and support the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the transition from unemployment or inactivity to work. LMP expenditures include the costs of services for jobseekers provided by the Public Employment Services (LMP services), the cost of 'active' interventions such as training and employment incentives to help the unemployed and other target groups as well as 'passive' supports, which mostly refer to unemployment benefits. In contrast to passive policies, the focus of ALMP is to increase the employability of unemployed workers. Seven broad categories of ALMP are distinguished: labour market services, training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation and start-up incentives (cf. Inset 9.1).

The level of spending on labour market policies differs widely across European countries. Chart 9.1 shows expenditure on active labour market policies as well as on passive labour market policies as a percentage of GDP in 2008. In 2008, the highest overall expenditures were recorded for Belgium. Expenditures on both passive and active labour market policies as a fraction of GDP ranged from about 3 % in Belgium to 0.25 % in the United Kingdom or Estonia while the average expenditures amount to 1.5 %. Among the ten EU countries under examination, only the UK has a very low spending level (while Greece was outside Eurostat's LMP database in 2008). Outside the United Kingdom, there is a clear difference between old and new Member States in labour market spending. The oldest Member States quite all spend above the EU average.

¹ Guideline 7 "increasing labour market participation".

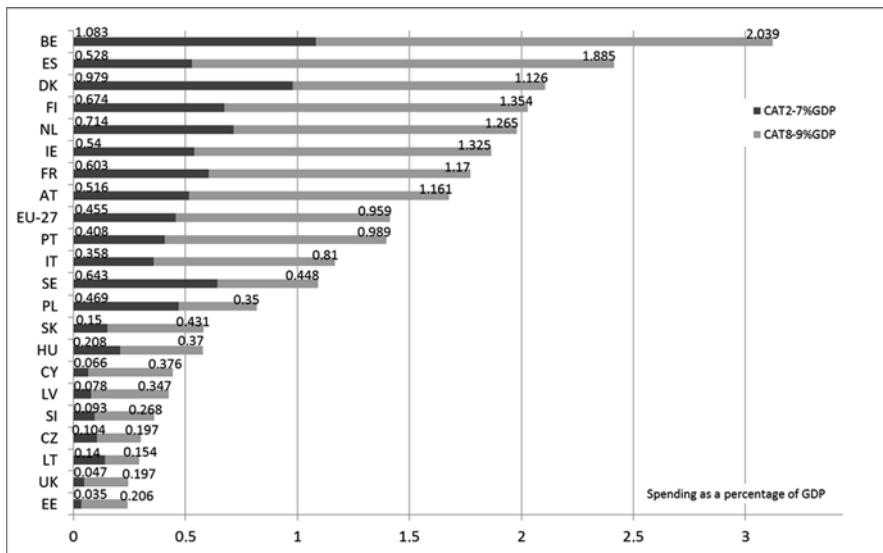


Chart 9.1 Relative labour market policy spending, 1998 (Source: Eurostat's Labour Market Policy Statistics (LMP) – Data 2008 – Calculation Céreq)

In addition, the fraction of spending on active versus passive policies differs across Member States. On average, European Member States devoted 68 % of labour market expenditures to PLMP (Cat 8–9) and 32 % of ALMP (cat 2–7). The highest expenditures for ALMP (as percentage of GDP) are recorded in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands. Countries with a particularly low spending are the United Kingdom, Estonia and Lithuania. However, in Poland and Sweden, the vast majority of expenditures went to ALMP (respectively, 57 % and 58 %), followed by Lithuania (48 %) and Denmark (47 %). Thus, while recent Member States spend less than the older, there is no actual difference in breakdown of expenditures between ALMP and PLMP between the two categories of Member States.

9.2.3 *The Thinking Behind Active Labour Market Policies Towards Young People*

A stronger focus is now placed on the youth, education and better skill matching, as well as on labour market transitions. Given the persistent high youth unemployment rates, these policies are targeted at individuals by requiring a change in behaviour (Daguerre and Etherington 2009). Activation policies aim at ‘activating’ social expenditures in order that their recipients find a job again as quickly as possible

through financial incentives or constraints (schemes or programmes called ‘work-fare’) where the recipients are automatically attributed some tasks, most of the time, not requiring any skill or qualification and without any professional perspective.

Following Bonvin and Moachon (2010), we may say that ‘as a consequence, the main purpose of welfare is not to guarantee a minimum level of material well-being via the payment of cash benefits, but to promote individual agency, i.e. professional and social integration, via training programmes’. As the cash welfare state is suspected to foster passivity among its beneficiaries, which may in turn result in long-term unemployment and social exclusion, strategies of activation are therefore to be seen in the context of changing welfare states (Sphohrer 2011). As a consequence, while on the one hand, individuals are made more attractive to employers through training and financial incentives, they are also expected to increase their job search activity.

There exist various forms of activation depending on countries and their tradition. However, as underlined by Moachon and Bonvin (2010), their legitimacy is considered as self-evident and is barely questioned. Nevertheless, this goal coincides with an increasing focus on individual responsibility. In this context, the main responsibility for dealing with unemployment lies on the individual. It is not simply taken to mean that the causes of unemployment are individual but also that the individual is responsible for implementing strategies to find work (Crespo and Serrano Pascual 2004). This change in the way responsibility is considered emerged while the discourse of the knowledge society has gained currency.

In some respects, the transfer of responsibilities which aims to be resolutely innovative matches with both trends of the development of a “knowledge society” and the promotion of “employability strategies” which are increasingly favoured at the European policy-making level. Although the development of employability is a notion which has itself been subject to numerous definitions (Gazier 1999; Bonvin and Farvaque 2006), it is aimed at fostering individual’s ability to gain or maintain employment, move between roles within the same organisation if required, by stressing the responsibility of the individual to participate in lifelong learning. This usually involves acquiring knowledge and skills, which makes employability the link between employment and training.

However, the shift in responsibilities is ambiguous insofar as it encourages the individual’s freedom of action, but it means at the same time that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds themselves may now have to shoulder the blame for not being employed. Still, in the school-to-work transition, the real freedom to choose the work one has reason to value is not only up to the youth. Therefore, the question raised is to know whether the conditions are actually met in order that the young from disadvantaged background can exercise their responsibility and take part in the labour market while promoting respect for their real freedom to choose the work they have reason to value.

Yet, as a matter of priority, the ultimate objective of active labour market policies is twofold: first maximising the employment rate at the macro level and second reaccelerating the reintegration into the labour market at the microlevel

(Bonvin and Orton 2009; Salais 2010; Bonvin et al. 2011; Vero et al. 2012). The debate is then reduced to the maximisation of the employment rate regardless of the nature of employment.

9.2.4 ALMP Through the Lens of the CA

The capability approach (CA) developed by 1998 Economic Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen (1982a, b, 1985, 1997) offers a stimulating way to go beyond the maximisation of the employment rate. The CA has contributed to renew the debates worldwide on inequality and poverty (Sen 1992), human development (1999) and social justice (2009). Its influence reaches far beyond academic audiences. It has shaped the work of the United Nations Development Programme and its human development index (UNDP 2011), and the most recent Poverty and Wealth Reports by the German Government (Arndt and Volkert 2011), not to mention the search for alternative GDP measures initiated by France's President Sarkozy (Stiglitz et al. 2009).

Although originally conceived for developing countries, the capability approach is now used to address a whole range of issues in postindustrial countries as well, such as gender (Nussbaum 1999; Robeyns 2008, 2010), education (Saito 2003; Otto and Ziegler 2010) and poverty (Schokkaert and Van Ootegem 1990; Brandolini and D'Alessio 1998; Vero 2006; Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007). Over the last decade, it has also been progressively extended to the study of work and employment. First adopted in this area as a yardstick against which to assess European labour market policies (Salais and Villeneuve 2004; Formation Emploi 2007), it has subsequently proved a robust tool for studying flexicurity and activation policies (Bonvin and Orton 2009; Verd and Vero 2011), new public management indicators (Salais 2006; Vero et al. 2012) and corporate policies (Zimmermann 2004, 2011; Abbateccola et al. 2012).

After highlighting the shift of emphasis introduced by the CA, we discuss how to handle time issue in a dynamic perspective.

9.2.5 The Shift of Emphasis Introduced by the CA: Employable or Capable of?

According to Robert Salais, 'the upheaval introduced by the capability approach relates to the choice of the yardstick against which collective action (policies, legislation, and procedures) should be devised, implemented and assessed. For Sen, the only ethically legitimate reference point for collective action is the person, and specifically his situation as regards the amount of real freedom he possesses to choose and conduct the life she/he wishes to lead' (Salais 2005: 10).

The (CA) provides an analysis frame to reconsider the relationship between freedom and responsibility. It develops a demanding conception of freedom based on democratic participation, opportunity access and the power to act. Capabilities aim

at giving an actual content beyond its formal aspects to the concept of freedom. One of the specificities of the approach is thus to combine a descriptive assessment prospect of the freedom to act with a normative prospect which makes the equal distribution of this freedom a principle of justice (Sen 2009). At the core of the capability approach, exercising any responsibility requires a scope of choice between various possible options and a power to convert the chosen option into an actual achievement. As a consequence, if young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are called to become active players of their school-to-work transition, this implies from a normative point of view that they are given the means which enable them to take their responsibility. In Salais' words, the more this condition is satisfied, the more economic efficiency and social justice can be reconciled (Salais and Villeneuve 2004).

This perspective sets out an ambitious way forward for public policy-making, which is not merely about enhancing people's adaptability to labour market requirements but first and foremost about promoting their real freedom to choose the life they have every good reason to lead. Collective action is therefore expected to develop opportunities for people while acknowledging their free choice with regard to ways of living or being. Central to this endeavour is the capability for work, i.e. 'The real freedom to choose the work one has reason to value' (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006). As a consequence, labour market policies cannot only take into account how to make the individual employable but also how to adjust the available jobs so that they meet what the individual has reason to value.

By contrast, as mentioned by Vielle and Bonvin (2008), 'activation has been developed with the aim of increasing employment rates, and, given the ongoing modernisation of labour law, this central focus on the issue of employment means that social issues (quality of social integration and quality of life in general) are being reduced to the question of employability seen as adaptability to the needs of the labour market'. The Lisbon strategy employment targets were a 70 % employment rate for the overall population, to be reached by 2010. These targets are not calculated in full-time-equivalent employment, whatever task is taken into account, whatever its duration, the number of hours worked per week, the status, etc. (in short, its quality) providing it is considered as a "job" by the statistical source used, national or European. Three employment rates appeared nevertheless in the list of the indicators used: by sex, for the 15–24-year-olds, and long-term unemployment (12 months and beyond). In early 2010, the European Commission launched a new strategy for the next decade, the Europe 2020 strategy, to support recovery from the crisis and to set out where the EU wants to be by 2020. Despite the failure to achieve the Lisbon strategy targets, the Europe 2020 strategy formulated a new ambitious employment rate target of 75 % to be reached by 2020. The new employment rate target (formulated for the EU as a whole) refers to the adult population (20–64 years old) only, thereby avoiding conflict with the education goal (European Commission 2010). Hence, activation policies promoted by the European Commission since 1997, and even a long time before it by the OECD, are aimed at increasing employment rate at the expense of other aspects of quality of work and quality of life, while these aspects are central in the frame of the CA.

9.2.6 The Capability for Work in a Dynamic Perspective

Following Bonvin and Farvaque (2006), capability for work is ‘the real freedom to choose the work one has reason to value’. It is therefore recognised that moving over to a capability approach-inspired vision would entail a number of developments. First, the employment quality issue would need to be integrated into a synchronic and dynamic perspective, referring back to ‘an analysis of the scope of working and living possibilities offered by inclusion in employment’ (Salais and Villeneuve 2004: 287). Moreover, by contrast with the normative foundations of activation as measured by the employment rate, the capability approach emphasises the two essential dimensions of real freedom: empowerment (opportunity development), which enables people to acquire the resources of freedom, and respect for process freedom, which enables them to remain in charge of their own choices. Should one of these two dimensions be lacking, the goal of developing capabilities is missed.

By the same vein, these requirements are the yardsticks against which the capability for work is to be assessed. Identifying capability-friendly labour market pathways implies a combination of information related to the set of valuable opportunities to be completed by information regarding the possibility to voice one’s preferences, wishes, expectations, etc. and to make them count in the decision-making process. Therefore, the question raised is to know whether the trajectories of youth can be assessed on the base of both essential dimensions of real freedom. However, embodying freedom into labour market trajectories is very demanding from an informational point of view and available data such as the EU-SILC database often fails in ensuring information that might allow analysing labour market trajectories from the point of view of the dividing line between imposed and voluntary mobility. The survey does not allow taking into account whether jobseekers’ or workers’ claims will shape the end result of the regulation process, even if a capability approach requires that they must be able to effectively voice their concerns and to be listened to. In a practical ground, our analyses must adopt a reasonable compromise to face this issue.

For the most part, literature on the CA has been limited to information spaces that are static while sustainable developments, like working lives, are in fact dynamic and would be probably best understood in an evolutionary perspective. Several papers address a question which has not been at the core of the reflection in the literature on capability: how to handle time issue? Ten years ago, Comim (2003) tried to go beyond the simple acknowledgement of the importance of time and investigated ‘the implications of expanding even further the informational space put forward by the CA towards concerns with time and temporal aspects to the CA’. He argued that ‘becoming’, in addition to ‘being’ and ‘doing’, is a key category of analysis and that this addition to the capability informational space is consistent with its emphasis on processes and the role of valuation activities. Some guidance is offered by the following approaches.

Some authors address the time dimension explicitly with the objective of arriving at a renewed basis of judgement in the measurement of poverty and social exclusion.

The main idea is to analyse whether the lack of capability in certain dimension occurs for a number of periods in time (Comim et al. 2008). If relevant information is available across time, one would then be able to judge whether a person's failure to achieve a minimally adequate level of capability in some dimension is just temporary or chronic. Papadopoulos and Tsakloglou (2008) echo the same idea when they develop an approach to the measurement of social exclusion using the CA. If deprivation in certain dimensions occurs for a number of periods in time, it constitutes a lack of capability.

The perspective outlined above implies that if capability for work is to be assessed over a sufficient long time, what matters is the possibility but also the probability to achieve a valuable pathway and to escape from unfavourable trajectory for a number of periods in time. Of course, the plurality of views about what is a 'valuable work' or a 'valuable pathway' compels us to avoid one-fit-all definitions of 'job quality' or 'capability for work', as these need to take into account the viewpoints of all people concerned (Bonvin 2012). The issue at stake is not claiming that one pathway is more valuable than another one for a given person but rather to ask whether the young people under review have the real capability for work and how as well as which various conversion factors matter in the enhancement of this capability. It is then suggested that the approach can be fruitfully limited to a dynamic analysis deprivation for a number of periods in time. We would then consider that if people are chronically without any job or only in bad jobs and at the same time compelled to go back to labour market, then it will not coincide with enhanced capability for work.

9.3 Labour Market Trajectories of Young European Entrants

The aim of this section is to describe the diversity of paths followed by young people who either drop out or finish education prior to the first wave of the EU-SILC (2005 or 2006). Our aim is to answer two specific questions: (1) what type of dominating labour market trajectories (LMT) exist among people aged 16–30 who left school? (2) Are there substantial differences between early school leavers and the average population of this age group?

9.3.1 *The Survey*

To that aim we will use the EU-SILC longitudinal data from 2007 to 2008 from 21 countries. Since our analysis builds on longitudinal data we are forced to restrict it to countries that are covered by the EU-SILC data. The included countries are Austria, (AT), Belgium (BE), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK),

Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom.

Data make up a representative sample of the total population, but in this case we have restricted our sample to young people 16–30 years old who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006, i.e. the first wave of the longitudinal survey 2007 and 2008. The EU-SILC panel data follows a 4-year cycle, which means that every individual is followed for 4 years and that every year a fourth of the sample is replaced by a new panel section. An effect of this system is that the fewer years we use, the larger sample we get. In order to have a sample large enough, we decided to use a 3-year panel. In the first step we selected those who participated during 2006–2008. In order to further boast the sample size, we also added the sample section that participated during 2005–2007. The total survey size is 152,994 and the young group is 20,909.

9.3.2 Typology of Trajectories

At the individual level, school-to-work transition denotes a time-dependent process whereby an individual moves from an initial state to a final presumably desirable state via a number of transitory intermediate states.

For every month nine alternatives are offered: (1) employee full time, (2) employee part time, (3) self-employed full time, (4) self-employed part time, (5) unemployed, (6) retired, (7) student, (8) other inactive and (9) compulsory military service. Thus, all individuals included in our sample have 36 consecutive monthly measurements of main activity. According to Halleröd and Ekbrand (2012), Halleröd et al. (2014), this monthly information is used to derive clusters of specific labour market trajectories. The life course is derived from seven main activity positions gathered every month for each interview respondent to build an empirical typology of the transitions: (1) employee full time, (2) employee part time, (3) self-employed, (4) unemployed, (5) retired, (6) student and (7) other inactive.

9.3.3 What Are the Dominating Labour Market Trajectories?

One might imagine that after at least years on the labour market, young people have finished with school-to-work transition and started forging a career. However, in Europe, school-to-work transition is far from being immediately achieved. Table 9.1 displays the trajectories of young entrants on the labour market, which are clustered into six different patterns. It shows that the passage between school-to-work transition and starting a career can follow many different patterns over the 3-year period.

Table 9.1 Clusters of LMT among people who left the educational system prior to 2005–2006 (%)

	[16–30] ISCED level =0,1,2	[16–30] ISCED level >2	[16–30] Total
1. Full-time employment trajectory	26.13	40.91	37.25
2. Employment followed by unemployment trajectory	3.59	3.12	3.23
3. Unstable employment trajectory	27.42	31.66	30.61
4. Inactive trajectory	14.88	7.40	9.25
5. Unemployment/inactivity followed by employment full-time trajectory	6.35	5.74	5.89
6. Unemployment trajectory	19.87	9.85	12.33
Missing	1.74	1.33	1.43
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Frequency (with missing)	5,183	15,726	20,909

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)
 Scope: [16–30] who left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Full-time continuous employment trajectory: 37 %

This first cluster is full-time employed for 36 consecutive months. Following 3 years of school-to-work transition, while it can be said that full-time employment trajectory is the dominating labour trajectory, it however only consists of around 37 % of the workforce entrants. The path to continuous employment is not yet at an end for two-thirds of the entrant workforce.

Discontinuous employment pathway: 31 %

The second cluster includes young entrants aged between 16 and 30 whose labour market pathway is characterised by experiences of discontinuity due to job shifts and unemployment. Occupational situations changed and people moved from one employment to another. One-third of the entrant workforce follows this kind of trajectory.

Unemployment trajectory: 12.5 %

The third group corresponds to young adults who were followed over the 3 years, recurrently or persistently unemployed. It includes 12.5 % of the sample of young entrants aged between 16 and 30.

Inactivity trajectory: 9.5 %

The fifth trajectory is characterised by about 10 % of young entrants aged between 16 and 30 who were withdrawn from the labour market over the reference 3 years.

Unemployment/inactivity followed by employment full-time trajectory: 6 %

The analysis of the trajectories recorded shows that people could find a job after a long period of unemployment. Over 6 % are in this situation.

Employment period followed by an unemployment trajectory: 3 %

The analysis of the trajectories recorded shows that people could find themselves out of work after an initial period of full-time employment. Over 3 % are in this situation.

9.3.4 Great Diversity of Trajectories, Which Depended on the Level of Education

However, this overall pattern masks the great diversity of individual trajectories, which depended in particular on the level of education and vocational training achieved. At the one end of the scale, the young entering the labour market with no or few formal qualifications (ISCED levels 0–2) are twice as likely to be in an unemployment trajectory and around 20 % were persistently unemployed. In addition, 15 % of young people less than 30 years old had not entered the labour market without going back to school. Only one quarter of them followed a full-time continuous employment trajectory. The remainder, who formed the relative majority, managed to stay in employment by moving from an employment to another: 28 % of young entrants whose ISCED level is (0, 1, 2) followed this kind of trajectory. This description of young people's first years on the labour market therefore confirms that some trajectories are, as not that often, a unique matter of choice.

9.4 What Factors Affect the Capability for Work?

Does the ALMP spending matter in terms of its impacts on labour market outcomes? How large are the effect of ALMPs on the various trajectories identified? Does it secure professional pathways? What other factors affect the capability for work? This section provides an empirical analysis to answer these issues.

The line of enquiry thus concerns personal, social and environmental circumstances (i.e. the conversion factors) that enable young people to control their mobility. What factors guarantee professional security or, contrarily, generate career fragmentation? Such conversion factors are found at various levels. Among the personal conversion factors, there is the issue of education level (initial and continuing vocational training, residential autonomy, parent's job situation, etc.). Conversion factors also include social and environmental conversion factors derived from public policy (employment incentives, social expenditure on labour market policies, the quantity of available jobs, the youth unemployment rate, the educational system, the early school leaving rate, etc.). To what extent do these conversion factors open up areas of freedom, or do they, on the contrary, constraint individual work opportunities? We will attempt here to shed light on how the various factors involved in shaping young entrants trajectory interact.

The perspective outlined above supposes, on the one hand, to include into the EU-SILC database national information related to environmental conversion factors alongside with the individual ones. For this purpose, the ALM database from Eurostat (2010) is first used to complement EU-SILC database and integrate active labour spending of each country. Besides, the national unemployment rate (Eurostat 2009) and early school leaver rate published by Eurostat are also included as additional information of EU-SILC. Second, it entails adopting econometric models that would allow disentangling individual and environmental conversion factors which influence the various trajectories identified in the previous section. This will require the use of multilevel models (Snijders and Bosker 1999; Bressoux 2008). Multilevel models are used to specify the effect of social context and explore the link between the macro and microlevels of social phenomena. The analysis is based on the assumption that people are nested within countries and the analysis provides fixed effects that are assumed to be homogeneous across countries and random effects capturing differences between countries.

The results discussed in the following sections stem from seven multilevel logit listed in Annex. The models uncover the relationship between the key variables of interests – the six labour market trajectories – and the conversion factors that may influence these variables. The issue of individual conversion factors relates to the sex variable, the level of education, the residential autonomy and parents' job situation. Social conversion factors comprise ALMP expenditures, youth unemployment rate and early school leaver (ESL) rate. The European Union defines early school leavers as people aged 18–24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training.²

9.4.1 Do Active Labour Market Expenditures Affect the Capability for Work?

Using multilevel modelling, the paper highlights that there is a lack of evidence that ALMP measures are effective in achieving their goal of inserting people into a sustainable path of employment quality (Tables 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7). First, the results emphasise that ALMP spending as percentage of GDP is effective in enhancing discontinuous employment pathway, when decreasing inactivity pathway. However, this is to the detriment of positive effect on full-time continuous employment trajectory. Indeed, as a matter of fact, ALM expenditures are associated with a lower probability of being in a full-time employment trajectory. Second, ALMP expenditures are expected to help unemployed workers return into employment more quickly. However, the effects are nonsignificant in practice on the youth long-term unemployed facing particular problems. Hence, the overall cost-effectiveness of such

²Early school leavers are therefore those who have only achieved preprimary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years.

Table 9.2 Probability of being in a full-time employment trajectory over 3 years

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-1.0313***	-0.9733***	-1.2645***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	0.9074***	0.9228***	0.9349***
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	-0.7492***	-0.7946***	-0.8018***
Residential autonomy	0.3025***	0.2907***	0.1529***
No residential autonomy when one or both are working	0.0518 (ns)	-0.0087 (ns)	0.1126 (ns)
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		-0.5218***	-0.4853*
Youth unemployment rate		-0.0374***	-0.0278*
ESL rate		0.016***	0.0177*
Random effects – intercept			0.1185***

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)

Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Table 9.3 Probability of being in an unemployment trajectory over 3 years

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-1.5028***	-1.8385***	-1.2906***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	-0.4788***	-0.4721***	-0.4666***
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	0.8131***	0.8509***	0.8107***
Residential autonomy	-0.7930***	-0.7038***	-0.3344***
No residential autonomy when one or both are working	-0.2120***	-0.1160**	-0.4409***
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		0.1561 (ns)	-0.00046 (ns)
Youth unemployment rate		0.1020***	0.08605***
ESL rate		-0.02395***	-0.01862*
Random effects – intercept			0.09849**

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)

Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Table 9.4 Probability of being in an unstable employment trajectory over 3 years

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-0.9094***	-0.8523***	-0.9019***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	-0.0405 (ns)	-0.04097 (ns)	-0.04226 (ns)
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	-0.1896***	-0.3064***	-0.2851***
Residential autonomy	0.1944***	0.1490***	0.04728*
No residential autonomy when one or both are working	0.1587	0.1943***	0.2572***
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		0.8736***	0.9512***
Youth unemployment rate		-0.00720**	-0.01012 (ns)
ESL rate		0.01561***	0.008962 (ns)
Random effects – intercept			0.1279***

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)
 Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Table 9.5 Probability of being in an inactive trajectory over 3 years

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-2.0630***	-2.1154***	-2.3390***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	-1.5972***	-1.6339***	-1.6544***
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	0.9734***	1.2198***	1.2022***
Residential autonomy	0.1852**	0.1913**	0.07837**
No residential autonomy when one or both are working	-0.2286***	-0.2807***	-0.2052 (ns)
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		-0.8257***	-0.9783***
Youth unemployment rate		-0.01724***	0.001962 (ns)
ESL rate		-0.03140***	-0.02987**
Random effects – intercept			0.1428**

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)

Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Table 9.6 Probability of being in unemployment/inactivity followed by an employment full-time trajectory

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-3.2168***	-3.2186***	-3.4094***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	-0.7954***	-0.7920***	-0.8011***
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	0.2275**	0.1886**	0.1815*
Residential autonomy	0.1807 (ns)	0.1890 (ns)	0.07561 (ns)
No residential autonomy when one or both are working	-0.0594 (ns)	-0.07671 (ns)	-0.00911 (ns)
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		-0.3027 *	-0.4286 (ns)
Youth unemployment rate		-0.00849 (ns)	0.004423 (ns)
ESL rate		0.009757 (ns)	0.01023 (ns)
Random effects – intercept			0.1473**

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)

Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

Table 9.7 Probability of being in employment followed by an unemployment/inactive trajectory

	Logit	Contextual	Multilevel
	Model 1	Logit model 2	Logit model 3
Fixed effects – intercept	-2.6136***	-2.7065***	-2.6436***
Individual variables			
Sex (man)	-0.0619 (ns)	-0.06254 (ns)	-0.07353 (ns)
ISCED = (0, 1,2)	0.0821 (ns)	0.1655**	0.1148 (ns)
Residential autonomy	-0.3304***	-0.2872***	-0.09855**
No residential autonomy when one or both parents are working	0.0898 (ns)	0.08573 (ns)	0.005174 (ns)
No residential autonomy when neither parent is working	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Country variables			
ALM expenditures (cat 2–7)		-0.5161***	-0.6402*
Youth unemployment rate		0.01850**	0.02722 (ns)
ESL rate		-0.01417***	-0.01030 (ns)
Random effects – intercept			0.1495**

Source: EU-SILC longitudinal 2005–2007 and 2006–2008 – Europe (excluding Norway and Greece)

Scope: [16–30] who have left the educational system prior to 2005–2006

measures is ambiguous and not substantiated. The claims made for the beneficial effects of raising employment rate would prove to be right while the effect on raising the capability for work with a dynamic view of this phenomenon is not substantiated.

9.4.2 The Crucial Role of the Youth Unemployment Rate

Among the social conversion factors, it is not surprising to highlight that youth unemployment rate matters greatly for labour market outcomes. It tends to increase the flows between employment and unemployment and amplifies the young's opportunities of being in an unemployment pathway.

9.4.3 Early School Leaving Matters

A key lesson is that the early school rate³ matters greatly on the labour market outcomes as for the young aged 16–30. The results shed light on the fact that the higher early school leaver rate, the higher the probability of the young 16–30 years old to follow a full-time employment trajectory over the 3 years. A high early school leaving rate often goes hand in hand with a more secure situation for the other young people who leave school with a higher level of education. Indeed, a high rate of early school leavers opens up more labour market opportunities for non-early school leavers which remain still here the majority of school leavers. In addition, the analysis showed that a low level of education has a statistically significant effect on labour market outcomes. It must be stated though that it decreases the capability to be in a continuous full-time employment pathway.

9.4.4 Being a Man Has a Positive Effect

Looking at individual conversion factors, it becomes apparent that there are differentials by gender. The empirical results found that being a younger man has a key effect in the probability of being in a full-time employment trajectory while younger women are more likely to be in an unemployment or inactive trajectory situation. Women's employment rates in particular show huge levels of variation and are particularly low (50 % or less) in a number of southern European countries (ETUI 2013).

³Early school leavers are those who have only achieved preprimary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years: level 0, 1, 2 or 3c short in the United Nations' International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

Conclusion

This chapter investigates the effects of active labour market spending in Europe through the lens of the capability approach. On average, we find only small effects, if any on the capability for work. The overall cost-effectiveness of such measures is ambiguous. Using multilevel modelling, the paper highlights that while ALMPs may increase employment rates for targeted groups, this may be to the detriment of the capability for a stable full-time work. It is argued that the claims made for the beneficial effects of raising the employment rate turn out to be right while the effect on raising the capability for work with a dynamic view of this phenomenon is not substantiated; the effects are often relatively poor in practice as it is there due to a lack of evidence that they are effective in achieving their goal of inserting people into a sustainable path of employment quality. However, the identification of obstacles that may impede the ambition of active labour market spending would require a more comprehensive view that this microeconometric approach study does not capture and calls for an investigation that would put the freedom aspect of the capability for work at the core of the analysis.

Inset 9.1: Eurostat Labour Market Policy (LMP)

LMP statistics are an important source of data for monitoring the European Employment Strategy (EES) which advocates active and preventive labour market measures. Labour market interventions can be described as ‘Public interventions in the labour market aimed at reaching its efficient functioning and correcting disequilibria and which can be distinguished from other general employment policy interventions in that they act selectively to favour particular groups in the labour market’. Public interventions refer to actions taken by general government in this respect, which involve expenditure, either in the form of actual disbursements or of foregone revenue (reductions in taxes, social contributions or other charges normally payable).

The scope of LMP statistics is limited to interventions that are explicitly targeted at groups of persons with difficulties in the labour market: the unemployed, persons employed but at risk of involuntary job loss and persons currently considered as inactive persons but who would like to enter the labour market. The unit of observation is the labour market intervention and data on the expenditure, and participants for each intervention are collected annually from administrative sources in each country. In addition extensive qualitative information describing the details of each intervention is collected. LMP interventions are grouped into three main types – LMP services, LMP measures and LMP supports – and then further classified into nine detailed categories according to the type of action.

Category 1: Labour market services: they cover all services and activities of the Public Employment Services (PES) together with any other publicly funded services for jobseekers. LMP services cover all services and activities of the Public Employment Services (PES) together with any other publicly funded services for jobseekers. Services include the provision of information and guidance about jobs, training and other opportunities that are available and advice on how to get a job (e.g. assistance with preparing CVs, interview techniques, etc.)

LMP measures cover interventions that provide temporary support for groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market and which aim at ‘activating’ the unemployed, i.e. they require participants to take part in some activity, in addition to or instead of their regular job search, that aims to broaden their skills or experience of work and therefore improve their chance of finding a regular job in the future. Measures can also aim at helping people move from involuntary inactivity into employment or to maintaining the jobs of persons threatened by unemployment.

Category 2: Training;

Category 3: Job rotation and job sharing

Category 4: Employment incentives

Category 5: Supported employment and rehabilitation

Category 6: Direct job creation

Category 7: Start-up incentives

LMP supports cover financial assistance that aims to compensate individuals for loss of wage or salary and support them during job search (i.e. mostly unemployment benefits) or which facilitates early retirement. It includes:

Category 8: Out-of-work income maintenance and support

Category 9: Early retirement (Source: Eurostat (2010) labour market policy – expenditure and participants.)

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Chapter 10

Critical Aspects of the Transformation of Work and Welfare from a Capability Perspective

Roland Atzmüller

10.1 Introduction

Traditionally, critical analyses of welfare states, which aimed at identifying the nationally and historically variegated functions which arise as specific, albeit temporary, limited, and conflict-prone solutions to the problems of capitalist market societies (Offe 1993b; Lessenich 2012; Gough 1979), raised severe reservations against normative accounts on the content of social policies. As Claus Offe and Gero Lenhardt have put it in a widely published paper on social policy:

Thereby, normative research projects are open to the objection, first, that they are incapable of sustaining the validity and necessity of their normative presuppositions, and, second, that they habitually overestimate their capacity to induce at least some unease among those political actors to whom proof of the discrepancies between ‘ought’ and ‘is’ is presented (...). (Offe 1993b: 90f)

Thus, they assume that little is achieved “in such attempts at normative definition” (Offe 1993b: 90), because many accounts on the question which social policies **SHOULD** be implemented to tackle certain social problems and reach certain social goals rather highlight the normative criteria of those people who are in the social position to judge them, than identify the political relevance of such considerations (Offe 1993a, b: 90). However, by assuming that it is possible to separate a critical analysis of social policies from normative reasoning, such considerations all too hastily dismiss a crucial dimension of the academic and political debates and conflicts about the welfare state in capitalist societies and its transformations

R. Atzmüller (✉)

Department of Theoretical Sociology and Social Analysis (TSS),
Institute of Sociology, Johannes Kepler University (JKU), Linz, Austria
e-mail: roland.atzmueller@jku.at

and dynamics.¹ Offe and Lenhardt linked their refutation of normative reasoning about social policies mainly to the macro-level of tackling “social problems” and the attainment of “certain social goals”. Viewed from this perspective, their criticism seems well placed, not only because the political relevance of normative considerations might be unclear but also because in case such considerations gain political relevance, they run the risk of prescribing certain social orders, solutions, and activities onto the population from above. At least from the point of view of freedom and emancipation, this creates a range of insurmountable conceptual as well as political problems and contradictions for welfare states, which were widely exploited by neoliberal attacks on the “nanny state”, welfare bureaucracies and the limited conceptions of equality which they embodied, etc.

However, in the article referred to above, Offe (1993b) forcefully remind us that this top-down perspective is inadequate. Furthermore, they also highlight the gap between certain social policy regulations – as codified in laws, organised in certain social policy apparatus, etc. – and their implementation. The latter creates a space of contradictions and social struggles, which highlight the political rather than merely administrative character of the concrete processes of said implementation of social policies. Thus, moving from a highly abstract attempt to identify the main functions of social policy to more dynamic analyses of changes and innovations within welfare reopens the field for normative questions once again. This becomes obvious in regard to what, according to critical approaches, is a central function of welfare states – the production of wage labourers in and through its institutions, such as educational systems (Offe 1993a).

The reconfiguration of this function of welfare systems over the last decades was dominated by the emergence of the so-called workfare strategies of welfare reform, as more and more countries, but also supranational institutions (European Employment Strategy), began to promote the activation of welfare systems (Peck 2001; Atzmüller 2014a). Even though there are attempts to conceptualise workfare as an encompassing reconfiguration strategy of welfare systems, recent debates have pointed out that these changes do not affect all the institutions of (European) welfare states and, therefore, not all parts of the population in the same way. What's more, the transformations of the welfare state over the last two or three decades and its effects on different welfare regimes have recently been described as *dualisation* (Emmenegger et al. 2012a; from a critical perspective: Atzmüller 2014b). Dualisation refers to the fact that welfare state retrenchments and reconfigurations of the last two or three decades tended to affect certain groups (migrants, women, low-skilled people, youth, long-term unemployed, etc.) much more than the so-called

¹In his later work, Offe has frequently referred to normative problems and dilemmata occurring in “late capitalist” welfare systems (1984, 1993a). Thus, he repeatedly problematised the fact that the very structures of capitalist labour markets and accumulation processes, together with the commodity character of labour power and the exchange processes between capital and labour as well as the legal and rational-bureaucratic fundaments of (welfare-)state activities, undermine the normative basis of mutual responsibility and solidarity within capitalist societies. This effect of the capitalist mode of production and the state contributes to the crisis proneness of capitalist societies as it undermines social cohesion and the legitimization of social institutions such as the state.

“core groups” of social security systems and welfare regimes. Dualisation approaches even claim that in many countries, in particular in continental Europe, these so-called insiders are hardly affected by transformations of welfare systems.

Dualization implies that policies increasingly differentiate rights, entitlements, and services provided to different categories of recipients. Thereby, the position of insiders may remain more or less constant, while only the position of outsiders deteriorates. Alternatively, policies may lead to the creation of new categories of outsiders that were previously treated according to the same rules as insiders. (Emmenegger et al. 2012b: 10)

This is an important point with regard to vulnerable youth who are at risk of social exclusion. It raises questions about the scope and content of emerging policies tackling the problems of the young and about the relations and interactions between the core/standard institutions of welfare regimes and the emerging peripheral activities affecting a range of more and more precarious groups. The dualisation of welfare systems led to the emergence of new welfare instruments, activities, and institutions, as well as to new social rights and obligations, respectively, particularly in the fields of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP), basic social assistance and education. These variegated reconfigurations of different welfare regimes affected those groups who have lost out in the outlined changes of the production regimes and labour markets as they are most affected by unemployment, economic inactivity and precarious forms of employment, poverty and social exclusion. Vulnerable youth as well as low-skilled people, migrants, women, etc. are among the groups targeted by the newly emerging peripheral welfare regimes.

As a policy response to high levels of unemployment and demands for flexible labour markets raised by the business side, workfare policies of dualisation consist, for example, in strategies of tying social benefits to the willingness of the unemployed to participate in coaching and (re-)training measures, to participate in make-work programmes, and to take up any job available – be it precarious or not (Peck 2001). Hence, the main line of interpretation sees them as strategies to increase control over the unemployed and to reinstall the capitalist work ethic (King 1995; Peck 2001; Handler 2004). From the perspective of the WORKABLE project, this understanding is not sufficient, as it rests on a negative concept of freedom, i.e., freedom from market forces. This reduces the evaluative scope of such analyses to the question whether people can choose not to participate in the labour market at a reasonable cost. Notwithstanding the significance of this exit option (Bonvin 2012), it does not pose an answer to the question what people can actually do or achieve in current societies to live the life they have reason to value, to take up reasonable employment or to be educated.

As workfare policies proclaim concepts such as activation and employability, and present themselves as a sort of trampoline or springboard back into the labour market, it is necessary to analyse their concrete workings and operations (Ferrera and Hemerijck 2003). This is necessary in order to understand and criticise the opportunities and functionings people are enabled to in dualised welfare systems and to identify fields where emancipation and social change might be possible. The WORKABLE research about educational and vocational policies and in-depth case studies on educational programmes concerning labour market transitions in 11

European countries offer a range of insights about the scope and content as well as the relations and interactions between activities for peripheral groups and core routes of education – VET – employment (WORKABLE 2011, 2012).

In the first part of this paper, I will analyse the significance of the capability approach for a critical understanding of welfare systems and their dynamics. In the second part, I will present some of the most important insights from the WORKABLE research, in particular, from the case studies. The paper will conclude with some considerations on how to evaluate recent changes of welfare systems in the crisis.

10.2 Critical Approaches to Welfare and the Capability Approach

The WORKABLE project tried to overcome some of the outlined problems and contradictions of critical analyses of welfare state developments and the functions of social policy through the application of a firm normative concept as provided by the now widely debated capability approach by Amartya Sen (2007, 2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2009) (for an introduction, see *Christian Christrup Kjeldsen and Jean-Michel Bonvin* in this book).

According to Robert Salais,

the upheaval introduced by the capability approach relates to the choice of the yardstick against which collective action (policies, legislation, procedures) should be devised, implemented and assessed. For Sen, the only ethically legitimate reference point for collective action is the person, and specifically his situation as regards the amount of real freedom he possesses to choose and conduct the life he wishes to lead. (Translation taken from: Lambert et al. 2012)

Le grand basculement qu'introduit l'approche par les capacités est relatif au choix de la référence par rapport à laquelle l'action publique (les politiques, la législation, les procédures) doit être conçue, mise en oeuvre et évaluée. Pour Sen, la seule référence éthiquement légitime de l'action publique est la personne, précisément son état quant à l'étendue des libertés réelles dont elle dispose pour choisir et conduire la vie qu'elle entend mener. (Salais 2005: 10)

At first sight, this conceptual starting point seems to be a methodologically individualist attempt to avoid the dilemma highlighted by Offe (1993b) who refer to the problem that normative reasoning often says more about the position of the scientist than about social processes. Analysed more closely, however, it becomes clear that Salais' consideration aims to overcome the false opposition and separation of individual utilities and preferences (or practices) on the one hand and macro-social processes as well as political interventions of different institutions to bring about certain social outcomes on the other by pointing towards their constitutive interdependence.

Furthermore, it shifts the perspective away from a narrow concept of social policy outcomes – which would correspond to functionings in the terminology of the CA (Sen 2007, 2009; Bonvin 2009a) – towards the problem of the real freedom of individuals to live the life he/she has reason to value. Thus, this approach tries to

give substance to the problem that the ability of someone to make free choices about his or her life is fundamentally tied to the social circumstances/conditions in which they take place. Nevertheless, this focus on the individual as the only ethically legitimate reference point demands a shift in the understanding of public policies.

In Amartya Sen's perspective, public action should not focus on functionings but on capabilities, which puts the concern for individual freedom of choice at the very centre of social intervention. As a result, the main objective of public action in the field of welfare should not be to put people back to work at all costs (i.e. a functioning), but to enhance their real freedom of choice with regard to the labour market. (Bonvin and Dif-Pradalier 2010: 95)

This means, while (at least implicitly) accepting that a fundamental task of social policies in a capitalist society lies in “the lasting transformation of non-wage-labourers into wage labourers” (Offe 1993), the debate about the CA highlights the significance of the opportunities people have in choosing the life they have reason to value (other than just obeying the “silent compulsion of economic relations” (Marx)). This explains why the recent adaptations of social policies to the demands of the knowledge-based economy of finance-dominated capitalism (Altvater 2010) pose a vast range of normative problems and conflicts as the socially hegemonic concepts of freedom and justice have become a contested field (again). Critical scholars of welfare states such as Claus Offe but also Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) in his seminal study about the Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism had focused their analyses on the relationship between the (re-)production of wage labourers and their labour power and the institutionalisation of (temporary) exceptions from the obligation to work through social security. While shedding light on the structural reasons why welfare states focus – among other things – on the reproduction of wage labourers, freedom seems to emerge only in a negative way in relation to the so-called de-commodifying aspects of social policies. This means that freedom and emancipation mainly arise from the limitation of the status of labour power as a commodity through social policies.

As these critical approaches to welfare states were analysing the disciplinary societies of Fordist capitalism (Jessop 2002) – which Offe labelled as late capitalism – this focus should hardly come as a surprise. The hegemonic Fordist work routines paradigmatically embodied in the assembly line and controlled by rational-bureaucratic administration demanded the ability of individual subjection to technical work plans and strict time regimes. The production of wage labourers in welfare institutions rested on a specific construction of subjects and their abilities, for which the acceptance of the Fordist production regime resting on the suppression of subjective competencies under Taylorist management concepts was central (Sauer 2005). The expansion of welfare systems, to which the crisis tendencies of the capitalist mode of production were externalised in this period, as well as full employment, mass consumption and growing living standards served to stabilise this model of social development also for the bottom end of the social hierarchies (Hirsch 2005). Hence, the scope of normative conflicts about work and welfare under Fordism was mainly limited to negotiations and conflicts about wage growth and the distribution of monetary resources as well as the reduction of working time to stabilise Fordist ways of living.

However, as, in particular, Offe's work of the 1970s shows, the social dynamics of the Fordist mode of development and the opportunities arising from the new forms of living soon began to transcend their narrow confines as embodied in the dominant mode of regulation which rested on the bureaucratic control of everyday living. Hence, many people, in particular youth and women, tried to use the opportunities opened up by heightened living standards, expanding welfare systems, etc. to develop new capabilities and enlarge their options of choice to lead the lives they have reason to value. Among other things, this contributed to the emergence of the new social movements in 1968 and the years after and their search for alternative lifestyles and gender relations, enlarged democratic procedures and transformed modes of production, etc.

10.2.1 The Evolution of Welfare Systems in Post-Fordism

However, the following period of crisis and subsequent social and political struggles, which mainly focused on the contested relations between economic processes and dynamics (welfare) states, gave way to the so-called post-Fordist production regimes which rest on service work and the so-called new production concepts (Sauer 2005). Together with the shift to activation policies in welfare regimes, the stakes of freedom to live the life one has reason to value have been transformed fundamentally. On the one hand, the social, political and economic changes which accompany the shifts to post-Fordist modes of development lead among other things to a narrowing down of functionings for big segments of the population – in particular vulnerable young people. This is due to high and growing levels of unemployment and economic inactivity as well as massive increases of precarious forms of work and employment and rising numbers of working poor (Standing 2012; Pelizzari 2009). Together with welfare cuts and far-reaching reconfigurations of welfare systems, this lead to a narrowing down of opportunities of social integration and inclusion and therefore also a narrowing down of the number of individual opportunities to live the life one has reason to value. On the other hand, shifts to activation in welfare systems and the emergence of the so-called post-Taylorist forms of work pushed the abilities and competences of individuals to the centre ground of educational activities (Atzmüller 2014a). Thus, the outlined processes are aggravated by welfare state retrenchment and reconfiguration, which are presented as without alternative by neoliberal hegemony. Emphasis is put on individual self-responsibility and self-reliance as well as the willingness and ability of individuals to adapt to new demands and to actively seek new opportunities to improve their economic situation. In particular, subjective and immaterial skills – such as communicative and cooperative competencies, affective skills and the processing of information and knowledge – are said to be crucial for post-Fordist employees (Sauer 2005; Hardt and Negri 2000). These dynamics cannot simply be attributed to increasing educational levels among huge parts of the population. Rather, they also reveal “new” demands to employees at the lower end of the labour markets who have to do less qualified, “simple” work in the service sectors (call centres, care, retailing, etc.).

The necessary adaptation of the workforce to the changing demands of the knowledge-based economy has also determined recent conflicts about the future shape of the welfare state. High levels of persistent unemployment, the deregulation of labour markets, growing flexibility of employment relations and the emergence of precarious employment circumscribe the main traits of the unfolding reregulation of employment and the re-commodification of work (Castel and Dörre 2009; Scherschel et al. 2012). These dynamics are closely linked to the restructuring of welfare systems and social protection. Not just since the current crises are the former based on welfare cuts, increasingly tightened eligibility criteria and attempts to privatise social security in the name of individual responsibility.

10.3 Insights into Ambiguities and Modes of Operation of Youth Related Policies - Results of the WORKABLE Case Studies

The WORKABLE research on educational policies and the project's case studies about transitions into VET and employment give interesting insights into the peculiarities and details of the outlined developments of welfare systems. Young people's growing problems in following the standard routes from the educational system into stable employment, which left a considerable and in some countries growing number of young people without adequate qualifications and employment opportunities, have spawned intense search strategies to create and implement adequate institutions and measures to tackle these problems. The research focused on measures and activities which claim to support vulnerable youth who face difficulties in the "standard" educational path and to handle the transition into stable employment and the still mainly employment-based social security systems (Bifulco 2014; WORKABLE 2011, 2012). These developments lie at the core of the outlined processes of dualisation and the creation of a range of new welfare state activities for the so-called peripheral groups.

In particular, the WORKABLE case studies analysed the so-called new and/or innovative programmes for disadvantaged and vulnerable youth such as early school leavers, unemployed, low skilled, etc. which are provided by public, private and voluntary sector organisations and initiatives on a regional and decentralised level.

Apart from the fact that in most European countries similar groups of young people (such as migrants, school leavers with low educational attainment, early school leavers, women, etc.) face growing problems in integrating into the standard path of education and labour market transition, the WORKABLE project revealed the emergence of a range of similar strategies to adapt education, VET and the transition to employment which nevertheless work themselves out in nationally variegated forms in different countries (Atzmüller 2012). While the debates about dualisation mainly try to highlight the growing division within dualised welfare regimes, the WORKABLE research – in particular the qualitative case studies – offers a range of important insights about the ambiguities and modes of operation of the peripheral welfare and social security systems.

Thus, WORKABLE shed some light on the relations and interactions between core and peripheral activities within dualised welfare systems. Furthermore, the results show that the scope of the emerging programmes and activities poses an important problem for their relevance in regard to social cohesion and integration. In particular, the question whether certain programmes and measures (in particular, if of high quality) provide universal access for every member of the target groups or whether a choice is made among possible participants proved to be of crucial significance for an analysis from the perspective of the CA.

This problem cannot be separated from the contents and orientation of measures and programmes to reintegrate vulnerable and socially excluded people such as youth. Here, a tension emerged between activities, which focused on employability, human capital formation and work first on the one hand, and measures, which took a wider perspective including social pedagogical and social work activities. Hence, it became obvious that the welfare state function of (re-)producing of wage labourers is increasingly organised as a learning process. This literally means that most of the programmes and measures analysed were geared towards activities to train young people how to work and to develop those attitudes and virtues (such as punctuality, endurance, subordination to hierarchies). Social pedagogical and social work-related support activities are therefore mainly geared to reconcile problems young people might be confronted with regarding the demands of a working environment. Even though complementing employability-oriented activities with social pedagogy and social work seems indispensable from the perspective of capability formation, the case studies showed that more often than not the latter was not the outcome. These activities might as well be geared towards the normalisation of certain forms of an orderly life as a precondition for somebody's ability to subordinate to the demands of flexibilised labour markets and human capital formation. Hence, it became clear that the contents and orientations of programmes for vulnerable youth form a contested field as a range of social interests beyond the goal of social cohesion are vested within the construction of dualised activation measures for certain target groups.

10.3.1 Relations and Interactions in Dualised Welfare Systems

Taking up the first point, the case studies showed that the most important source of variation relates to the question whether activities developed for certain target groups such as youth aim at reintegration into the standard/core route of education–VET–employment and social security or whether these activities rather aim at stabilising precarious existences/life courses in the context of low wage employment and flexible segments of post-Fordist labour markets. From the point of view of the target population of these activities, the former can be expected to allow for some form of capability formation and the expansion of individual freedoms to live the life one has reason to value, whereas the latter can be expected to focus on employability formation and an active re-commodification of labour power, while (temporary) exit options are more and more reduced. However, as highlighted

above, a wider approach to integration into the standard route of education and employment is not necessarily linked to capability formation as can be shown through an in-depth analysis of the relations of power and dominance which run through, for example, the dual system of VET (see below). A third alternative, which transcends the outlined reintegration strategies to a certain degree, was found, in the Italian case study about a community project in Naples (Bifulco et al. 2012) – albeit on a very decentralised level and only in a very limited way. It revealed options to escape the outlined polarity in the context of deep crisis and growing dysfunctions of the welfare state as well as in the economy.

- (a) Generally, it is interesting to note that the WORKABLE case studies analysed two forms of interactions within dualised welfare system that aim at reintegration into a standard route of education–VET–employment. These examples begin as attempts to supplement the standard routes at the point of education or VET. In these cases, educational or VET activities are not only seen as a means of (quick) reintegration into employment and the labour market, which dominates many activities of workfare labour market policies, but rather they become a goal of their own. They are not only seen as an indispensable precondition for integration into a stable employment career. Rather, they are also understood as the best way of social integration. These strategies of reorganisation are either organised through an alternative and additional pillar of the standard route of VET, which is mainly financed and organised through public institutions. Or they are based on the more or less experimental development of activities that try to keep people within the standard path of education and schooling.

A crucial dimension that has become visible in these activities in contrast to other examples, which primarily focus on reintegration into the labour market (work first) is time – i.e., time which young people are given to develop the skills and competencies they need to stay within the standard routes from education to VET and employment or to re-enter them and to possibly reverse the stratified outcomes of the traditional educational system and modes of transition into VET.

Thus, the Austrian case study about supra-company apprenticeships (Haidinger and Kasper 2012) can be seen as an example for the creation of an additional public pillar within the dual system of VET to reintegrate young people into the core system of VET. This programme offers young people who cannot find a regular apprenticeship on the labour market the opportunity to reach the standard certificate for labour market entry and also further progression in employment. These activities are part of the so-called training guarantee in Austria, which is offered to every school leaver below 19, financed mainly through the collectively funded PES and organised through third sector activities. In contrast to measures as analysed, for example, in Germany around the so-called transition regime or in the Scottish/UK case study which mainly offers shorter training courses often for less than 1 year, supranational apprenticeships are not shorter than traditional apprenticeships with an employer (which may be in the private sector or in a public institution) which last between 3 and 4 years.

A second example can be found in the French case study (Berthet and Simon 2012) which focused on strategies developed in schools to prevent and tackle

early school leaving.² Here, the aim is to develop a variety of activities to keep people in the educational system and to make sure that they leave with a secondary school qualification. The rather muted success of activities to prevent early school leaving as highlighted in the case French study clearly showed the demand for a systematic public approach to this problem that would be able to work with local experiences and networks as they are closest to young people.

However, the outlined examples cannot be taken as representative for certain educational regimes and types of welfare systems. Thus, it would be inadequate to ignore the scope of variation within different regimes the case studies made visible. To take an example, countries where the system of alternation/dual system of VET is still dominant (i.e. Austria, Switzerland, Germany) revealed considerably varied strategies to tackle the crisis of the apprenticeship system (Atzmüller 2012). A systematic attempt to offer every young school leaver a bridge back into the standard path of VET and employment is but one possibility to tackle the lack of apprenticeship positions.

In Germany, even though there is the goal to make sure that every young person is “cared for”, people are rather parked in the so-called transition regime, which is not adequately connected to the standard VET system. There are still strong vested interests from trade unions as well as the business side to prevent a state-organised public pillar within the traditional dual system. Thus, within one type of VET regimes, different strategies emerge which might either fit a path of reintegration into standard routes or create an alternative system of transition for peripheral youth on the labour market.

- (b) As outlined above, an alternative to these forms of interactions and relations within dualised welfare systems could be found in the Italian case study (Bifulco et al. 2012). Two aspects proved central for the emergence of such activities. First, the Italian case study showed that in situations of deep crisis and increasing withdrawal (sometimes dysfunctionality) of the welfare state, space for bottom-up approaches to youth disadvantage and social exclusion might be emerging. Thus, such developments can be seen as a response of communities to a range of crisis processes within the state and the economy. These do not only serve to reorganise and direct educational investments but also to rescale political decision making between national, regional and local institutions and (sometimes also) to integrate new actors as well as to implement and create new institutions for the provision of policies.

The professed goal of these developments is to bring educational activities related to work, and in particular those that aim to tackle processes of social exclusion, closer to local communities and to the needs of the local economy. Rather than one-sidedly fostering employability and adaption to globalised labour markets, these activities try to secure social cohesion on the local level by offering social integration measures to young people. Apart from activities through which participants contribute to the reconstruction and maintenance of

²Similar activities can be found in other countries but were not covered in the case studies of the WORKABLE project.

public infrastructures (albeit on a very limited scale), there seems to be strong reliance on cooperation with local businesses. By at least temporarily employing participants of this project, they show their willingness to contribute to the reintegration of excluded youth.

Thus, the Italian case study revealed that in a situation of crisis, bottom-up processes might develop activities in which social cohesion does not only constitute a goal of activities but might become the very content of initiatives for young people on the local, decentralised level. This of course raises questions about the values and understandings linked to social cohesion and integration on the local level, which would demand an in-depth analysis of community structures. Notwithstanding the emerging potentials of a project like this, the scarcity of public funds and the lack of support from other levels of the state clearly reduce its outcomes.

10.3.2 The Scope and Depth of Programmes

Other dimensions of variations that emerged from the WORKABLE research refer to the scope and depth of the programmes, measures and activities young target groups are confronted with. Here, the case studies show that a range of distinctions can be identified which affect the mode of operations in the peripheral welfare institutions.

- (a) The first distinction I want to highlight is the question whether activation programmes for certain target groups really do cover everyone who is at risk of social exclusion or whether the emerging programmes and the related governance mechanisms (performance and output-related funding) rely on creaming effects by focussing activities on those people who are closest to the labour market. Thus, the first question concerns the availability of places and activities of high quality for every vulnerable young person – in particular in programmes of high quality – and whether they are offered possibilities of choice. The analyses show that in a context of (austerity related) scarcity of public funds, a choice is rather made by the institutions and their representatives (case managers) who have to fulfil targets and reach certain goals. From the perspective of the CA, this raises the questions about the justice and objectivity of the decisions of the personnel of educational institutions and the PES who might well be influenced by certain assumptions about their target groups or by interests of other actors such as businesses.

If these effects prevail, more vulnerable groups might be excluded from high-quality programmes and constantly pushed between institutions and short-term activities, thus deepening the dualisation of welfare. Tackling the problems and needs of the latter might be too costly for many providers of integration programmes, which are under control of ever tightening budget criteria.

Even though the case studies did not focus on these divisions within the countries of the WORKALBE consortium, some of the case studies clearly referred to this point. Thus, the Polish case study (Sztander-Sztanderska and

Zielenska 2012) about a privately run VET programme with an international electronic company in Warsaw clearly shows that the dominance of narrowly defined company-specific training interests support creaming effects in the choice of participants. While this initiative by an international company has become necessary not least because of a general disbanding of the VET system in Poland over the last two decades, it clearly shows that such strategies cannot pose an answer to the problem of social cohesion and social integration for societies and communities as a whole. Those young people who cannot enter such privately organised VET programmes loose out and become the object of activation measures and poverty-related policies.

- (b) Another remarkable development revealed by WORKABLE is the search for strategies to bring the educational system, the labour market and the economy closer together in a systematic way. In this context, the role of the so-called system of alternation/dual system of VET for the debates about necessary reforms of VET systems all over Europe and systematic approaches to the transition from education to the labour market comes to the fore again (Atzmüller 2011b, 2012). The dual system bases VET on a combination of on-the-job training and theoretically oriented education in public (vocational) schools. It is jointly organised by the state and social partners creating the so-called occupational labour markets, which rest on transparent, transferable and widely accepted skills and qualification. Even if an implementation of a German system of alternation for educational investments all over Europe is unlikely, the idea of bringing schooling and working closer together has gained a strong foothold in European countries in the current crisis. This is especially true for the group of youth who lose out in the academic-oriented paths of the different educational regimes.

From the perspective of the CA, there are however a number of downsides to these developments. First, this VET system is confronted with many problems concerning the quality and availability of a sufficient number of apprenticeship places provided by the private sector. Second, it supports a shift in educational concepts and goals towards employability and human capital, whereas wider concepts of education – as embodied in the concept of “Bildung” (Düker and Ley 2012) – or capability formation are rather pushed to the back. Third, a one-sided emphasis on the merits of the dual system neglects its role for the socialisation of employees to the capitalist work ethic and exchange value orientation as well as their subordination to occupation-related cultures and values which, for example, might be linked to specific constructions of male and female work, hierarchy, etc.

10.3.3 Social Interests Defining Youth Policies

Apart from a normative understanding of social cohesion and social integration for which the debates of the CA could offer important insights, the WORKABLE case studies clearly showed that, apart from the buzzwords and jargon manifest in official programme documents, a range of interests come to the fore within this policy field.

The example of the Polish case study (Sztander-Sztanderska and Zielińska 2012), even though it represents a certain “outlier”, points towards this problem quite clearly as do the analysis about the varied responses to the crisis of the dual system. The channelling of vulnerable and disadvantaged youth into a set of newly created activation measure programmes in the context of a dualised welfare system is not simply driven by the goal of social cohesion and social inclusion. Rather, the creation and implementation of policies vis-à-vis groups that are at risk of social exclusion such as vulnerable and disadvantaged youth constitute a highly contested political field. Different social, political and economic interests try to influence and steer the emerging strategies and activities concerning vulnerable and disadvantaged youth.

Thus, even the Austrian research, which analysed a programme which clearly aims at social integration of its target groups, also highlighted the relevance of the state interest in social control and regulation of, for example, (urban) excluded and unemployed youth as a new dangerous class which might pose a problem to public order, as could be seen in other European countries where riots took place (France, UK) (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011). Concerns about public order and safety also popped up at the back of other case studies such as the Scottish/UK one. In the UK context riots and other form of social unrest, which are linked to the social situation of the poor and in particular the young and their relation to public authorities, have for a long time been at the back of developments in youth policies as has been highlighted in relation to the emergence of labour market policies and welfare (Peck 1996) over the last three decades. Furthermore, there are also economic interests, which lie behind the goals of the emerging set of activities and programmes tackling youth unemployment and social exclusion. It is very often rather precarious and low-paid employment that the programmes and measures within the emerging peripheral welfare regime prepare young people for, or even force them to accept. Thus, it cannot be denied that there is also an interest to stabilise and regulate a flexible, precarious and low-waged segment of the labour market by the state as well as the business side.

Concluding Remarks: Perspectives in the Crisis

The outlined changes raise a range of questions from the perspective of the CA as they clearly pertain to the problem whether individuals can have (or even enlarge their) real freedom to make informed choices about their lives, work and position in society more general or whether they have to adapt to the new demands of a globalised economy and an activating welfare system (Bonvin 2009b).

- (a) First, the WORKABLE research analysed and problematised the concrete relations and interactions between the peripheral and core welfare institutions, through which vulnerable and disadvantaged youth become socially excluded and therefore the object of activation regimes. Measures and programmes can either try to secure social inclusion of vulnerable

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and disadvantaged groups through activities that support them in integrating into the standard path of education and employment, allowing them to project a stable biography or can instead focus on the expansion of strategies of social control and discipline of the poor and unemployed who are increasingly seen as a threat to mainstream society. In particular, the fears of the middle classes regarding the “new” dangerous classes of poor and unemployed youth, migrants, unskilled, etc. feed social segregation which increasingly dualised welfare state institutions might reproduce.

Against this background, a normative evaluation of the (changing) functions of welfare systems and educational regimes as proposed by the debates about the CA supports critical analysis to look behind the smoke-screen of certain buzzwords and jargon of activation policies. Confronted with the weakness of social movements in many countries which would not only offer an alternative interpretation of the realities of welfare systems but would rather change them, the CA offers an alternative entry point for an in-depth debate of recent changes as it focuses on the person and his/her situation as regard the amount of real freedom he/she possesses to choose and conduct the life he/she wishes to lead (see above).

However, notwithstanding the significance of democracy for the CA, the lack of social movements in many countries leaves the position of democratic processes in a rather awkward situation. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in the WORKABLE case studies, there is hardly any debate about the creation of individual and collective capabilities to change the social circumstances in increasingly flexibilised and precarious labour markets. To my mind, the individualised understanding of an internalisation of “realist life plans” explains why the analyses of WORKABLE reported rather limited scope for participation of young people in the policies and programmes that affect them.

Their integration as fully participating citizens is therefore hardly a topic of the outlined measures and programmes apart from the goal to integrate them into the labour market. This corresponds well with the worrying result of some case studies which reveal a lack of a sense of entitlement among young target groups. This poses a range of interesting questions for further research. Do people who are the target of activation regimes due to their individual deficits give up the idea of having social rights to social integration and a good life? What would this mean for future development of welfare systems as well as democracy? How do democratic processes and structures have to change to make capability formation a field of participation?

- (b) Second, the case studies offer insights into the dominant modes of operation and functional principles embodied in the emerging peripheral welfare regimes of dualized welfare states. Thus, the problems of young

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people are defined as deficiencies and needs, ranging from insufficient educational abilities, the lack of an adequate work ethic and adequate secondary virtues (discipline, responsibility, punctuality etc.), to non-conformist lifestyles, family background, migrant status, etc. Less focus is put on the abilities and aspirations young people might have. This is neglected as many policies want young people to become more “realistic” and attuned with labour market demands, the former being of relevance only if they support individual employability.

Linked to this is the attempt by most of the analysed measures and strategies to implement programmes, which are said to be tailor-made to the problems of the specific groups of young people. However, as these problems are defined as failure of young people in the standard path of education and the transition to the labour market, it is companies, educational and labour market institutions, youth experts, etc. who define these problems and what constitutes a socially desirable way out of social exclusion and a socially integrative lifestyle.

Furthermore, there are no adequate attempts in many countries to accompany youth-related measures with macroeconomic employment policies, which try to create sufficient employment opportunities and to improve employment conditions through attempts to fight precarisation and instability. This is particularly pressing in the current period of crisis. Rather, the aim is to spread the risk of unemployment but also precarious and flexible employment among a higher share of the workforce so as to overcome the segmentation of the labour market in this way.

Taken together, transcending a narrow conceptualisation of workfare and activation, the CA can help us to identify the historically and nationally concrete normative issues that lie behind the question what it means to be able to work and to be educated in the knowledge-based economy and to identify and interpret the social aspirations and demands which emerge in the everyday practices and struggles of (young) individuals and groups who try to cope with changing circumstances. Thus, the articulation of the CA with critical analysis of the changes of work and welfare states can help us to identify their political and contested character. This is important because the strong emphasis which is currently put on human capital formation and education can be interpreted as the result of a fundamental shift in power relations – if power is understood according to Karl W. Deutsch as the ability to afford NOT to learn. Thus, the imperative to permanently learn and adapt is the result of a fundamental loss of power for employees and their organisations.

In the on-going shift towards a knowledge-based economy, this has a range of significant effects, as it means that the onus of adaptation to a constantly changing economic environment is put on the employees and their ability to learn and change as quickly as possible. If adaptation through learning is

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the most important precondition to secure one's competitiveness, the very activities of employees themselves contribute to the general trend towards 'precarisation' as the skills and competences workers acquire are made obsolete through their very actions. This in turn not only contributes to destabilising their employment careers and life course but also contributes to the crisis of solidarity which accompanies the outlined changes of the welfare state (Atzmüller 2011a).

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Part V

**Capabilities for Voice, Work
and Education: Critical Analysis
of Programmes for Disadvantaged Young
People in Europe**

Chapter 11

Capabilities for Voice, Work and Education: Critical Analysis of Programmes for Disadvantaged Young People in Europe

**Lavinia Bilfulco, Valerie Egdell, Ronald McQuaid, Thierry Berthet,
Véronique Simon, Raffaele Monteleone, Carlotta Mozzana,
Emilie Rosenstein, Maël Dif-Pradalier, Jean-Michel Bonvin,
Emma Hollywood, Niels Rosendal Jensen, Christian Christrup Kjeldsen,
Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska, Marianna Zieleńska, Bettina Haidinger,
Ruth Kasper, Jan Düker, Thomas Ley, and Gunilla Bergström**

11.1 Introduction to the Case Studies

Lavinia Bilfulco (✉)

Department of Sociology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

e-mail: lavinia.bifulco@unimib.it

Valerie Egdell

Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University,
Edinburgh, UK

e-mail: V.Egdell@napier.ac.uk

Ronald McQuaid

University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

e-mail: r.w.mcquaid@stir.ac.uk

L. Bilfulco (✉) • R. Monteleone • C. Mozzana

Department of Sociology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

e-mail: lavinia.bifulco@unimib.it; raffaele.monteleone@unimib.it;

carlotta.mozzana@gmail.com

V. Egdell • E. Hollywood

Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

e-mail: V.Egdell@napier.ac.uk; emmahollywood46@gmail.com

R. McQuaid

University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

e-mail: r.w.mcquaid@stir.ac.uk

T. Berthet • V. Simon

CNRS, Centre Emile Durkheim, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

e-mail: t.berthet@sciencespobordeaux.fr; v.simon@sciencespobordeaux.fr

This chapter introduces the nine case studies, the common question framework used and the different methodologies adopted. The aim of the case studies is to examine the transitions of disadvantaged young people from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market and from being unemployed/outside the labour market into employment. They also look at examples of education and employability programmes that may support young people in these transitions in order help us understand the trajectories from school to work from a capability approach.

11.1.1 Overview of the Case Studies

The case studies enhance our understandings of ways to develop the capabilities for voice, work and education of young people who encounter difficulties in, or who do not complete, the ‘standard’ trajectories from school to work. The case studies were conducted in nine different European countries (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK) thus providing insights not only from different geographical and socioeconomic contexts but also from different welfare, education and employment traditions and regimes.

The case studies examine new and/or innovative programmes that support disadvantaged young people (viz. early school leaver; those unemployed; those in upper secondary vocational school, who have not yet obtained their diploma and who suffer from low skills; those with no upper secondary education qualifications; and those higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job) in their

E. Rosenstein • M. Dif-Pradalier • J.-M. Bonvin

Center for the Study of Capabilities in Social and Health Services (CESCAP), University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), Lausanne, Switzerland
e-mail: emilie.rosenstein@eesp.ch; mael_dif@yahoo.com; jmbonvin@eesp.ch

N.R. Jensen • C.C. Kjeldsen

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
e-mail: nrj@dpu.dk; kjeldsen@edu.au.dk

K. Sztandar-Sztanderska • M. Zieleńska

Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
e-mail: k.sztanderska@gmail.com; marianna.zielenska@gmail.com

B. Haidinger • R. Kasper

FORBA (Working Life Research Centre), Vienna, Austria
e-mail: haidinger@forba.at; kasper@forba.at

J. Düker • T. Ley

Center of Social Service Studies, Faculty for Educational Science, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany
e-mail: jan.dueker@uni-bielefeld.de; thomas.ley@uni-bielefeld.de

G. Bergström

Department of Sociology and Work Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: gunilla.bergstrom@sociology.gu.se

transitions from formal education to work. The programmes explored in the cases were provided by organisations across the public, private and third sectors. In addition, one case study (Sweden) focuses on the transitions of young people with less favourable labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme.

In three case studies (France, Italy and Switzerland), the focus is on early school leavers; the Danish and UK case studies are concerned with the young unemployed; the German and Austrian case studies consider young people with no upper secondary education qualifications; the Polish case study views young people with low skills who are in upper secondary vocational school; and the Swedish case analyses higher education graduates who are experiencing difficulties in finding their desired job. Table 11.1 provides an overview of the nine different case studies and the target groups of young people addressed in each of them.

11.1.2 Common Question Framework

The overall approach taken in all the case studies was based on a common capability approach methodological framework, drawing on a set of consistent questions focusing on the opportunities open to individuals and the freedom they have to make choices that they value (Sen 1985, 1998).

The aim of the common framework was to provide a robust means of carrying out a cross-country analysis of the various programmes and to provide a consistent framework for how the capability approach would be used to conceptualise the transitions made by young people from education into work and the ways in which young people's capabilities for education, work and voice were developed.

The capabilities for education, work and voice were understood as follows (see Bifulco 2012 for further details):

1. *Capability for Education:* The capability for education is the real freedom to choose a training/curriculum programme one has reason to value. As such, the importance of educational resources is not exclusively concerned with increasing individual professional skills and economic productivity but also with reducing inequalities and empowering young people to lead integrated and active lives in society (Bifulco 2012).
2. *Capability for Work:* The capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job/activity one has reason to value. It encompasses a series of dimensions and takes into account the plurality of views about what 'valuable work' is (Bonvin 2012). It focuses on issues and dimensions such as adequate skills, the availability of work opportunities and access to them, etc. (Hollywood et al. 2012).
3. *Capability for Voice:* The capability for voice is the capacity to express one's opinions and to make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made (Bonvin and Thelen 2003; Bifulco 2012). It can be seen as a mechanism by which the capabilities for education and work are realised. Implications of this capability include that young people have the skills and influence to put forwards their viewpoints, are entitled to do this and are free not to express their voice without having

Table 11.1 Case-study descriptions

Topic	Country	Case-study description
Early school leavers	France	Two state regional action plans: 'regional plan against school dropout' (Rhône-Alpes) and 'local networks for school perseverance' (Aquitaine).
	Switzerland	FORJAD (formation pour les jeunes adultes en difficulté/training for struggling young adults) programme set up by the cantonal department of Social Affairs, together with the departments of Education and Employment. FORJAD gets marginalised youth out of welfare programmes and offers them the possibility to achieve a vocational training.
	Italy	'Trespassing project' operated in Naples by a community development agency. The project provides personalised paths towards labour market for young people not in employment, education or training.
Unemployed	UK	Two third sector programmes in Scotland that help disadvantaged young people aged 16–25 make the transitions from unemployment to employment by providing work placements and work experience opportunities.
	Denmark	Basic Vocational Education and Training Programme (EGU) at the local municipality level for young people who have failed their earlier schooling (e.g. early school leavers, or students of technical schools that have given up their education).
Those in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills	Poland	Implementation of programme 'We empower you to learn' (programme of cooperation between education and the power industry) in one of Warsaw's upper-secondary vocational schools.
No upper secondary education qualifications	Austria	The 'Youth at Work' (Jugend am Werk) programme which offers supra-company training places for a range of apprenticeships in craft, industry and service sector professions. The supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a 'safety net' for those young people not able to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.
	Germany	Two contrasting programmes within a local transition management institution were chosen to represent the spectrum of interventions available there: Kompetenzagentur (agency of competence) and KSoB (courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract).
Higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job	Sweden	Young people with an individually composed bachelor's degree in one of the disadvantaged academic fields/subjects.

Source: Hollywood et al. (2012: Table 2: Case study descriptions, p. 7)

to incur penalties (Bonvin 2012). On this basis, our research highlights the voices of young people and their chances to lead the life they value.

In order to explore how to equip and enable young people to be capable as participants in labour markets, the individual, social and environmental factors that promote or impede young people's capabilities for education, for work and for voice, people and contexts and individual and collective dimensions have to be considered altogether (Bifulco 2012). The perspectives of young people themselves have been taken into account as the individual level is the dimension in which capabilities may be exercised and increased. The conditions that allow for the development of capabilities also have their roots in institutional and social contexts and frameworks, and in the organisational cultures that define public intervention. From a capability perspective, the social environment should, normatively, be inclusive. Therefore, the case studies highlight the link between the individual and social dimensions of capabilities. From this point of view, the research aims to highlight in what sense the promotion of capability for education, work and voice of young people is decisive both for individual well-being and our collective life (Bifulco 2012). While the case studies focus on the views of individual participants regarding programmes, i.e. taking a bottom-up perspective of the development of capabilities, they also sought to understand how these perspectives, preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or enabled by the wider economic, social, institutional and cultural environment. Thus, the case studies look at the development of the capabilities for voice, education and work at different levels: the micro level (the subjective, professional and interactive level), meso level (the interactive, institutional and conceptual level) and macro level (the political and societal level).

In order to take a bottom-up perspective of the development of capabilities at different levels, the common methodological framework was centred on four factors core to the capability perspective. To be able to assess an individual's capabilities to make choices that they value, the resources a person has access to, as well their individual and external conversion factors, need to be taken into account (Bonvin and Moachon 2008; Bonvin and Orton 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid 2010).

1. *Resources*: What resources are available for the programme and are there enough resources for the programme to enable beneficiaries to have the capacity to act? What resources do individual beneficiaries bring with them to the programme?
2. *Empowerment*: Are beneficiaries sufficiently empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the programme and how much choice do they have in this process, and in the selection of alternatives?
3. *Individual Conversion Factors*: Do individuals have the necessary conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities? In particular to identify the young person's potential or substantive freedom to achieve alternative combinations of states, or activities he or she has reason to value.
4. *External Conversion Factors*: Conversion factors depend not only on individual conversion factors but also the broader social, economic, environmental and political context in which they are made. What is the role of external social and structural factors that may affect the conversion of resources into capabilities, such as

social class, geography, gender, labour market conditions, labour market segregation, discrimination and the legal framework (including welfare legislation).

As outlined in Hollywood et al. (2012), the aim of the common question framework was not only instrumental but rather was to embrace the capability approach ‘by seeking to identify the range of capabilities that the case study programmes sought to enhance. Therefore, the aim was to examine the process for the individual, their freedoms or opportunities, rather than only focusing on observed choices, outcomes or achieved functionings’ (p. 5).

11.1.2.1 Methodological Approaches

The common research questions were addressed primarily through research interviews, both group and individual interviews, with young people and other stakeholders (e.g. managers, employees) in each case study. These case studies were used to get insights from a range of individuals about the programmes and to help understand complex relationships. In addition to interviews, other methods were used in the case studies in order that depth and additional insights could be gleaned, including participant observation, document analysis and statistical analysis. A thematic content/coding analysis of the data was most commonly used to analyse the data collected by the case studies. In addition, a series of short videos sought to give young people and other stakeholders a partial voice through expressing their views (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuUG2k0o8RX3BEu-OmPb-Hnk4axX5Sdu->) (Table 11.2).

Table 11.2 Methodological approaches

	Method
Germany	Problem-centred interviews with young persons
	Expert interviews with case managers
	Documentary analysis (mainly political and professional concepts)
Poland	Documentary and statistical data analysis
	Semi-structured in-depth interviews with policymakers, programme deliverers, programme beneficiaries etc.
Italy	Interviews with policymakers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries
	Group interviews with policymakers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries
	Participant observation
	Documentary analysis
France	Documentary analysis
	Semi structured interviews with regional public authorities; and with local operators
	Individual face-to-face interviews with Pupils/students and small group interviews of 3–5 Pupils/students
	Class group interviews >10 pupils/students
Denmark	Documentary analysis
	Semistructured, theme-oriented interviews were conducted with policymakers, managers, teachers; EGU pupils and one internship-teacher. Two interviews (pupil; teacher) developed into group interviews

(continued)

Table 11.2 (continued)

	Method
Austria	Explorative and expert interviews: management, trainers and social pedagogues
	Group discussions with the apprentices
	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with apprentices
Switzerland	Documentary survey Semi-directed in-depth interviews with young people on the programme
UK	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, project workers and young people in the two case study organisations
Sweden	Unstructured in-depth interviews with young graduates with weak labour market attachment
	Interviews with employees at the university
	Scientific studies and public discussions in the press
	Policy documents, texts and accounts
	Interviews with employers, union representatives and employment office

Source: Hollywood et al. (2012: Table 4: Case study methodologies, pp. 16–17)

11.2 Nine Case Studies from Europe

11.2.1 *Good for Nothing, Capable of What? Early School Leavers and Regional Public Policies in France*

Thierry Berthet • Véronique Simon

CNRS, Centre Emile Durkheim, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France
e-mail: t.berthet@sciencespobordeaux.fr; v.simon@sciencespobordeaux.fr

11.2.1.1 Introduction

Until the beginning of the years 2000, early school leaving was not a matter of concern in French politics. It started to change after the November 2005s urban riots provided a political window of opportunity. In the aftermath of the events, public authorities put the issue of school dropouts on both national and local agendas. The inscription of the dropout issue on the agenda occurred in a complex political landscape where different types of actors coexist: *government departments, local governments and administrations and local guidance structures and networks*. These actors try to cooperate on several territorial levels of government and within an unstable network of intricate hierarchical and organisational relationships. This blurred landscape has scarring effects on the governance of these policies as well as on the service delivered to youngsters. In this case study, we propose to assess two territorialised educational policies carried out by Regional Councils from the capability approach point of view. This policy analysis will be conducted at two levels: the governance of these local experimental programmes and their effects on the beneficiaries in terms of individual capabilities.

11.2.1.2 Two French Regions Facing the Governance of Dropout in an Uncertain Institutional World

In the French institutional landscape, the Regional Councils are recent actors but progressively gaining more competencies in the field of educational, guidance and training policies. Most of the 26 French regions are now starting to intervene on the dropout question and propose experimental programmes. We have chosen here to study two of these innovative policies co-funded by the French government¹ and launched by two regions: Rhône-Alpes and Aquitaine.

¹The Experimental Fund for Youth (Fonds d'Expérimentation Jeunesse) was set up by the Sarkozy government to fund local experimentations towards youngsters at risk.

Rhône-Alpes: Subsidising Schools to Prevent Early Leaving

The regional plan in Rhône-Alpes consists in financing innovation within schools. It was launched in 2008 and resulted from an interinstitutional agreement between the Regional Council, the French Education Department (more precisely two of its regional subdivisions called ‘Rectorats’), the regional directorate for food, agriculture and forests (i.e. the DRAAF who is in charge of educational policies in agriculture) and the regional network of the missions locales (i.e. local guidance structures dedicated to marginalised youth). The analysis that prevailed in the Regional Council back then was that prevention should be favoured, by supporting schools in helping at-risk pupils to succeed. Hence, a call for proposals was launched on February 2008 ‘to improve and develop the prevention of school dropout in order to reduce the rates of early leave in professional training schemes’. The applying schools were to submit ‘an innovative approach for identifying and providing extra help for struggling pupils’. This plan was directed to both public and private upper vocational and agricultural secondary schools. The call for proposals was open for 3 years (2008–2011) and had a global budget of € 1.5 million. Out of the 125 submissions, 91 projects have been selected, 80 of them carried out by a single school.

The analysis of programme’s implementation shows several significant observations. First, 80 % of the requests for funding have concerned overtime pay of the teachers while the main topics of the funded programmes have been training for teachers, small group remobilisation workshops, individual counselling for at-risk pupils, tutoring as well as personal and interpersonal competencies development. These local experimentations are mostly limited to one single school, and partnerships rarely extend to the information and guidance services. While they often speak of families and pupil’s involvement, it is generally realised only by distributing individual or collective information sessions.

Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that the programme fostered interest in the schools, since almost half of the 230 eligible schools in the area have taken positions and submitted applications. In a context of decreasing national public funding for secondary education, it appears that the subsidies offered by the Regional Council allowed for the funding of programmes that could not be provided for by national policies. ‘I think that globally, for the school involved, it has given them some air to breathe and has widened horizons a little’ (Interview at the Regional Council). Another positive dimension of the programme is a mobilisation effect on the academic case managers involved within the schools, in a quite unfamiliar project framework in education. ‘I think in terms of effect, the very first thing is that in participating in the plan, the schools say it helped us to tackle the issue. That is to say that as soon as they redacted a proposal, (...), it has had an internal mobilization effect’ (Interview at the Rectorat of Lyon). This has called for an awareness effect for teachers involved de facto in an internal programme for fighting dropout, while the issue tends to be increasingly externalised towards non-academic operators (psychomotor therapists, advisors in Mission Générale d’Insertion, speech-language pathologist, etc.). ‘It did bring too, thanks to the means and the funding, I think it has an effect of overtime pay and so on,

it allowed each Head of School to have the means to foster mobilization, especially with the teachers. That is the second effect' (Interview at the Rectorat of Lyon).

In the end, the regional plan against school dropout will have instigated a project dynamic and initiated innovation inside a significant number of Rhône-Alpes' schools.

Regarding the governance partnership at the regional level, according to the actors interviewed, this partnership has been working to their satisfaction, except for two points:

The local guidance organisations for deprived youngsters (missions locales) involvement has been limited, due to a programme design that focuses mainly on schools for both the regional plan and the programmes submitted by the public upper secondary schools. 'When looking at the projects, what are you told? I will be very, very caricaturing: if a pupil drops out, your job is to direct him to the mission Locale. But it is our usual activity to take responsibility for these young people. What we would have wished for is the development, for instance, of direct permanent presence within the schools. Well, it was obvious that this was not an option' (Interview at the regional coordination of missions locales).

The monitoring of the regional plan entrusted to the Pôle Rhône-Alpes de l'Orientation (i.e. guidance's network for Rhône-Alpes, or PRAO) included a mission of precise inventory of the dropouts in the region. However, the Rectorat have not shared the necessary extractions from their databases to make such calculations. This situation has created uneasy relationships between the Regional Council and the two Rectorats. 'So the evaluation, the PRAO's job, happened the way it could because they did not want to communicate their numbers. At first they were issues both technical and, since in fact when we implemented this, we were questioning their ability to actually know what they were doing, and it was not their problem since they always have responded to the Department in statistical terms. (...). Objectively, it is problematic. Then, there was a big fear to reveal things threatening an institution that is already quite weakened. The more they fear, the more they lock up, and the more complex it gets, the more aggressive interpersonal relationships become'. As a result, the PRAO had to resort to other extrapolated statistical sources to perform its task. Regarding the systemic effects which have been observed on the schools, two elements can be pointed out, as recalled by the Rectorat de Lyon:

The Regional Council's action is set to continue with a new plan 'in favour of return to school' launched in the spring of 2011, here again shaped as a call for proposals directed to local operators. Nonetheless, two changes introduced by the new plan underline the shortcomings of the previous one. The change in semantics shifting from school dropout to return to school can mainly be accounted for as mediation with the Rectorat, which is not called into question anymore. The new call for proposal rests also explicitly on the need for schools to establish partnerships with local operators (especially the missions locales). Such a constraining condition for eligibility highlights indirectly how low the external partnership dynamic was in the schools during the 2008–2011 period.

Aquitaine: Supporting Local Networks to Find Solutions for Dropped Out

The programme initiated by the Regional Council in Aquitaine is entitled *networks for school perseverance*. The wording ‘school perseverance’ to designate dropout is quite unusual in France, yet frequently used in Québec.² When in 2008, the Regional Council considered getting involved in preventing school dropout, three territories were identified where pre-existed a cooperative dynamic between local stakeholders. ‘So we identified those three territories and offered them the following deal: we will organize a mission to Québec, the deal is not to copy-paste what is done in Québec but we can draw inspiration from it, hear principles out, see work approaches and postures, and the deal is to come back in Aquitaine and with your operators, your projects in common, to try and put those methods into practice’ (Interview at the Regional Council).

The network was launched in 2008 and has been the object of an experimentation cofinanced by the state during the 2008–2011 times. The objectives of this experimental approach consist in: ‘Supporting and encouraging partnership and network-setting of distinct institutions, structures and organizations which are locally involved with “dropout”, so as to reinforce their cooperation for a better care provided to young people. Accompanying the three local and experimental networks for perseverance and success of young people in their areas, in their action for identification and monitoring of young drop outs, potential or actual, encountering difficulties in academics and / or insertion’.

In Aquitaine, the project’s implementation happened in a global context of tension with the Rectorat. ‘And the Rectorat always said that the Region was creating a program adverse to ours, they are outside of their competences, etc. (...) Of course the tension was obvious with the actors from the Education Department who did not regard kindly inviting at the table, on issues relevant only to them, people whose relevance or expertise they do not recognize’ (Interview at the Regional Council). It is indeed quite likely that choosing to invest on the axis of network-building, rather than to intervene directly with the schools’ policies as was done in Rhône-Alpes, is due to this particularly tensed relationship between the Regional Council and the Rectorat on the dropout issue in 2008.

The implementation’s beginnings were slightly chaotic. Over the three targeted areas, two actually invest in the project, while the third was finally not involved. Following demands from the local case managers, the main axis for action rests on recruiting two coordinators in charge of animation of the local networks and thus being able to dispense operational staff involved in preventing dropout of all bureaucratic and managerial tasks. Soon though, a second objective came alongside. It consists in developing an IT-shared programme on the local network scale in order to identify and monitor in real-time young dropouts’ situation. This programme, named

²The beginning of the project in Aquitaine is related to a fact-finding mission conducted in Québec in 2006.

SAFIRE (Solution d'Accompagnement à la Formation, l'Insertion et la Réussite Educative, i.e. Support for Formation, Insertion and Academic Success Solution), has been developed in two local areas (Blaye and Marmande). This development task, carried out by the coordinators recruited for the project, has been very favourably assessed by the local operators: 'This is enormous work, it took him time, he went to all the schools so as to appoint referring operators for perseverance, trained academic staff to use Safire. Thus it is something who had a very positive impact, because alerts have been doubled' (Interview at the mission locale de Blaye). 'It allows for more reactivity, because once you have fed the information to Safire, you just click on the name of the people you wish to contact, and with this click an email is systematically sent to these people who will go on Safire and look in detail on the file where the kid is at' (Interview at the centre for information and guidance of Blaye).

The programme's two axis – coordinating local operators and implementing a monitoring device – collided with a state's policy launched in February 2011. With a circular from the ministry of education,³ the French government introduced two new devices: local platforms for monitoring and support and the SIEI (Interdepartmental System for Exchange of Information on dropouts). Those two measures, which local officials from state services will have to implement, brutally collide with the local networks in Aquitaine. 'We have been hit by this and de facto, we cannot keep our programs alive with the platforms since our operators are fully involved in the operationalisation of such state policy, and are compelled to implement it' (Interview at the Regional Council). In the end, the two staff members coordinating the networks did not see their contracts renewed beyond the experimentation calendar (December 2011), and the future of the SAFIRE programme is at the very least uncertain, since the local civil servants in state services have been advised to favour the national SIEI programme.

Common Findings and Divergences

To conclude on the governance dimension of this assessment study, several dimensions can be recalled. In terms of *institutionalisation*: no extension or continuation of the projects as they are today has been considered at the end of the experimentation. In terms of *partnership*: dropout appears as an issue strongly marked by political tensions between the Regional Council and the Rectorat, especially regarding data transmission on dropout and project management in both regions. In terms of *project management*: the local and national agendas collided. Governmental initiatives (SIEI and local platforms) launched after the beginning of experimentations and, particularly in respect to identifying dropouts, have impacted and sometimes destroyed local experimentations (Aquitaine). In terms of *relations to the beneficiaries*: young people and their families have usually not been given a lot of time for voicing their concerns, even when targeting specifically the schools (Rhône-Alpes).

³ Ministry of education, *Circulaire n° 2011-2028 du 9-2-2011 Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire*.

The global observation one can provide for both the national and local levels is one of limited actions in time and space, strongly calling into questions the public action's continuity. For *decision-makers*: repeated competences overlap, and conflicts play on the unstable margins of decentralisation and national competences. For *case managers*: local experimentations are alive and well, but they remain strongly vulnerable to the institutional context in the region.

Overall, a picture of uncontrolled repetition for programmes very often similar one to another can be drawn in terms of governance.

11.2.1.3 Studying the Service Delivered to Youngsters from a Capability Point of View

Are those two regional programmes factors of capabilities enhancement in the words of Amartya Sen (2000)? To what extent and how do the resources allocated allow for an increase in the actor's actual freedoms, in this particular case dropping out pupils (Bonvin and Farvaque 2008)? As collectively decided by the WorkAble Research Consortium, programme's effects on beneficiaries are evaluated with regard to the development of three main capabilities: capability for voice, capability for education and capability for work.

Capability for Voice

The voice is a crucial element for some projects and has appeared more broadly in the research to be a central capability for deprived youngsters. A capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies, according to us, the active involvement of pupils but also grants them the freedom not to participate. Of course pupils must not be forced to participate to experimental programmes, and they should be invited to get involved and therefore should receive accurate information (families nonetheless have less systematic access to information). The regional programmes target pupils with the more difficulties, yet it does not identify⁴ them as at-risk individuals. They should be granted an easy access to the programme (free access), and the organisation should take into account their constraints (timetables, public transportation, living conditions, etc.) and what they appreciate and give value to. Pupils can also be a force of proposal, for the choice of a school field trip, or for the timing and the discipline of tutoring, for instance.

But voice can also be lacking in some projects. In such cases, pupils have no or very little information on the different aspects or on the existence of the project, and when they have gotten any, it remained unclear. The fact that they actually understood the project does not seem to have been verified. Pupils, for instance, think they are getting grades for the tests they are given and have only a very vague idea of what they could be used for. It was very salient from the interviews with pupils benefiting from this type of projects that what was done bore no value nor had any

⁴Thus, preventing for stigmatisation as a reason for non-take-up.

use to them. The different parts of the project have been conceived without their input, and pupils are threatened into participating for fear of exclusion. To them, the only way to express themselves is an institutionalised one, through the ‘délégués de classe’ or pupil deputies (Berthet 2013). Outside of such representation, they have no voice granted to them.

From the case manager’s point of view, voice seems to be present to different extents and under distinct forms from one school to another. In rural areas and agricultural schools, it seems to be an important stake. For instance: a rural school has opened specific spaces for listening and expression for third year pupils. Besides, psychological support has been set up for voluntary participants, which can choose the place and the subject of those sessions. As another example, an agricultural secondary school in Montravel⁵ makes space for capability for voice: based on free expression, pupils involved in field trips, mentoring and tutoring scheme jointly elaborated by adults and young people.

But, more generally, in the vocational secondary schools, the voice dimension seems less important. The analysis of interviews with heads of school and teachers matches the one with the pupils. Indeed, they mention very scarcely the dimension of capability for voice. Outside of the induction week when pupils are given individual meetings and sessions are organised with families, added to the fact that a pupil can refuse individual care, the indicators for voice are largely absent.

The CLEPT: A ‘Capability for Voice-Friendly’ School?

The Collège Lycée Elitaire pour Tous (CLEPT or loosely translated the Elite secondary school for all) is an experimental school. It offers alternative approaches to education for dropouts (they have an average 18 months lost before getting into the CLEPT). Small groups, tutoring, step-by-step assessments, writing workshops, academic and cultural sessions and initiation to philosophy are some of the many devices designed to promote ‘the construction of youngster’s own authority in acts, an on-being acting on its own citizenship and its own learning processes’ (www.clept.org, our translation).

This box does not aim at describing its whole action, but to illustrate from the voice point of view how they confront the issue of developing such capability (Bloch and Gerde 2004).

We have met pupils from one basic group (all grades and number of years enroled) and some of the teaching staff. The interviews show that developing capability for voice is at the very heart of the educational approach. The ‘rules of the CLEPT (...) are jointly constructed’. They imply ‘working all year

(continued)

⁵A short movie presenting Montravel’s upper secondary school practices has been realised by our team and can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIxnu8LWKes>.

long' can be adjusted depending on the pupils, 'we hear what they have to say' (teacher) and is given incentives: 'they will not get shut down because they said something outside of the question asked, badly formulated, so speech is risk-free' (teacher).

A pupil confirms: 'Regarding self-expression, first you need to know that already in our timetables we have slots, just like for groups, what we are doing now, where self-expression turns around the table, on news, internal issues for the CLEPT. We also have a "vie de classe" happening every week. I know of some schools where the "vie de classe" is every 6 months, I exaggerate but really it is very little. Here again, it is a space where we can really express ourselves. Then we have the tutoring, that is to say the teachers are tutoring us and besides we can express ourselves but it is in a more personal context'.

The CLEPT, a school where the pupil is 'an interlocutor with authority to be, to say and to do' (www.clept.org).

The collective interview session conducted with the pupils of the CLEPT has illustrated such a point of view. Contrary to the other interviews conducted in all other schools under study, pupils at the CLEPT are neither noisy, undisciplined nor distant. They respect each other's time to speak. They listen to each other, don't interrupt and do not hesitate to speak up. They make their own point and are open to collective deliberation.

Capability for Education

The pupils perceive capability for education mainly as an instrumental device in service of a substantial one. To them, diplomas matter to get a job, even a better one. The Baccalauréat (A-level) is perceived as a conversion factor, increasing their positive ability to do something worth doing. The social norm does indeed make it crucial to get this degree in order to access the job market more securely. For the majority of them, being successful at school is valuable. In order to guarantee the achievements they desire: to get 'good wages, a family, a job' (pupils from vocational secondary school), they know a definite level of education or qualification is compulsory. Beyond such level, their situation would be unacceptable in terms of well-being: 'with no education, you have no job, you don't manage (...), your life is a waste' (pupils from vocation school). Education is not an end but the means to choose a way of life. In the hierarchy of choices we submitted them, 'completing education' comes for most of them before 'getting a job'.

Ideally, a capacitating project would guarantee that pupils would obtain a valuable degree, which would provide them with opportunities for continuing their

education. In reality, a project can develop access to degrees through ‘individual conversion factors’. The help provided is then academic and psychological. Attention is focused on the individual, in supporting his/her self-esteem, help to study, tutoring in some subjects where he/she encounters the most difficulties or even mentoring the elaboration of a career aspiration of value for him or her. Yet such projects impact the beneficiary after a series of choices sometimes strongly forced on them. Pupils might have been enroled⁶ in a curriculum they did not choose. It is thus virtually impossible to witness any capability development. The regional plan impacts possibilities pre-determined by the education system constraints.

In a large number of schools or local guidance networks under study, even when pupils do say they feel at ease, they can be here ‘as a last resort’ or on their ‘5th choice’ (pupils from vocational secondary schools). Agricultural education might have been chosen for its alternative academic approach and as a solution to failure in other schools. In itself, agricultural education is capacitating, since it gets numerous pupils a qualification they would not have as certainly obtained otherwise.

Teachers and heads of school do not all mention, at least explicitly, a concern for developing capabilities for education. However, some schools do put at the heart of their projects the interest for education. They can focus on contents, meaning or interest of education. Teachers from a vocational school explain: ‘We French teachers often see that the one who will make it professionally is first someone who can make the language its own: that is to say that he is able to say what he wants, to formulate a need, to understand and thus this disqualification of French in vocational schools reinforces the idea of a second-class subject, it is then much more difficult for us to demonstrate its interest. In the end pupils are quite happy to tell themselves that French is not an important subject’. Besides, the issue at stake is to provide a type of affirmative action by allocating in priority new migrants to the programme. In other words, the school is trying to promote more conversion factors for those who might be the most impeded to complete their education.

Capability for Work

All the pupils we have met are already very concerned with their integration on the job market. But is it always a self-valued functioning? Let’s quote a very typical interview:

⁶In France, the ‘allocation process’ resulting in such enrollments consist in matching teacher’s decisions and available slots within each school. First, decisions reached in ‘conseils de classe’ (instances gathering teachers, heads of school, pupils and family delegates) can go against the wishes formulated by pupils. Second, the classes asked for can be unavailable (popular classes, bad track record or both). The administration will then offer a slot in classes where there are still open slots.

Celia

We met Celia on the sidewalk in front of the high school a day of exam. She expresses very accurately the adaptive preferences and the importance of getting a job above all:

The final objective is to find a job?

Of course (silence).

(The silence following the statement reveals heavy constraints, when listening to the next answer:)

So do you know what you want to be?

'Well I enrolled in accounting, I take classes in vocational training for accounting, if I keep it up I think I will end up as an accountant'.

(Ending up in accounting! In colloquial French, it does not convey any sense of gratification. Ending happens when there is no more hope. You don't end up a millionaire; you end up homeless. Here lies all the weight of resignation. The words 'adaptive preference' do apply here, which the rest of the interview confirms:)

Were you the one to choose?

Basically, no. It was my last resort.

What would you have wanted to do?

Social worker

And it was not accepted?

I have not been accepted in secondary schools – clears her throat – I was not good enough in sciences so well, I applied here, in accounting.

(But they stay in the game and complete education because it matters in order to get a job)

Is it important for you to continue your education after secondary school?

Anyways, you got to! (laughs), that's what you need now to get a job.

Is it important to you to get a degree in order to get a job?

Personally I think, employers ask for diplomas anyways so after to get a job you automatically have to get one.

Similarly, to the way case managers did not seem to deliberately develop capabilities for education; they often do not emphasise the capability for work dimension explicitly. Nevertheless, some teachers or guidance case managers openly mention capabilities for employment: some refer to the work done on the professional project, some on the acquisition of job description flyers as an additional resource to the numerical documentation.

In some cases, the issue of employment seems to condition the desire and the will to get an education, and in others, teachers and school guidance counsellors are at first concerned with developing a will to study and an ability to interact within the

school, in order to possibly develop capabilities for work later: 'Take G.'s example, he is a typical case of failing kid who did even want to study anymore, and then: bad grades over bad grades, he did not feel like studying, he gave up. Whereas now, he got successful again, so we got into a virtuous circle, good grades over good grades, he wants to study a little more, and so on. These are two extremes, we have great examples, and the bonus is already to get them to come to school, to feel happy within the walls. It is the first gain' (Teacher, Agricultural upper secondary school).

These three capabilities appear important separately, but what seems more strategic to seize is their interdependency. What is at stake with these relations between capabilities is a set of interdependent variables explaining the success or failure of these innovative programmes for deprived youngsters.

How Capabilities for Voice, Education and Work Are Intertwined

Our observations suggest a direct link between a weakness in terms of voice and the two other capabilities (Fig. 11.2). A weak performance at school is generally related to a poor capability for voice. Voicing is not any kind of natural gift, it is shaped by education. This weakness in voicing results in difficulties when it comes to guidance choices: 'at the beginning I wanted to do car mechanics but I have been sent in agriculture' (Manu, mission locale of Marmande). 'At first I was supposed to go in general education but in cinema studies at the Montesquieu high school. The thing is that it was a very asked high school with little room left, it was very hard to get in, it didn't work' (Mylène, CIO of Blaye). We could easily multiply the examples; misfits and constraints in school-based guidance are present in nearly all of our interviews (Fig. 11.1).

In the absence of choice concerning the school curriculum, work becomes the ultimate goal. By this, we mean that the transition onto the labour market is conceived as a solution to school problems especially in the case of apprenticeship or



Fig. 11.1 Complex set of relations between capabilities

on-the-job training. There is then a strong relation between capabilities for education and work: weak performances in education result in fine in a capability for work weakened by successive adaptive choices. In Aquitaine, perhaps more clearly than in Rhône-Alpes because they are already out of school, the youngsters we have met express it very clearly:

Manu and Guy

Manu and Guy are two dropouts we met at the mission locale of Marmande.

What is your priority: employment or education?

M: Both, I put both because without education you can't find a job, without a job no way to get training, it works in both directions

G: and without money you have no life

M: Exactly and now that's the way it works. When we say we work to get blossomed first and for money in a second row, that might have been true a long time ago. Now we don't work for blossoming but to earn money! To know if by the end of the month we'll be ok, if we'll have enough to eat rather than to get blossomed! You have to tell things the way they are and I think it's gonna get worse and worse.

So you associate education and better job

M: Exactly!

So the priority is not necessarily to get a job?

G: Well, as I told you both are tied, it works like a train

That goes first by the education station?

M: Exactly.

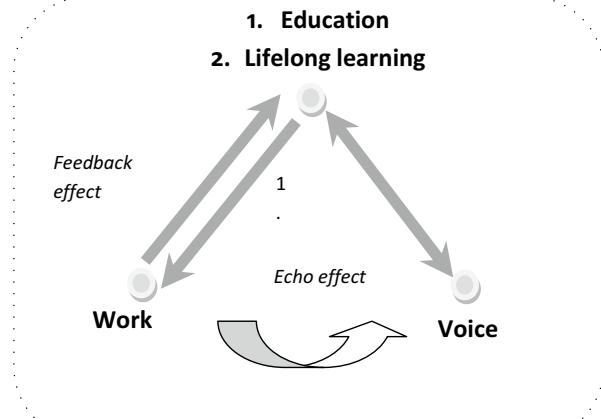
To sum up, in France the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education.

A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two other capabilities while, on the contrary, a strong capability for education drags up and reinforces voice and work. But it should be reminded that with the same performance at school, the children coming from well-off families get better diplomas than those coming from poorer families. The firsts are able to express themselves (they show their guidance preferences, the act to put pressure, mobilise their social networks, etc.) when the seconds are not able to do so. In that sense, the voicing resource also acts upon the capability for education. A weak capability for work also leads in echo to a poor voicing capability. By feedback effect, this process impacts the capability to access lifelong education through training. We can illustrate these intertwined relations by the Fig. 11.2.

As shown by the PISA survey⁷ and many academic works (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970; Dubet 2004; Duru-Bellat 2002), in France, these effects tend to institutionalise in a permanent way if nothing comes to counterbalance the initial

⁷<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-overview-FR.pdf>

Fig. 11.2 Capabilities interdependency in the French case



individual/social situation: education or belonging to a given social category on the capability for voice. In other words, the three capabilities are clearly bound together; they act upon each other in different ways that have to be understood in a temporal perspective.

11.2.1.4 Resources and Constraints: What Kind of Achievement May Be Reached?

What do we learn from this case study in terms of achievement and vulnerability? To answer this question, we must try to identify if what the pupils achieve correspond to what they wanted to achieve. In that case the conditions for an increased freedom would be present.

It should be noticed that the ‘schooling situation’⁸ supporting the projects rarely leaves room for a deliberate choice of the children. The projects have not been conceived to reduce the initial/individual constraints but to prevent dropout. The only freedom given to the youngsters is this one: not to be forced to drop out whether they have chosen or not this school, this path or this diploma. By this they are supposed to increase their chance of getting the given diploma. So the question might only be: *do this project increase or lower this embedded ‘freedom’?* The means to convert the given resources into capabilities might sometimes be unexpected. For example, supporting a pupil until he gets his diploma even in a prescribed curriculum (and of course requesting from him a strong adaptive preference) might allow him afterwards to pursue his educational career in a more chosen way. The initial diploma acts as sesame, the support he gets might be considered in itself as a conversion factor. But, the means associated to this supports are among the first conversion factors. If the means are of the same kind than those producing the

⁸By this, we mean the mix composed of the teaching institution, the educational curriculum and the targeted diploma.

dropout, the project will probably not be capacitating. For example, using writing as a pedagogical mean might be inefficient if not worse when it is managed with pupils showing difficulties in spelling.

On the contrary, learning basic skills in vocational school, fight against educational ‘miserabilism’ (downgraded education for marginalised youngsters) can increase the attraction and the pupil’s involvement in the programme. Even if the fact of being there reflects an initial adaptive preference, it still can work and the pupils might not drop out.

In spite of the projects, numerous constraints remain and the absence of conversion factors limit the pupil’s capabilities. First of all, enrolment is not for some of them any kind of choice. Even before benefiting from the plan, operators have highlighted this set of initial constraints. Besides, if indeed all programmes allow for participation or not, it appears clearly that the same pupils can be prevented and/or dissuaded to participate. For instance, activities aiming at professional insertion can disrupt the project. Other pupils also have to provide for themselves and have a job. Sometimes, tutoring hours are difficult to provide as ‘teachers and pupils are submerged with classes’ (Head of school, vocational upper secondary School). Long hours in transports between the schools/guidance organisations and their homes can also be a strong disincentive for pupils.

Regardless of the projects themselves, environments also seem to have a strong impact as an exogenous variable on capability deployment (living in deprived areas, health care problems, transportation means, poverty). Such examples tend to demonstrate that deploying capabilities for voice, work and education cannot be reduced to regional plans and projects, and would in all probability necessitate horizontal policies or developing conversion factors, on an individual but also social and environmental level.

Conclusion and Policy Statements

The French case study allows us to draw some conclusions both on the governance of educational policies to reduce early school leaving and on the analysis of existing programmes in terms of capabilities.

First conclusion to be drawn in institutional terms: there is no coherent public policy towards dropouts. Brought very recently on the political agenda above all in terms of public safety, the subject of early school leaving has not yet been addressed coherently by the French public authorities. Most of the recent efforts have been put on counting out precisely the number of dropouts. There are a large number of solutions and programmes addressing this question but they remain scarce, discontinued over time and uncoordinated among actors. In particular, the lack of multilevel governance can be pointed out both in terms of horizontal (intersectoral) and vertical (territorial) coordination.

(continued)

Promoting anti-dropout and back to school programmes supposes a high level of coordination between national and local public and private organisations. The complex and somehow poorly assumed process of devolution to territorial bodies (decentralisation) results in constant competency battles between the French state and these bodies. The matter of early school leaving is one of such battlefields.

If the national framework of dropout policies can be criticised for its inefficiency and lack of strong political initiative, the local actors (street level bureaucrats and case manager) show a different perspective. They appear to be strongly mobilised, easily collaborating and innovative. Directly confronted to the concrete difficulties of dropouts, they are convinced of the necessity to overwhelm the sectoral/territorial barriers. But the local experimentations appear to be too vulnerable to the national/regional institutional contexts. Besides no framework of policy transfer has been created and the policy evaluation conducted are not taken in consideration as elements of judgement for a possible diffusion of local initiatives. So the local experimentations remain strictly local, totally experimental and limited in time and funding.

The studied experimentations in Rhône-Alpes and Aquitaine show different approaches in order to develop pupil's capabilities. Yet, in spite of their resources, these plans reveal several constraints and the absence of conversion factors indispensable to capability reinforcement. They might suffer from excessive attention paid to a limited number of aspects – most of the time individual ones – like tutoring, self analysis and/or identification and monitoring).

To promote action plans aiming at a global improvement of the dropouts' capabilities, it seems necessary to work on transversal and integrated policies. Improving youngster's capabilities in order to prevent or cure a massive phenomenon of school dropout (around 150,000 youngsters each year) supposes to take into account numerous factors related to school leaving such as transportation, health, housing, employment, social assistance, employment, substance abuse, etc.

A capability informed policy should necessarily be integrated and oriented towards horizontal/vertical coordination for what concerns its governance. Also, a capability informed policy should pay a great attention to the non-take-up issue. In depth studies of the reason why youngsters at risk or already dropped out do not make use of existing resources is central. In order to fully promote capabilities for voice, education and employment, we need to know in details what prevents beneficiaries from using the institutional resources offered to them. Indeed before understanding conversion factors, it might be urgent to focus on the 'non-conversion' factors.

11.2.2 The Trespassing Project in Naples

Lavinia Bifulco (✉) • Raffaele Monteleone • Carlotta Mozzana
Department of Sociology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy
e-mail: lavinia.bifulco@unimib.it; raffaele.monteleone@unimib.it;
carlotta.mozzana@gmail.com

11.2.2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present and discuss the experience of the Trespassing project, an innovative and experimental project aimed at young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) living in Naples, the capital city of the Campania region in the south of Italy. Campania is one of the poorest regions in Western Europe, and it is included in the EU's Objective Convergence, the EU cohesion policy aimed at supporting European regions with slow development. Naples is a city especially affected by both social and economic problems: the condition of young people is critical, early school leavers are commonplace, the unemployment rate is very high, and black market labour is widespread.

At the same time, since the end of the 1980s, the city has been an important test bed for experimental projects intended to remedy training shortcomings and address problems in the school-to-work transition process. The Trespassing project picks up where these projects leave off by developing new means and strategies for intervention in order to familiarise young adults with the labour market through on-the-job placement projects.

The analysis starts from two general research questions: how is it possible to promote capabilities in a context that lacks resources and rights? What institutional, social and individual factors impede or promote the development of beneficiaries' capabilities?

In order to address these research questions, we use an analytical grid focused on capacitating and non-capacitating mechanisms (Table 11.2). Besides Sen (1992, 1999), the grid refers to the theoretical works of Martha Nussbaum and Arjun Appadurai.

Firstly, through Nussbaum's (2000) concept of combined capabilities, the grid highlights the interdependence between the individual and the social dimensions. From this perspective, there is a combination of capabilities (and their promotion) from the moment when the internal capabilities, those belonging to the person, may be combined appropriately with the external ones, those which derive from organisations, institutions and social contexts.

Secondly, the grid considers the ways in which collective choices enable – or do not enable – participation and public debate: that is, in Sen's terms, whether they promote – or inhibit – development of the capabilities for voice and redefinition of the informational bases of judgements of justice.

Table 11.3 Capacitating and incapacitating mechanisms

Capacitating mechanisms	Incapacitating mechanisms
Combination of internal and external capabilities	Non-combination of internal and external capabilities
Development of capability for voice, informational bases of judgements of justice can be redefined	Choices and informational bases of judgements of justice are externally defined and not negotiable
People have the capacity to aspire, that is, the opportunity and the ability to imagine, plan and construct their futures (future-oriented)	Adaptive aspirations: people are constrained by predefined and imposed concepts of the future (past oriented); they do not have skills that make it possible to imagine and achieve the future

Thirdly, the concept of the capacity to aspire, as formulated by Appadurai, concerns ‘how human beings engage their own futures’ and the normative frameworks in which desire and imagination of the future take shape. The capacities to aspire are bound to the possibility of having ‘a more complex experience of the relationship between a wide range of ends and means, [...] to explore and harvest diverse experiences of exploration and trial, because of their many opportunities to link material goods and immediate opportunities to more general and generic possibilities and options’ (2004: 61). This concept makes it possible to focus on the conditions for development of capabilities bound up with an orientation aimed at the future (Table 11.3).

The analytical grid as defined above identifies ideal-type mechanisms of two types: non-capacitating and capacitating. As may be seen, in the latter case: (a) individual capacities are combined with environmental capabilities, (b) the capacity to aspire is developed and exercised, and (c) public action is based around a procedural definition of the common good which operates within the action of the actors which take part in it. By contrast, social and institutional systems may be considered non-capacitating when: (a) they are oriented towards the past; (b) common assets are defined from the outside, without undergoing a participatory procedure in which all the actors are able to exercise their own capacity in terms of making their voices heard; therefore, (c) it is not possible to activate the synergic circuit arising from the combination of individual and external capacities. These are two ideal-type situations, the practical declinations of which are combined by those factors that promote or hinder the conversion of resources and formal rights into capacities, meaning real possibilities for freedom.

The analysis of these various dimensions allows us to investigate whether or not, or to what extent, social and institutional frameworks are structured and take shape according to capacitating mechanisms, i.e. whether they lead to deployment of the factors which enable the conversion of resources and formal rights into capabilities. While the individual level is indeed essential to the concept of capability, and it is the dimension in which the capabilities may be exercised and increased, the conditions that allow for its development have their roots in institutional contexts and frameworks, in the interventions and organisational culture that define the very nature of public intervention.

11.2.2.2 The Institutional Setting

Italy is characterised by a high level of institutional fragmentation, which translates into weak coordination between the various levels of government and a context of highly sectorial public policies, lacking integration between labour, development and education policies (scarce multiscalarity and multidimensionality of policies) (Paci and Pugliese 2011). The institutional resources assigned to education seem insufficient to allow for the different starting points of the students to be taken into account and for upholding pupils' capacities: the school system is unable to emancipate those who start with social and cultural disadvantages by redistributing opportunities. Consequently, the poorest areas are generally marked with a high level of dropouts (Rossi-Doria 2009; Fondazione Agnelli 2010). Inequality and imbalance are substantial on a national level, especially in the north/south divide. Moreover, as for the employment policies, measures aimed at activation are few and far between.

In such a context, the Campania region displays particularly serious problems, closely bound up with the issues linked to economic and social development and with significant territorial differences and inequalities, which lead to uncertainty with regard to rights, resources and rules (Kazepov 2009). The investments of the past years in education, made with the aim of achieving the Lisbon strategy targets, have not produced the desired results. Campania's labour market is characterised by ample margins of undisclosed labour and a very high percentage of unemployment. In such environment, the resources destined for youth vocational training and adult lifelong learning are often used improperly: on the one hand, they have been widely used as substitutes for social welfare or for patronage; on the other, EU funds should have only supported public initiatives aimed at upskilling, while they seem to have ended up taking the place of state intervention, in a situation that has worsened over the last few years, partly due to the economic crisis. Therefore, the situation of young adults in Campania is problematic: the unemployment rate is very high, and school absenteeism as well as school dropouts are widespread. The lack of stable occupational opportunities constitutes a structural weakness of the labour market, and off-the-record work is commonplace. Many young NEETs therefore face the risk of undertaking deviant paths.

11.2.2.3 The Trespassing Project in Naples

The Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli and the Trespassing Project

The Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli (AQS) is a non-governmental organisation that was founded at the end of the 1980s in the Quartieri Spagnoli neighbourhood in Naples. It is a territorial association, able to supply support and guidance to the most disadvantaged of its inhabitants. It is committed to various projects aimed largely at minors, youths and their families, financed both by public bodies and private subjects. Although it has broadly cooperated with public services in Naples for more than 20 years, it is currently going through a difficult financial period due to delays

in payments by the public institutions that finance its job. All the AQS actions are characterised by a strong local dimension. They are activation measures addressed to people living in the area (e.g. programmes for young NEETs, projects of daily nursery, after-school activities for children, etc.,) and interventional practices dealing with early school leaving and educational failures. They especially focus on supporting young people in the transition between 'hard school' and 'hard work', between a school not sufficiently equipped for disadvantaged students and a labour market with a youth unemployment rate that is one of the higher of EU countries.

The Trespassing project consists in offering apprenticeships at small companies collaborating with the AQS. The programme, which was awarded its fourth cycle of financing in 2012, sets out to involve 16 early school leavers for each cycle (aged between 16 and 18) through an on-the-job training programme, addressing the recovery and development of their basic life skills. The project does not foresee any classroom training, and no professional qualification is offered. Through an in situ approach, the main aim is to put together operations which re-establish the prerequisites of employability, thus allowing young people to choose a working career independently, while the long-term goal is to foster chances of social integration through work placement programmes. In most cases, the young adults who turn to the project have already been involved in other AQS activities, as there is a range of social tutoring and promotion projects aimed at young people from the area. The AQS in fact manages a database of various kinds of information (personal data, information on schooling, family and involvement in other projects) on the young adults entrusted to it.

The Trespassing project has an intervention protocol structured around well-defined methods, tools and practices, based on the care of the young people taken by the educators and the company tutors. The intervention methodology is based on experience and learning on the job, and support for participants is provided by a tailor-made tutoring programme. Each young adult is thus entrusted contemporarily to a company tutor and an educator from the association, who provides personalised tutoring and counselling. The latter supports the participant's apprenticeship using specific tools such as worksheets and task registers. The counselling activities, the worksheets, the activity registers and the time organisation of the meetings define a structure which guides the young adults, the educators and the company tutors in the whole work-familiarisation process. Every beneficiary receives 5 euros per hour with a total amount of 20 hours per week, while the company is refunded 3 euros per every tutoring hour.

Once the apprenticeships are over, the participants are not issued with professional qualifications, but are given letters of reference including an evaluation of basic skills, referencing the European model of the portfolio of individual skills. This approach is considered sufficient to outline an 'informal' biography of each participant, able of bringing together all the documents and testimonies necessary to demonstrate their 'know-how'. At the end of the experience, the young adults perform a 'work sample' ('prova d'opera' in Italian), in which they are filmed at work describing their action and their apprenticeship itinerary.

Capability for Voice

One of the main focus points of the AQS action is coming up with interventions that work explicitly on encouraging young adults to express their voice. This is created and strengthened in particular by the constant presence of the office kept open all day by the chairperson of the association. The fact that she is present at any time of day and that she acts as a medium between the needs of the neighbourhood and public services, translating the needs of people and families into concrete actions and interventions, not only constitutes the very basis of the association's approach but also means that it performs an advocacy function for the community. The office is a real social help desk which brings the few resources available closer to the needs of the people of the neighbourhood. The story of its creator, the association chairperson, is also a somewhat special one, as we are told by one of the educators:

A. is there on the front line; every day she deals with families, immigrants, those who criticise her, and she keeps on the Council's back, trying to get them to pay up. She is not from the neighbourhood and she's a biologist; she left everything to become a sort of lay missionary, and she's an important figure for everyone. She's fundamental, she's the emotional and ideological point of reference, she's everything for everyone. She's the heart of the neighbourhood, loved and hated, she's a vital force, and despite her aches and pains, she's always there in her *basso*.

The office (*basso*) is people's first point of contact with the association; A. is the guarantee that someone is there to listen to the problems, the personal and family situations; she is the chance of being looked after in a situation in which the institutions turn a blind eye, having seemingly abandoned the neighbourhood to itself.

Moreover, the Trespassing project pays specific attention to the issue of voice, as it is considered throughout all the various phases of the project. First of all, it is important in the phase of selection of the candidates: information is gathered here about beneficiaries' life context, literacy and numeracy abilities and work experiences with a personal interview. They are also enquired about their fields of interest and desires. In this phase, attempts are made to sound out the young adults' motivation to undertake the itinerary proposed by the project and to open up a space of dialogue in order for their aspirations to come to the fore for discussion. It is here, as evinced by the words of the educators, that there begin the listening work of the educators and the association, and the expression of voice by the young adults:

Often, we manage to find what the kids want to do by offering them a range of possibilities, perhaps by getting them out of the neighbourhood context and letting them see something different from it. We try to bring together the kids' desires with what is available to us, [...] but we don't only look at the job itself; we also think about other things, and we look at the characteristics of the kids to try and understand what they need, and what might make the work placement more sustainable for them.

After evaluating the candidacies, the selected beneficiaries are required to sign a training contract stipulated between the AQS, the beneficiary and his/her family (if the beneficiary is a minor). This may then be reformulated or substituted with an agreement between the various actors even during the work placement, so the young

people have the chance make their voice heard and considered in order to change it even during the apprenticeship.

After the contracts have been signed, it is the piccoli cantieri (literally ‘little building sites’) that promotes the capability for voice in practice. The piccoli cantieri are the first activity in which the participants are involved. This is a collective work experience which lasts 1 week with the aim of repairing a public building or utility, the main aim of which is to bring together the peer group around a cooperation project in which individual roles and responsibilities are recognised. The building site is the place where the young adults and the educators get to know each other, working side by side to achieve a common goal which commits all members to the respect of common rules of both work and behaviour. It is one of the more relevant steps in the process of learning the capability for voice, because it is now that the voice of the participants is collectively listened to, respected and considered worthy by both the peer group and the referent adults, i.e. the educators.

Moreover, a role in promoting young adults’ voice is played by the counselling, during which the educators supports the participant’s itinerary. From a pedagogical point of view, the approach adopted is largely that of ‘scaffolding’: a support strategy based on learning processes which allow the participant to carry out a task even if he/she initially does not have the sufficient capabilities to do it on his/her own (Hogan and Pressley 1997). The main tools used during this process are the worksheets and tasks register that are helpful to organise and define the stages and timing of the activities. Every week, the tutor and the beneficiary fill out these forms, which have different aims: some focus on the placement and thus serve to make the beneficiary think about what has been done over the week; others concern the labour market rules, aspects of working contracts and relevant legislation; others deal with general basic skills bound up with society as a whole; yet others address the emotional and relational levels of the young adult. This specific methodology defines highly structured pathways with a strong support from the AQS:

These are tools used to assess both motivations and their capabilities, but seeing as they’re all capable, it becomes more of a basic skills issue. And they also assess scholastic abilities, like calculations, percentages, skills which the project participant may then deploy in a more practical manner.

Generally speaking, the Trespassing approach has an impact on the young adults’ capability to express themselves: at the beginning, they show up with a general need for a job; with time, they acquire more and more awareness and become able to say what they want thanks to the methods applied by educators and time devoted to listening to the young people and to counselling them. Educators practices (their methodology, their time, way of behaving) are as well a conversion factor that leads to development of capability for voice, as it is the cognitive ability the beneficiaries have to express themselves or to be represented by someone who can adequately express their viewpoint. The support granted by the programme to young adults represents an important social conversion factor, even if there are no public arenas in which it is possible to take into account the beneficiaries’ and educators’ point of

view in programming the interventions and the beneficiaries' voice concerns just the modulation of apprenticeships itineraries, while it is not exercised in Trespassing planning phases, where it is very limited.

Moreover, the right of young people to express their voice and to practise it is a prerequisite for the development of all the other capabilities. But at the same time, this promotion of capability for voice is an element of ambiguity: as the educational system does not support the young people in dealing with their problems and the labour market is characterised by high youth unemployment rate and does not offer them opportunities, beneficiaries' voice is the only element the programme can work with, but the context remains the same. The meagre support offered by institutions and the absence of integrated projects with regard to the various living dimensions of the young adults depress their scope for voice: this is a social factor that limits the conversion of formal rights and freedoms into real ones. Furthermore, this limits the young adult's freedom to choose: since after having exercised their capability for voice within the project, they find themselves in a situation in which they can only reproduce patterns typical of their living environments without having the chance of choosing alternative paths.

Which Combination of Internal and External Capabilities?

As said, the Trespassing project activates a set of resources to construct apprenticeship courses for young people. In this section, we discuss aspects of the combination between the internal capabilities of the young people and the institutional and social capabilities in the external environment. There seem to be three factors that enable this combination and convert resources into capabilities: work instruments the educators use during the apprenticeship, the educators and the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli office in the neighbourhood.

As for the third factor, the presence of the above-mentioned walk-in office in the community is of key importance in constructing the association's role in the area. The constant presence in the office of the chairperson of the AQS, A., and her readiness to receive the neighbourhood's residents create an openness to needs and personal situations which would otherwise not be possible. In this way, the association enacts a capability of listening, mediation and translation which gives residents the self-confidence to exercise their own capabilities. And this also happens for the youths on the Trespassing project and their families that consider A. and the office their reference:

A. is the one I went to see to ask about getting a job.

My mum came to talk to A. and it was her that told us about Trespassing, we always trust A., she is always here and help us.

It's the presence of the office, and of A., that allows young people to exercise their first capability for voice: if there is no chance to be heard, it is no possible to speak. So, the office is not only a physical but also a listening space in which there is the combination of the capability for voice of the young people and their family with the capability of listening of the association.

The second factor that furnishes a context of opportunity able to influence the young people's internal capabilities so that they combine with external ones is the action undertaken by the educators in the course of the project. The educators are a medium between the internal capabilities of the young people and the institutional environment. They try to support the beneficiaries in their journey of discovery and the deployment of their skills and abilities, bringing young adults back into a more general learning process that sometimes guides them towards an institutional education system. For example, this is what happened to D., a girl on the 2010 edition of the Trespassing project:

I followed the project working as a beautician, which lasted six months. It was there that I realised that I had to go back to school, and now I've enrolled at beauty school. I go there in the mornings and then I come here to work in the afternoons. The course costs a bit, but I pay for it myself with the money I earn at work. Then in the afternoon as soon as I've finished I come here. [...] The project was necessary for me to understand that I really did want to become a beautician and I'm doing the school because in the future I want to open my own beauty centre.

In the relationship with the young adults, much time is dedicated to learning and to the construction of an educational strategy, both in working practices, and also during the counselling activities carried out with the AQS tutors, and indeed due to the very role of the tutors. Both the company tutors and the educators of the association are adults proposing values and behavioural models different from those that the young adults are used to, and in this way they question approaches and interaction logics which they might otherwise take for granted. For the young adults, the example, presence and constant support of these figures take on major educational importance, to the point that the headquarters of the AQS are open to all those who have taken part in previous Trespassing projects, who come to visit the educators for help with jobseeking, but also for advices on personal situation.

The third factor that fosters the combination of capabilities consists in the instruments available to the educators so that they can monitor and support the progress of the young adults. They are interviews, assessment and self-assessment sheets, log-books and counselling sessions which make it possible to evaluate the development of basic skills, the skills acquired from the work placement programmes, as well as the relationships with company tutors. The intervention protocol used by the educators and the company tutors guides them and the young adults in the whole work-familiarisation process. This allows for an all-round operation of enhancing beneficiaries' knowledge about themselves and the situation they are in, because it activates the capabilities to listen and mediate of the association and the educators. Moreover, this activation combines with the ability of the young adults to exercise their capabilities not only within the project but also, and especially, in their everyday lives:

For example, there's a worksheet on calculating percentages, which is not so much about testing their knowledge but about them knowing what to do in a practical situation, because if they say you're getting a 50 % discount, at least you need to know that you're not being ripped off, as the aim is to apply knowledge to real-life situations.

But if, as we previously claimed, the local attachment is a strength, due to its ability to collect and address the problems of the people living in the area, on the

other hand it is a weakness of Trespassing: there is no national or local (municipal, regional) strategy for supporting young NEETs, and interventions are episodic and uncontinuous. Thus, the lack of other levels of action ‘segregates’ the programme to its context, and the absence of a strategy and a public direction, which might guarantee rights and resources, hampers the programme’s ability to generalise its results and methods, which is why it remains short-ranged and limited. This runs the risk of isolating the association and especially the young adults, leaving them without perspectives due to the lack of a more general policies aimed at supporting them. The capabilities of the young people developed by the project are therefore depressed because they are unable find an institutional and environmental context that furnishes capacitating situations and capabilities. When the programme is finished, the risk is that the beneficiaries – due to their vulnerable life situation – fall right back to the starting blocks, further depressing their capabilities.

One of the most critical areas in terms of combination of internal and external capabilities is the labour market, characterised by a shortage of opportunities, deregulated job positions and criminality. The high incidence of deregulated positions (in many cases linked to the black market) and the presence of a consolidated system of criminal labour, together with the high youth unemployment rate, make it very difficult to put together solid preparation projects for the beneficiaries:

At a certain point the kids ask you for a job and here lies the snag: if you haven’t got a job you don’t have a social identity, but there’s no work here. When you reach a certain age, the kids just want this, but perhaps they set off on the path of illegal work because there isn’t any legal work on offer. And so either the kid has some personal contacts in order to manage to stay out of the criminal scene, or otherwise it’s there that the work is, and you’re not going to find it anywhere else.

In working with employment processes, educators from AQS must bear in mind this general constraining situation, making it very difficult to find a job. Thus, the programme offers itineraries of familiarisation with work that do not necessarily lead people to a regular job yet that focus on the recovery and valorisation of basic skills. While the AQS, notwithstanding the paucity of resources that characterises its action, is a stimulating and capacitating environment from the point of view of capabilities combination, the same cannot be said of the more general context. In regard to the role of the institutions in particular, the limited amount of capabilities deployed by the institutional actors (regional administration, municipality, etc.) and by the environment (work being a case in point) makes it difficult to speak of a combination between the internal capabilities of the young people and those external to them. Hence, on conclusion of the project, the participants may find that their capabilities furnished by the Trespassing courses are further depressed.

Moreover, the (scarce) resources are often uncoordinated, and the lack of integration among interventions (employment, labour market and educational policies) impedes the combination of capabilities: this may affect the overall living conditions of the youth and limit the process of converting the rights and resources into capabilities. It may result in transferring all the responsibility from society to the young individuals themselves, who have to choose among very few opportunities in a situation where individual capabilities do not seem to be flanked by institutional ones enabling the effective promotion of the former.

Capacity to Aspire

Strictly connected to capability for voice is the issue of the capacity to aspire: it is difficult to imagine a situation in which someone is able to exercise his/her capacity to aspire without a strong and structured voice, or in which someone has bargaining power with no planning of the future. The capacity to aspire consists in the right to dream and construct one's future and in gaining abilities to plan this future: it is a 'navigational capacity' to use the map of social norms and, with this tool, explore and plan the future, even involving a change in the normative context in which action and imagination emerge.

In this sense, the programme activates young people due to its educative dimension. Its aim is to let them gain a perspective about their future through a tailor-made itinerary. The beneficiaries often start off not knowing exactly what they want to do, falling into the local stereotypes based largely on gender conditioning. As one of the educators maintained:

Most of these kids have no idea what they want to do. The boys all tell you they want to be mechanics and the girls that they want to be hairdressers, sticking to the classical stereotypes. For example, R wanted to be a hairdresser, but she had physical problems which made this impossible. And so we worked with her to fit her into a babysitting project, after school, because she has an autistic brother whom she has always looked after. It was a hugely successful case, so much so that now she has signed up to a course to become a nursery teacher, turning the tables and moving from student to educator.

The work undertaken by the educators, the company tutors and the AQS as a whole tends to promote difference and increase choice, through actions aimed at putting together emancipation strategies directed to let them increase their capacity to aspire to a different future. The strong structuring of the itinerary and the abilities of the educators provide the young adults with a solid support framework, in which their capabilities are valorised through a process of personal growth. In particular, the educators on the one hand adopt a direct listening stance with regard to the beneficiaries, and on the other hand, they are adults who propose values and behavioural models which open up perspectives and approaches different from those that the beneficiaries are used to: albeit partially, they manage to put in doubt the behavioural models which the young adults have grown to accept as the norm. Passivizing or inferiorising approaches are rejected, and tutors cannot take the place of beneficiaries on the job.

Moreover, the process of familiarisation with the work experience is not limited to the acquisition of technical and professional abilities: it is mainly a process that deals with socialisation and the development of mature relationships. Young people, then, 'learn how to learn' embracing and sharing, during on-the-job practices, rules and values typical of the adult world. They end up building an effective analysis of their experience while highlighting their desires and the paths they have reason to value. The programme works in favour of promoting those basic skills that allow young people to imagine and aspire to futures that can also be redefined in the course of their apprenticeships. Especially because of the difficult labour market conditions described above, one of the characteristics of the project is to offer

itineraries not of introduction to the workplace but of familiarisation with work, focusing on the recovery and valorisation of those basic skills applicable to all working activities:

Here the participants are provided with the key tools, such as the European curriculum; they are taught how to handle a work interview, where and how to look for work; we help them enrol at employment centres and go there with them, but the only thing we can really hope to do is to create 'pre-employability'.

Here, the choice of the companies to work with has a role: over the years, the AQS has put together a database of companies in which the young adults may not only gain work experience but also grow as human beings. The educators define this database as a sort of 'pedagogical company register' which has been built a relationship of trust over the years: the companies have been chosen if there was the presence of a tutor able to conjugate solid abilities to teach a job with educative skills, in order to have a global approach to the young people situation:

Our task is also to support them in this process, and so difficulties need to be overcome together. Another aspect is that of – I wouldn't say fill the gaps left by their schooling because that would be presumptuous – but we do try to reinforce or get across certain skills. The important thing for us is managing to activate them, to wrench them out of that situation in which they just hang around doing nothing all day and motivate them to get going themselves. But we can only go so far, and then they have to take over.

The close collaboration and integration between the company tutor and the educator, albeit with different tasks and roles, constitutes one of the points of strength of the entire project: the participant may thus rely on a solid support framework both inside the workplace and outside, within a project which is itself as far as possible tailor-made to suit his/her own abilities and desires.

The most important thing about the project was S (the educator) and F, my tutor in the shop. I don't know what I would have done without them. Whenever there's something I don't understand, or that doesn't work, I know I can ask them (the tutors).

Generally speaking, the programme promotes young adults' self-reflection, giving them the chance to focus on what they value in their working practices and supporting the development of their basic skills.

Besides, Trespassing is, as we already noticed, ambiguous in its practices. The fact that it is not really strict and oriented towards professional skills allows the educators to deal with the most problematic dimension of young adults' life: in this sense, it opens up a context of possible futures, oriented towards the capacity to aspire. But the normative and value frameworks of the local context are strong and limiting. In fact, for most of the beneficiaries, the end of the project means going right back to where they were before.

The lack of integration between the interventions and the measures deployed for young people ensures that these remain detached from the broader context:

Then if this habit that we have managed to change is not supported with something to do, if the participants just go back to doing what they were doing before, even if we've got them used to reflecting on themselves and planning, their motivation collapses and people then just give up.

The scarce connections between policy levels and scales seem to highlight an excess of the local dimension, which risks producing a form of segregation from the experience, the project and the young adults themselves, who are then left trapped in a difficult situation: when the project finishes, their provenance and their social milieu make it very likely for them to fall right back to the starting blocks. The lack of support by the institutions and the incapacity to define articulated and integrated projects relating to the young adults' various living dimensions depress their capacity to aspire and therefore their possibility of voice.

The risk is that after having exercised their capacity to aspire within the project, the youth then find themselves in a situation in which the only possibility is that of adapting their desires to the context without having the chance to think of or construct alternative futures: a common finding in every edition of the project is that one or two young girls give up Trespassing to have a baby (and they usually stop searching for a job) and a period in jail remains a very common scenario for some of those young adults.

As for the orientation towards the future and the chance to imagine a tomorrow, other critical issue is the lack of a solid basis of resources and opportunities for young people. In this context, young people activation depends on the individual and on his/her ability to promote him-/herself. In this sense, a sort of ambiguity may be noted in the Trespassing project: while on the one hand it aims to increase beneficiaries' scope for choice, especially with regard to the working environment, on the other hand it is centred on individual competences and attitudes in a given context with no parallel actions that aim at changing it to create a more capacitating situation, and risking to lay the responsibility of the situation only on young people's shoulders.

The scarcity of resources is another issue that has to be tackled. Given the small number of places and the limited budget, only those pupils who right from the selection phase seem to have certain resources (be they individual, social or family based) are accepted to undertake the itinerary. Weaker ones who risk not completing the programme are excluded a priori, for uncompleted placement courses cannot be refunded by the Regional Council. The weakness of the institutions entails the difficulty or unwillingness to intervene specifically to address these limitations, while they could be crucial in this respect.

Moreover, as for the issue of work, there is another ambiguity connected with the capacity to aspire. Despite the fact that the aim is to bring participants closer and not insert them into the labour market, in practical terms it is often difficult to manage to separate basic skills and professional skills: participants thus find themselves 'learning a job', with the expectations of them being able to continue in their chosen line once the placement is over. And this emerges not only from the words of the participants themselves:

I'm learning to fix computers, and after the placement I would like to carry on doing this.

On the placement I learnt how to be a beautician, because in the future my dream is to be able to open a centre of my own.

but also from those of the craft tutors, who attribute importance not only to the educational progress that the young adults make but also to their professional progress:

The important thing for the kids that come here is to try and pick up a trade. There are still people here who go round to people's houses to wash, set and cut their hair. And so I'm happy to teach these girls a trade, because then it's something that they can keep on doing all their lives, even without having to open a saloon or working here.

Despite the fact that the project only works on the individual skills of the beneficiary, strengthening his/her capacity to 'stay on the job' and respect rules and times, following the beneficiary in his/her apprenticeship, the project however lacks the necessary conditions for it to affect the demand for labour, above all because of the shortage of any overarching and coordinated policy framework to which to refer. Consequentially, the lack of parallel support measures – i.e. in the labour market – therefore risks making the beneficiaries' work placement an isolated experience, important both for the young adults and the educators, yet in which the lack of further interventions runs the risk of invalidating the entire project.

Conclusions

The research results highlight that the right of young people to express their voice and to exercise it is a prerequisite for the development of all the other capabilities. The promotion of the beneficiaries' voice is a driver of other capabilities: the Trespassing project activates the young NEETs so that they aspire for something that may be further vocational training or further education. The development of capabilities is therefore dependent on strengthening and extending the voice of young people and those supporting them. One of the ways in which this can be done is by institutionalising this voice – be it through the permanent representation of parents and young adults in the educational system or that of civic organisations in local government. From this perspective, the informational bases of judgements of justice are crucial: if the qualification of beneficiaries (their 'targeting') and of their itineraries, and the consequent identification of the information relevant to designing interventions and policies, is open to and debatable by everyone – be they beneficiaries, project leaders, policy-makers and so on – needs, rights and resources may interact so as to develop an effective choice process in which the beneficiaries' voice can be effectively supported and exercised. Here, a number of issues should be underlined.

(continued)

The work undertaken by the educators, the company tutors and the association as a whole tends to promote difference and increase choice; these actions are aimed at the future of the beneficiaries, their purpose being to put together emancipation strategies. As regards the organisational structure, the image of the open door sums up an intervention method based on openness, physical closeness, and listening. In the relationship between social workers and beneficiaries, organisational tools are important and so in general is the methodology of the programme: the counselling activities, the worksheets, the activity registers and the time organisation of the meetings define a structure which guides the young adults, the social workers and the company tutors.

Yet the links with the normative and value frameworks of the local context are strong and restrictive. In fact, for most of the participants, the conclusion of the project means returning to where they were before. The meagre support furnished by institutions and the absence of integrated projects with regard to the various life dimensions of the young adults depress their scope for voice: this is a social factor that limits the conversion of formal rights and freedoms into real ones. Furthermore, it restricts the young adults' freedom to choose: since after having exercised their capability for voice, within the project they find themselves in a situation where they can only reproduce patterns typical of their living environments without being able to choose alternative paths.

Despite its focus on capabilities, the project lacks a collective dimension of their promotion, and the external capabilities deployed are few and far between. The problem is not only the quantity of external capabilities (including social action resources) available in the contexts but also – or rather mainly – the quality of the combinations created and the role that the institutions play in these combinations. The labour market, from this point of view, constitutes one of the most critical areas. Moreover, the scarcity and sectoriality of the available resources generate situations of discrimination against the weaker pupils: given the small number of places and the limited budget, only those who already in the selection phase seem to have certain resources (be they individual, social or family based) are accepted on the programme, while the weaker ones who risk not completing the programme are excluded a priori, because uncompleted placement courses cannot be reimbursed by the Regional Council.

As for the territorial dimension of the project, on the one hand strong local attachment is a strength of the project, while on the other hand the lack of other levels of action 'confines' the action of the association to within its context. The project remains short-ranged and isolated. This is due to the fact that there is limited multiscalarity, with very few connections and scant synergy among the different levels of public action, and to the lack of any public actor

guaranteeing rights and resources. In fact, there is no network of alliances and support which could link with other levels besides the local one. This also affects the dimension of the combination of capacities. The fact that the system (both local and national) of interventions in favour of young people is limited hinders the project as a whole.

Institutions play a crucial role in this regard, because capabilities are supported by powers and social rights such as the right to decide and to participate in the construction and change of the contexts in which decisions take place. These rights, as stated earlier, are lacking in the case in question, but they are crucial for capabilities. Access to a broad range of opportunities and the possibility to discuss options and decisions are both decisive for well-being and participation in society.

11.2.3 Vocational Training as an Integration Opportunity? A Swiss Case Study on Struggling Young Adults

Emilie Rosenstein • Maël Dif-Pradalier (✉) • Jean-Michel Bonvin
Center for the Study of Capabilities in Social and Health Services (CESCAP),
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO),
Lausanne, Switzerland
e-mail: emilie.rosenstein@eesp.ch; mael_dif@yahoo.com; jmbonvin@eesp.ch

11.2.3.1 Introduction

Many authors have stressed the ambivalent effects of individualisation and contractualism within active labour market policies (ALMPs) (e.g. Sol and Westerveld 2005; Van Berkel and Valkenburg 2007). Whereas reciprocity should be at the core of the contract, the active turn of welfare policies often leads to reinforce individual responsibility. The ambivalences of contractualisation are particularly strong in the field of youth policies and result in important tensions between empowerment on the one hand and constraints on the other (Saraceno 2007). Indeed, the beneficiaries can be envisaged either as ‘beneficiary partners’ (Lafore 1989: 581) or as responsible citizens upon whom constraints can legitimately be imposed (Duvoux 2007). Thus, it is crucial to distinguish between two types of individualisation (Pohl and Walther 2007): (1) in terms of personalised measures starting from individual needs and (2) in terms of individual responsibility for compensating their lack of competitiveness.

In Switzerland, the FORJAD programme illustrates these ambivalences of contractualised transition policies. FORJAD stands for ‘training for struggling young

adults'. This programme aims at improving the level of education and the prospects for professional insertion among social assistance beneficiaries aged between 18 and 25-year-old. Based on a step-by-step logic leading to a vocational degree with an individual follow-up, its goal is to activate the so-called struggling young adults (JADs) by bringing as many welfare recipients of this age category back into vocational training and apprenticeship.⁹ The priority is to reinforce JADs' training opportunities in order to increase their capacity to be socially and professionally integrated. Hence, achievement of vocational training is considered as the best way to exit social assistance and the best protection against unemployment.

The aim of this chapter is to examine to what extent the FORJAD programme enhances youngsters' capabilities by providing resources and conversion factors allowing them to project themselves in the future and plan their own life in a way they have reason to value according to Sen's recurrent formula (e.g. Sen 1999). In this sense, we will use Appadurai's notion of capacity to aspire (2004) as a meta-capability (i.e. a precondition to the enhancement of individual capabilities) and see how this programme influences the way young adults engage in their future and affects the ethical horizon against which youngsters' build their present and future citizenship. More precisely, we will analyse what kind of individualisation is promoted and implemented by the FORJAD programme by answering the three following questions:

- Can the notion of individualisation underlying the FORJAD programme be interpreted as capability-friendly? Does it provide youngsters with extensive capability for voice?
- How does the programme integrate a life course perspective (life trajectories, transitions, etc.) and to what extent does it take into account its beneficiaries' capability for education, capacity to aspire, capacity to plan and engage in the future, etc.?
- What is the impact of the FORJAD programme on the supply/demand sides of the labour market? How does it situate itself between an employability-oriented and a capability for work-oriented policy?

Our analyses are based on a documentary survey of official texts and 43 semi-structured interviews – 32 conducted with young adults¹⁰ at various stages of the FORJAD programme, 7 with field workers and 4 with representatives of cantonal authorities in charge of transition measures.

⁹When the FORJAD programme was launched, more than 70 % of the social assistance recipients between 18 and 25 years old had not completed or even started a vocational training (Von Muralt and Spagnolo 2007).

¹⁰Among them, 18 were engaged in so-called social integration measures that are the preparatory stage of the FORJAD programme, and 14 were involved in FORJAD itself. Interviews with the former are referenced as M in this chapter, while interviews with the latter are designated with the letter F.

The FORJAD Programme

Like in Germany or in Austria, the Swiss educational system is characterised by a dual system¹¹ within which apprenticeship combines vocational classes at school and on-the-job training at a host company. Despite its very positive image among Swiss youngsters and parents, not all of them succeed in finding an apprenticeship at the end of compulsory schooling. The canton of Vaud, one of the biggest Swiss cantons in terms of population, is particularly exposed to this problem: first, because of a labour market characterised by a comparatively high unemployment rate compared to the Swiss average (around two points higher than the national average 3 %)¹² and, second, because of an educational system (organised at cantonal level) that operates in a very selective and compartmentalised way (Perriard 2005). In this canton, FORJAD is the first programme specifically targeting the JADs and represents a pioneer experience at national level. Launched in 2006, the programme aims at reintroducing these young people into the vocational and education system (VET). More precisely, it offers a twofold support to this target group, as soon as they are accepted into an apprenticeship. First, a personalised coaching is provided by social workers belonging to a private non-profit association. This coaching is multidimensional and covers four areas: academic (like school support courses), vocational, social and personal. Second, FORJADs receive a scholarship grant, which implies that they do not depend any more on social assistance. In 2012, the FORJAD programme includes almost a third of all young social assistance beneficiaries aged between 18- and 25-year-olds (around 1,000 out of 3,000).

Moreover, FORJAD includes a preliminary stage intended to help young adults finding an apprenticeship and entering FORJAD. About 20 social integration measures (MIS) are available for young people relying on social assistance. These MIS are aimed at assessing their motivation and validating their professional project. Some of them are oriented towards the acquisition of social and relational competencies (self-esteem, self-confidence, etc.), while others insist on the development of individual employability and professional skills (acquiring professional experience in private or social enterprises, complying with working schedules, etc.). These MIS are relatively short (generally between 3 and 6 months) and can be cumulated. However, many young adults follow a plurality of MIS with little coordination between these (Schaub et al. 2004).

In short, the FORJAD programme aims at (1) reinforcing the professional integration of young people leaving compulsory school without any degree or training achieved and (2) decreasing the expenditure on social benefits by reducing the risk of long-term dependence on social assistance.

¹¹ In Switzerland, vocational training plays a major role in the transition processes from school to the labour market. About two thirds of young people take part in the dual system of apprenticeship.

¹² Source: SCRIS, Portrait du canton et comparaisons avec la Suisse, www.scris.vd.ch/Default.aspx?DomId=178.

The FORJAD programme addresses a public characterised by multiple and cumulative difficulties. In addition to schooling issues, the JADs are very often confronted to problems related to family, housing, migration, health and debts incurred during their life course. Thus, the effectiveness of the programme relies on its capacity to adapt to the specific needs of the youngsters' trajectories. In a capability perspective, the issue can be phrased as follows: to what extent the focus on vocational training allows to take into account such diversity and promote the effective enhancement of JADs' capability for voice, for education and for work? In the next section, we will analyse the relations between the local agents in charge of implementing the programme and the beneficiaries, with a view to assessing the extent to which the FORJAD programme contributes to enhance 'the amount of choice, control and empowerment an individual has over its life' (Burchardt et al. 2010: 8).

11.2.3.2 Assessing the FORJAD Programme Against the Capability Approach

Youngsters' Freedom to Choose: What Room for Their Capability for Voice?

In a capability perspective, it is key to assess to what extent JADs have the effective possibility to voice their wishes, concerns, claims, etc. at all stages of the FORJAD programme, as this features as a prerequisite for the implementation of genuine individualised measures.

For the JADs, the entrance into the programme does not always reflect a free will, rather a certain form of loyalty that can be imposed by the threat of financial sanctions since their social assistant or integration counsellor can cut up to 25 % of their integration income. As this interviewee tells us:

- My social assistant told me that I was going to start a MIS. I didn't really have a choice, I had to do it.
- What was the alternative?
- I don't know, but I preferred to do what I was asked to do in order to avoid getting into trouble, because social assistance can reduce benefits. (M11)

In this context, the necessity to participate actively in their social and professional integration is non-negotiable. An exit option (Hirschman 1970) is available but at a high cost, which makes loyalty to official expectations the readiest solution for youngsters.

At the FORJAD stage, financial sanctions are no more available as the income is provided by the cantonal office of scholarship grants. Indeed, JADs who have found an apprenticeship become administratively FORJADs. As such, they are bound to be individually followed by a coach in four different areas – academic, social, vocational and personal – this individual support being the cornerstone of the whole programme. As one coach states, the follow-up is a 'constrained support' imposed

on FORJADs throughout the whole duration of their apprenticeship. Besides, if the coach considers that the JAD is not cooperative enough, he can close his ‘file’ and stop the coaching. Moreover, if they fail to achieve their training, beneficiaries have to refund (part of) the grants they received. For the youngsters, this requirement represents a serious burden as many of them are highly indebted before entering the apprenticeship, but it can also be perceived as a genuine incentive for success and a motivating factor. As one FORJAD states:

I was also told: ‘if you do not succeed your apprenticeship, you’ve got debts and you will have to pay back the scholarships’. It was the only downside about the story but I really wanted to succeed my apprenticeship. So it wasn’t really something that actually scared me. (F4)

This evolution emphasises the youngster’s responsibility for his future and possible successes or failures. Such emphasis on individual responsibility raises interrogations from a CA perspective, as the youngster is held responsible for something he has not really been free to choose. Indeed, according to Sen ‘without the substantive freedom and responsibility to do something, a person cannot be responsible for doing it’ (1999: 284).

Even though official expectations insist on constraints and requirements imposed on youngsters, field-level practices actually leave the JADs a greater room for manoeuvre and negotiation, as the two examples of the individual coaching and the choice of the MIS illustrate.

First, the contractual relationship sets only very basic requirements for the content of the follow-up, such as a minimum of one meeting per month between the FORJAD and his or her coach. The usefulness of the follow-up is unanimously celebrated by its beneficiaries, they all declare enjoying the support provided by the coach, be it tutoring (individual support courses), administrative support (solving problems with insurances, taxes, debts, etc.) or more broadly social support (housing, transport, childcare, etc.). The room for interpretation is particularly appreciated by the youngsters, as it gives them the possibility to negotiate to a large extent the content and the modalities of the follow-up. However, FORJADs’ very positive appreciation does not prevent some of them to be more critical, because of their will to be autonomous and act by themselves, and therefore to be recognised as responsible individuals. Therefore, the coach is expected to leave some independence and autonomy to young people in certain areas of their personal lives.

We have to learn to stand on our own two feet, to have the courage to face problems and to remember that we are not worse off, that we must fight. (F2)

Second, concerning the choice of a MIS, some JADs said that their social assistant (AS) presented different kinds of MIS and let them choose between them. MIS differ in their goals (social skills acquisition or marketability enhancing), their content, their location, the number of hours they impose, their length, etc. Therefore, JADs could make a choice, e.g. according to its content, its geographical location in order to avoid travels, the timetables, etc. In other cases, the choice was already made by the AS.

Moreover, all MIS are not available to all JADs. Gaps may exist between the wishes of youth and the proposed measures because of a lack of available slots or limited access to public transport. Hence, the content of the MIS does not always suit the JADs and their expectations. On the one hand, some young people accuse the MIS that are oriented towards the enhancement of social and personal competences to be insufficiently focused on their career plan. On the other hand, some of the MIS that are employability oriented may lack meaning for some young people especially when the working activity is not very attractive, as this quote illustrates:

Working there is good, it's just that when there is no work to do, there is nothing to do and you get angry easily. Everybody gets angry easily. And when you have no work, no one is motivated, everybody starts to sit, talk and drink... water. (M17)

Whatever the orientation of the MIS, their official goal consists in helping the youngsters in finding an apprenticeship. To do so, young people are strongly encouraged to answer job advertisements. Some JADs told us they sent more than 200 application forms for apprenticeships or internships. In such cases, the space for voice and negotiation, or even individualised approaches, is rather limited:

They gave me lists with nurseries, names and stuff like that, I sent CVs but I found this was really like a factory. I copied 7 times, printed 7 times, sent it and waited for a reply. (M1)

Since JADs' career plan has to be 'as realistic and achievable as possible', as stated by the law, the role of the local actors engaged in the MIS is to match labour supply and demand. In the words of the cantonal Head of the specialised education and training support service: 'They show the roads, the flux, the red and green lights, they provide the necessary information to enable young adults to decide'. As Goffman described it in the field of psychiatry (1952), integration counsellors have to 'cool out' JADs' initial ambitions when they perceive them as nonrealistic or impossible to achieve. Their role is to identify key competencies and skills of the youngster and to highlight their usefulness in order to push them towards other roads, more 'realistic and achievable'. This limits the youngster's capability for expressing professional aspirations, as it may be constrained by a top-down imposition of institutional views about what is a 'realistic and achievable' professional project.

Between Aspirations and Conformism: Youngsters' Capability for Education

Considering the youngsters' capability for education requires taking into account two dimensions: their capacity to act and their freedom to choose between valuable educational options. Interviews revealed that the agency dimension often boils down to the capacity to develop coherent projects interpreted as a guarantee of the beneficiaries' responsible engagement in the future. Regarding youngsters' freedom to choose, analysis shows that it is often reduced to an ambivalent conception of autonomy. The task is here to understand how the youngsters involved in the FORJAD programme perceive education, how they define their own projects and to

what extent they are provided with sufficient resources, conversion factors and room for manoeuvre in order to engage in the future.

If some young people told us that they really wanted to start an apprenticeship, many chose to seek an apprenticeship because they were strongly encouraged in this direction by the local agent. They generally give an instrumental value to training, which is conceived as a protection against insecurity and precariousness. Under such conditions, the notion of autonomy is ambiguous. Indeed, it both refers to the acquisition of the market-oriented skills promoted by the programme and to the youngsters' will to be recognised as responsible individuals able to plan their future. The notion of 'project' is a good illustration of this ambivalence as it is not referred to in the same way by institutional actors and JADs.

JADs are well aware of the competitive functioning of the labour market and its downsides (many of them have indeed experienced job precariousness), and they develop an instrumental relation to training. Almost all of them declare seeking a 'piece of paper' they can present to a potential employer. In their discourses, taking advantage of the apprenticeship to improve their professional prospects is often presented as a priority, sometimes without any consideration for the type of apprenticeship itself.

- In which sectors did you search for an apprenticeship?
- I would have accepted any opportunity as long as there was a certificate at the end.
(M17)

It is interesting to notice that almost all interviewed JADs have fully endorsed the ideas of life project and life planning, which are part and parcel of the expectations of active labour market programmes. During the interviews, youngsters insisted on their own projects as a sign of maturity. Doing so, they show their adhesion to the call of the programme for reflecting on their professional aspirations and projects. Therefore, they demonstrate (or at least make a show of it) having incorporated the dominant 'idea of work as a career and vehicle for self-fulfilment' (Maeder and Nadai 2009: 75).

Some of my friends do not care at all about their training results but it is not my case because I have plans behind. So it's important for me to succeed. But some of my friends do not have projects, they don't know what they are going to do after the apprenticeship, and it sometimes interferes in my relationships with these friends. (F4)

In the same line, youngsters use very often a vocabulary that relates to the logic of activation (to be 'active', to 'wake up', to be in the 'real life', etc.). Young people display their will to get rid of the stigma attached to passivity as this quote illustrates:

- I also wanted to show that I could do an apprenticeship, that I could have a job.
- To whom did you want to prove it?
- To my parents, people from the SEMO, my friends also, and not acting as a fool, unable to have a job. (F1)

In the same vein, their concern for the continuity and linearity of their life course is repeatedly reasserted. More broadly, they show their commitment to the idea that the individual must provide for his own future and be proactive.

As a teenager, I started to find ways to escape from schooling, at weekends you drink, you smoke, and by doing so, it is true that I... I just changed my way of life. It was supposed to be linear and then it started to go every which way. (M2)

I realised that if you do not plan your future as soon as possible, it will be a mess later. (M14)

These quotes illustrate, on the one hand, JADs' awareness of the stigmas attached to their situation, and on the other hand, their commitment to official discourses that promote the linearity of life course at the expense of non-linear trajectories. This reflects Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's idea of modernity (2002), where individuals are asked to find biographical solutions in order to deal with social problems.

However, this proactive logic of 'life through projects' reveals ambiguities regarding JADs' autonomy. Indeed, autonomy is also a deep-rooted normative injunction (e.g. Cicchelli 2001), as was repeatedly illustrated in youngsters' speeches. This should not come as a surprise insofar as autonomy is both a condition to enter the FORJAD programme (eligible JADs are called to show that they are responsible, independent, etc.) and the aim of the MIS. Consequently, many young people have integrated this approach, and their willingness to prove their independence is recurrent in the interviews:

Generally... I try to do things by myself. (M2)

I prefer to manage and pay my own bills rather than waiting for social assistance to pay them. I prefer my independence, it's been 3.5 years that I am independent, they give me money and I pay my bills, my electricity. I pay them by myself and I do not want someone to do it for me. (M11)

But this willingness to display autonomy may conflict with the follow-up provided by the MIS and the FORJAD programme. Indeed, sometimes, young people are tired of being followed by someone:

Having someone behind me during my apprenticeship, I think it devalues me. It bothers me. (M17)

This tension between JADs' concern for autonomy and the follow-up they are subject to can also account for their discomfort with the idea of seeking help, because they have fully integrated the injunction towards autonomy and the stigma of assistance:

If he helps me doing more things, I will be embarrassed. It is because I like to be a bit autonomous, to show by myself the progress I make. (M14)

The notion of project is ambiguous too and can lead to misunderstandings. While local actors define the professional project as a programmatic project (with a logical and precise succession of steps), young people have generally a more vague idea of their project (Jonnaert 2000). Thus, for some interviewed JADs, the project boiled down to an intention to engage into training in order to avoid being stuck in a passive state, but without any concrete elements about how to implement and pursue this project. Under such circumstances, choosing the type of professional training is generally not a priority:

I was looking to do something instead of staying at home, but it was more because I wanted to be occupied than because I wanted it. (M6)

But even if they do not define their project ‘programmatically’, a great part of the youngsters stressed the importance to do things that made sense for them. This search for meaning points out that for young people, designing a career plan is often envisaged as a dynamic and long-term process. In this sense, it is important to take into account JADs’ own temporality as stressed by this quote:

There are young people who are not highly motivated to enter the labour market, they are not ready, it is necessary to give them time. It is the only way to achieve something. But some people have not understood it yet. There is a proverb that I like: You can take a horse to the river, but you can’t make it drink. (M11)

The importance of time as a key condition for the emergence of sense (and meaningful plans for the future) in the social and professional integration of JADs stresses the necessity to conceive professional integration as a dynamic transition from education to a relatively stable position in the labour market (Mansuy et al. 2001). This also echoes Vincens’ argument (1997) that professional integration takes place over a period when situations of job search, unemployment, training and inactivity are mixed and that process may take a long time.

Supply- vs. Demand-Side Adaptability and the Issue of Capability for Work

Assessing the FORJAD programme’s capacity to enhance the youngsters’ capability set finally requires examining to what extent it allows them to get a job they have reason to value. Enhancing JADs’ capability for work implies adapting jobs and workplaces to their wishes and characteristics. Our investigation shows however that despite the multidimensional follow-up provided by coaches and more broadly the contractualised support JADs’ and FORJADs’ benefit, finding an apprenticeship mostly lies on the shoulders of the individual. A certain number of sectors of the Swiss apprenticeship market (e.g. book clerk, early childhood educator and beautician) are structurally marked by disequilibrium between supply and demand. Under such circumstances, the coach plays an ambivalent role since he is called to concomitantly defend the youngster’s rights on the workplace and strive to adapt him/her to the employer’s expectations.

In other words, professional integration strongly depends on the youngsters’ individual willingness and ability to work (Nadai 2006). What is at stake here is their capacity to demonstrate they share the ‘work ethic of the general population’ (Maeder and Nadai 2009: 74) and are able to implement this ethos in their own life. And this is precisely the sense given by many interviewed youths to their participation in the programme, despite boredom and feelings of worthlessness. The case of this youngster who accepts to work for free because of her age (unlike the other MIS participants who receive social benefits because they are over 18) is paradigmatic in this respect:

It’s little hassle [the work in a second-hand shop] but I’m happy with it. I’m not employed, it’s as if I was a volunteer. They are all paid except me because I’m a minor, and the regional social agency does not support the minors. And that way, I think employers will at least see that I have worked in (the second-hand shop) with colleagues who were paid and me not. (M10)

To enhance the chances of finding an apprenticeship, the MIS emphasise the importance of acquiring work experience through internships. However, many

interviewed JADs outlined the gap between the workplace they first discovered during an internship and the one, different and generally harsher, they then discovered as apprentices. In this sense, referring to Weber's well-known analysis, many JADs experienced a 'disenchantment of the world' of work. Such negative experiences in the labour market can affect negatively their motivation and, in turn, reinforce their instrumental conception of training or make them turn away from training.

In addition, the search for internships 'at all costs' can be dangerous because it places young people and their employers in highly asymmetric positions. Young people are looking for a permanent place and to this purpose they agree to follow unpaid internships with the hope of obtaining an apprenticeship afterwards. Here, the logic is that any experience at a workplace is better than no experience at all. But the MIS agents have no specific tools to ensure that employers, beyond their contractual commitment, are truly respectful vis-à-vis youngsters engaged as trainees and that they do not take advantage of the young's willingness to make a good show, or exert pressure on them (e.g. in terms of timetables):

When I did my internship, there was the wedding fair. Apprentices who were there, they did not really want to go to the wedding fair because it was on Saturday; but as I was a trainee, I wanted to show the boss that I was motivated. So I suggested going on Saturday and Sunday. So I worked from Monday to Sunday, I was tired, but I showed that I was motivated. Later on, I was hired, so this was worth it! (M5)

Finding an apprenticeship is a key issue for JADs. It is envisaged as the solution to take them out of social assistance and precariousness, and it is the only way to enter the FORJAD programme. In such a conception of the transition from compulsory school to professional training, most of the responsibility lies directly on the youngsters as they are called to find an apprenticeship. At the preparatory stages of the programme, i.e. when those who have failed to find or to complete an apprenticeship are engaged in so-called MIS, they benefit from a support (be it logistic, in terms of access to information, help to write a letter of motivation or a CV, social networks, etc.) in their search that can vary from one measure to another and from one social worker to another. In some cases, the MIS agents have proved decisive for the youngster's success in finding an apprenticeship. In others, JADs have had access only to limited or very standardised information and self-presentation techniques that retrospectively appear of little use in their search for an apprenticeship. In such cases, success very much depends on the youngster's ability to convince an employer that he or she is a good bargain.

All in all, the MIS main objective is to enhance beneficiaries' attractiveness in the eyes of potential employers. Under such circumstances, compliance with the labour market requirements is conceived as a moral obligation. Even the social skills that are promoted in the MIS dedicated to the acquisition of social competencies are presented as necessary for both designing and implementing a professional project and fitting in the labour market requisites (e.g. autonomy, ability to carry out a personal project, etc.). In other words, these social competencies are considered as resources to compete in the labour market. Indeed, MIS mostly boil down to supply-side adaptability tools, as they have very limited means to significantly affect the demand side of the labour market. Under such conditions,

it is no wonder that the adaptation to the labour market appears as an undisputable necessity to JADs themselves. This in turn reinforces their disenchanted view of the labour market.

During the apprenticeship, the coaches also play an important role in relation to employers. Indeed, they may act as intermediaries and/or mediators between the youngsters and their bosses. Their role is particularly important since the apprenticeship commissioners, who are in charge of supervising the smooth and lawful running of the apprenticeship period in Switzerland, very rarely intervene in the workplace and even tend to back the employers' viewpoint in case a problem occurs. Individual characteristics and personality appear to be decisive, since every coach has a specific conception of his mission, which is determined by his individual trajectory, previous job experiences, political preferences and so on. Whatever their job conception, however, the coaches' task is intrinsically ambivalent from the point of view of both the apprentices and the coaches themselves (who are well aware of this ambivalence). Indeed, they have two functions that may be contradictory on certain occasions as they are called to, concomitantly, defend JAD's rights in front of his employer and push him to adapt to the demands of this latter and to the requisites of the labour market. In other words, they have to be both advocates and compliance officers. If their mediating role with employers can prove very useful in order to prevent or limit abuses, this does not impede JADs to sometimes ask their coaches not to intervene on the workplace since such an intervention could be a source of stigma (as it brings back the idea that the FORJADs are not apprentices like the others since they need specific support for success). Voice options thus appear very restricted for youngsters on the workplace, where the call for adaptability (often endorsed by the youngster himself) prevails over the development of capabilities.

Conclusion

Despite its clear activation logic coupling behavioural requirements and benefits (Maeder and Nadai 2009) and materialised through contractual obligations weighing upon JADs, the FORJAD programme considered as a whole, i.e. including the MIS as preparatory stages and FORJAD itself, allows the youngsters to receive individualised support, the content and modalities of which are negotiable to a large extent. Therefore, this programme is a very good illustration of the intrinsic ambivalent nature of contractualism when it is used as an activation tool in the field of social policies. Whereas the institutional framework leaves the JADs some space for negotiation and some capability for voice in the context of their relationship with the social workers they are being followed by (esp. in the choice of the MIS and in the delineation of the content and scope of the individualised follow-up during the apprenticeship period), the relationship with the employers is one of compliance and loyalty. In the latter case, the contract boils down to something merely

(continued)

rhetorical as the employers' will is considered as non-negotiable; in the former case, there is some ambivalence which allows the youngster to get closer (though not very much) to the ideal of a contractual partner. In our view, two dimensions would be key to overcome the limitations of the FORJAD programme and promote a capability-friendly transition policy aiming at enhancing both the capability set available to recipients and their freedom to choose among valuable options.

First, time is a crucial condition for the emergence of sense and meaning in the social and professional integration of JADs. It is a decisive prerequisite to enhance their capacity to engage in the future, i.e. to develop their capacity to aspire and become full citizens. Furthermore, this clearly requires departing from the early selection bias of the Swiss educational system that limits the capability for education of youngsters oriented towards vocational training because of their low performance at school. Only this way will it be possible to address the paradox that youngsters with the least resources are precisely those that are compelled to make important choices earlier in their life.

Second, the disequilibrium between supply-side and demand-side interventions is to be interpreted as an obstacle impeding the development of JADs' capabilities. Hence, employers should be envisaged also as contractual partners with rights, duties and, if necessary, sanctions in order to ensure their effective enforcement. Such a transformed notion of 'contract' would entail a twofold adaptability (of the youngster to the labour market and of the labour market to the youngster) that would allow the development of JADs' capability for education and vocational training and, more generally, their capability for work.

11.2.4 Addressing the Issue of Unemployment Among Disadvantaged Youth in Scotland: Developing the Capability for Work

Valerie Egddell • Emma Hollywood (✉)

Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

e-mail: V.Egddell@napier.ac.uk; emmahollywood46@gmail.com

Ronald McQuaid

University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

e-mail: r.w.mcquaid@stir.ac.uk

11.2.4.1 Introduction

While most young people in the UK leave compulsory education and enter positive destinations, such as work, training or further and higher education; a significant number are not making this successful transition or are not finding a job or a career

path that they aspire to or particularly value. Disadvantaged young people in the UK (such as those who lack qualifications or those living in poverty) face many barriers in the labour market including the contraction of the economy and labour market because of the economic recession, recruitment freezes, increasing competition from more skilled job applicants who are competing for low-skilled jobs, and recruitment practices relying on informal contacts and recommendation (McQuaid et al. 2010; Oxford Economics 2010; UKCES 2011, 2012). The unemployment rate for 16–24-year-olds was 21.4 % for April–June 2013 (Office for National Statistics 2013). The nature of work for young people is also changing as more people are underemployed and young workers are also more likely to be employed on precarious or temporary contracts (UKCES 2011) and so may also be at risk of cycling between low-paid work and unemployment (Bivand 2012). Vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are at particular risk of not making a successful transition into work or becoming trapped in low-quality work with poor pay and terms and conditions (Green and Owen 2006; Shildrick et al. 2010; MacDonald 2011; Lee et al. 2012; Sissons and Jones 2012). Less qualified young people may feel pressured to move quickly into the labour market, taking whatever work is available (Taylor 2005; Schmelzer 2011). As such, the transition into work is not necessarily a positive outcome if a young person does not value it, e.g. if they find the work unsatisfying, or if the job is not in a sector that they are interested in (Bartelheimer et al. 2012; Egdell and McQuaid 2014; Vero et al. 2012). It is in this context that this chapter explores how young people's capability for work can be developed so that they can choose work that they have reason to value.

The focus of this chapter is on disadvantaged young people in Scotland, aged 16–24, making the transition from unemployment to employment. ‘Paraphrasing Sen, capability for work is “the real freedom to choose the job one has reason to value”’ (Bonvin 2012: 13). The chapter examines two third sector run programmes that are argued to promote the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value (Hollywood et al. 2012a, b).

11.2.4.2 Findings

This section examines the barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth and demonstrates how the capability for work is articulated. The ways in which the programmes seek to develop disadvantaged youth's capability for work are explored, and the limitations to enhancing the capability for work are presented.

Barriers to Young People's Capability for Work

Conversion factors play an important role in developing young people's capability for work. Staff from both programmes identified some of the conversion factors that the young people lacked, including both individual conversion factors and external conversion factors. The young people often faced a combination of multiple barriers to work which could be deeply rooted.

Young people could lack work experience, making it hard for them to find work in the constrained labour market.

- I guess the common things are lack of skills that local employers require; definitely lack the experience and experience is a key thing. (Service manager, Programme 1)

The economic recession had changed the opportunities available to young people and there were not the same number of elementary and/or low-skill occupations as there had been previously. The young unemployed group now includes graduates as well as low-skilled individuals (UKCES 2011). This means that graduates may now be competing for job vacancies previously filled by those with lower levels of qualification:

- When the economic situation deteriorated that totally changed the kinds of jobs that were available and the number of the opportunities that were available...its much, much more difficult now to get manual opportunities, it's really significantly changed from when it started. (Project worker, Programme 1)
- You [cannot] really pick and choose now as of 2 years ago you could pick and choose because there was quite a few jobs going but it's just because of the lack of jobs and the lack of sectors that you can go into. (Young person, Programme 1)

Young people often lacked concrete aspirations, not really knowing what they wanted to do once they had left school. Although careers advice may have been offered at school, the young people engaged in the programmes had not necessarily sought it.

- It's not always easy because sometimes they don't know. You know they'll come in and say I'll do anything, or don't really know so we have to start to ask them questions to get them thinking about you know what they would like and what they definitely wouldn't like, to try and tease out what their interests might be. (Project worker, Programme 1)

The young people had not always had much exposure to the world of work so were not necessarily aware of what certain jobs entailed.

- A lot of guys will come in and say I want to do the trades. And they want to do the trades because they think traditionally you don't have to be very academic to do it, its quick easy money and its big money apparently. But of course it's just not the reality of it. And on a day like this how many people genuinely want to be out in the mud and the rain and the cold. (Project worker, Programme 1)

Those young people that did have aspirations did not always know how they would achieve them.

- In the long run when I am about 30 or 40 I knew where I wanted to be, but it's trying to figure out how to get there...with [no] money and [no] job it is pretty hard...when I am 30 or 40 [I will] hopefully own my own business even if it's a small business it's still my own business. (Young person, Programme 1)

Support and encouragement was cited by programme staff as crucial to whether young people made successful transitions. However, as shown in Table 11.4, young people did not necessarily have support from their families and peers, although some did.

- [If you] need to take actually a lot of responsibility for your own development and learning, attendance, research, you know it is very difficult so if you haven't any support around you that can be very, very challenging. (Project worker, Programme 2)

Table 11.4 Barriers to young people's capability for work

	Factor
Individual conversion factors	Lack of family/peer encouragement Lack of role models Lack of aspirations/not knowing what to do once left school Lack of skills and experience Long-term unemployment Lack of confidence and self-belief Feeling disempowered Negative experiences of school Lack of/few qualifications Also care leavers; family problems; housing problems; literacy and numeracy support needs; mental health problems; physical health problems; young parents; debt; substance misuse; youth-offending backgrounds, etc.
External conversion factors	Lack of careers advice from school Lack of (sustainable) job opportunities Also housing; external labour market; welfare changes, etc.

Source: Developed from Hollywood et al. (2012b, pp. 205 & 215)

It is because of the complexity of the barriers to work that, Programme 1 especially, supported young people in all aspects of their lives, and not just addressing issues of employment/unemployment in isolation from the wider contexts of young people's lives. This can be seen as being very much in line with the capability approach, which acknowledges that individuals are socially and culturally situated and embedded and that it is important to take into account the processes that lead to a functioning such as a job outcome (Sen 1985, 1998; Bonvin and Moachon 2008; Bonvin and Orton 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid 2010; Lehwess-Litzmann 2012).

- We now ask where do you live, who is at home and what do they do. We try and get a background – is mum working, is dad working, does that have an impact on why they are not enthusiastic about it, or is it their own confidence. Also if their siblings are not working then it is someone for them to hand around with as well. We try to find out as much as we can about their backgrounds so we can support them the best. If you have a good family support pushing them on then that helps. (Project worker, Programme 1)

It was felt that the young people would have greater difficulties finding work if issues like self-confidence and housing problems, for example, were not addressed.

- Let's sort out the stuff in your life and then get a job...the jobs is what happens when everything else is in place really. (Service manager, Programme 1)

Programme 2 staff also highlighted that stability and encouragement outside the programme were important in helping the young people to succeed on the programme, indicating the limitations of the influence the staff can have in addressing some of the barriers to work faced by the young people.

The barriers were often deeply engrained, and programme staff did not necessarily have the resources (e.g. time) to provide the extensive levels of support needed to address deep-rooted barriers, although they did work in partnership with other specialist organisations to help tackle them.

- I mean the list can go on and on but part of the real problem is that some of these things have been going on for years and years and years and years and then they come to us and we have six months to sort it. Some of the problems have been a long time in the making and you know we're supposed to sort that in a very short space of time... To be fair sometimes that's because the young person you know hasn't flagged it up for whatever reason because quite rightly they don't want to tell everybody all their ins and outs.
(Project worker, Programme 1)

Providing Young People with the Capability for Work

Programme 1 is a 6-month programme that provides training and work placements for disadvantaged unemployed 16–24-year-olds. In the majority of localities in which it operates, there is no wage cost to the employer for the first half of the programme, and in the last half the third sector organisation supports 50 % of the wage cost. The programme offers placements in a variety of sectors, although some localities specialise in certain sectors. Optional aftercare is provided.

Programme 2 is a voluntary programme that offers intensive training and work experience in specific sectors to disadvantaged unemployed 16–25-year-olds. The programme ranges from 5 to 10 weeks in length. The programme comprises of (sometimes externally sourced) training and placements in specific work sectors, although the length and structure of the courses varies by sector. Optional 6-month aftercare was being piloted at the time of the data collection.

The empirical data highlights a range of issues that were key in providing young people with the capabilities for work in Programmes 1 and 2: engaging with young people, support and encouragement and identifying aspirations.

It was important that the programmes were able to effectively engage with the young people in order to identify their support needs and address the barriers to employment to develop their capability for work. Programme 1 staff used a number of informal and formal tools (e.g. assessment forms, interviews, speaking to other professionals who knew the young person) to identify the needs and aspirations of the young people. The skills of the Programme 1 staff were also central in shaping the way that they engaged with the young people. Few of the staff had employability services backgrounds, coming instead from social work, youth work and community education. The staff also took great efforts to communicate with, and remain in touch with, the young people.

Both programmes offered support and encouragement to the young people that might not necessarily be available elsewhere.

- We are creating an environment where it is possible for them to succeed. Which might not be there otherwise. Access to employment and a placement. There are also the little things that we do. We don't want to claim that we have made the person successful but

there are all sorts of little things that we do along the way. Whether it is a wee word of encouragement or a visit to them on site. (Project worker, Programme 1)

Staff from Programme 1 described how this encouragement could take many forms including simply contacting the young person at the end of the working day to see how their day had been. However, some of the young people did have support from their family and peers, and this was seen to be very important in ensuring their success on the programmes and the development of their capability for work.

The supportiveness of the employers was also important in developing the young people's capability for work.

- It's not just about finding employers who will give a job, it's employers who can understand and see the needs, maybe nurturing the young people a little bit and we will get them there and we will get good employees at the end. (Service manager, Programme 1)

Employers needed to offer a nurturing environment. Programme staff also provided support to employers to help them address any issues that they had with the young people.

Central to the capability approach is having the freedom to do what the individual considers to be valuable. The programmes also provided supportive environments where young people could find out what they wanted to do. Often the aspirations of young people were limited. One important aspect of the programmes was that they helped young people identify what they wanted to do and to form aspirations for the future.

- So there is quite a degrees of assessment just to see where the young person is at, just to make sure the young person is fully aware of what it is they want to do and where they want to go and what kind of career they want. Because very often...everyone has ideas of what it is what they want to do and then they find themselves on a building site and thinking is this really where I want to be when it's raining. (Service manager, Programme 1)

In Programme 1, there was flexibility and tailoring in the programme where the staff would try to match young people with placements that corresponded with their aspirations as well as trying to widen the aspirations of the young people, as these could be very narrow and shaped by a lack of exposure to the world of work.

- The main thing that I think is useful...you can actually experience it and you can actually say this is for me or [no] I couldn't see myself doing this in 10 years...you can never really tell until you are actually there with your head in it. (Young person, Programme 1)

Programme 2 did not have the same level of flexibility as it was delivered only in certain sectors. However, it enabled young people to choose a job that they had reason to value by providing them with an environment in which they could make decisions and the resources to find employment in particular sectors (e.g. skills and qualifications, understanding of particular work sectors in terms of terminology, etc.).

Through the programme, young people were able to reflect on what work 'is' in terms of: 'knowing exactly how to behave' (Project worker, Programme 2); what

work they are 'able to do' by learning about the job opportunities available to them; and what work they 'value'. For many of the young people, being on the programmes was their first experience of work, and therefore the programmes helped them develop a range of work-related individual capabilities/functionings: e.g. professionalism, time keeping.

- For some of them it might be their first job...we really encourage them to be self-disciplined on the programme with their attendance and their time keeping. (Project worker, Programme 2)
- When they move in to the world of work they understand the importance of taking instructions properly, turning up on time and working well with your colleagues and what is acceptable and not acceptable. For a lot of young people using our service they have not really had that. They have certainly not had that insight into how important those sorts of behaviours are in the world of work. It is relatively easy to get people trained and give them certificates and all that sort of stuff but the other side the more important stuff – the impact of their behaviours. That is a key area. (Service manager, Programme 1)

The programmes also provided young people with qualifications and skills to help them stand out from other job applicants, thus extending the opportunities open to them in the future.

To a certain extent, the programmes also addressed external conversion factors, as well as internal conversion factors, when developing young people's capability for work. Employers engaged with the programmes were being asked to provide placements/work experience to applicants they would not previously have considered (e.g. those who would not typically be recruited because of a lack of qualifications, self-confidence, etc.). Programme 2 staff outlined the impact of the wider labour market external conversion factors on the programme. The sectors addressed in Programme 2 were those where there are jobs available. The programme therefore acknowledged the importance of external conversion factors in young people's unemployment/employment experiences, as well as the way in which these imposed restrictions on the choices that young people could make.

- It drives everything that we do, these external factors – whether the jobs are there, what sector the jobs are in. (Project worker, Programme 2)

However, even if there were not always job opportunities, the young people were gaining transferable skills (e.g. people skills) that would be of use in other sectors.

The Capability for Work and the External Labour Market

The extent to which the programmes could develop the young people's capability for work and give them voice and choice was greatly affected by the external labour market.

The funders of the programmes determined the young people who could be worked with, the approach taken and the flexibility in delivery. In order to take part in the programmes, the young people have to meet a number of both external

and individual criteria. Due to the conditions attached to some of the Programme 1 funding, young people had to be unemployed for a minimum amount of time. The staff participants on Programmes 1 and 2 also spoke of the need to work with the 'right' young people and not wanting to 'set them up to fail if their problems were [too] bad' (Project worker, Programme 1) but that many issues could not be addressed within the time and resources available to the programmes.

In Programme 2, for example, the young people needed to have certain individual conversion factors (e.g. social skills to enable them to work in some sectors), and they also needed to be able to demonstrate a genuine interest in the programme, and the sector they were applying to get experience in. The young people also had to be in a position where the programme would make a positive difference as the staff did not want to put the young people in a situation where they were likely to fail.

- If the person has absolutely no interest...that will never work so they do have to have an interest in the sector to add to that enthusiasm and everything else. (Project worker, Programme 2)

While giving young people choice in the placements they engaged with, it must be remembered that the programme operated in the wider labour market context and therefore there were constraints, because of these external conversion factors, in the choices young people had.

- We always make clear with the young people that we're not miracle workers. If you say that you want a job doing this and that job isn't there, we'll be honest. (Service manager, Programme 1)

Programme 1 staff, for example, spoke of having to manage the expectations of the young people in terms of the labour market situation as well as expectations of what it is like to work (e.g. having to work their way up to positions where they would have more pay or responsibility). The lack of choice was seen by one manager a 'reality' that needed to be acknowledged.

- I think we've got, it's tailored enough to the needs of the individual without removing the reality that you don't actually get that much choice...and I think that's important. We're very upfront with young people about that as well that just because you want it; it doesn't necessarily mean that, that it going to happen. (Service manager, Programme 1)

The choices available to the young people could also be restricted by the way in which the programmes found, and the willingness of employers to provide, placements. If the jobs were not there, the programmes could not support the young people, although the programmes would refer them to alternative service providers.

- We can only offer the opportunities that we can get from employers...if somebody came in and sat down and said I'm really interested in health and social care and at that time we didn't have any jobs along that...it wouldn't be we can't offer you a job, it would be where can we go to look at you taking that a bit further. And that might be about college, or there are other job brokers. (Project worker, Programme 1)

Conclusions

This chapter has examined two third sector run programmes that sought to promote the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. The programmes took the approach that unemployment cannot be taken in isolation from wider barriers in the young people's lives (Hollywood et al. 2012a, b). As such, they engaged with a range of individual and external conversion factors. While young people must possess some essential attributes, such as willingness to work, the programmes acknowledged that simply providing placements would not necessarily enable disadvantaged young people to sustain employment in the future. Thus, the programmes acknowledged that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the processes that lead to that functioning (Bonvin and Farvaque 2007; Bonvin and Orton 2009). However, a lack of programme resources (e.g. staff time) can make it difficult to address deep-rooted barriers and the extent to which conversion factors can be addressed by the programmes.

Questions are raised about the voice of young people and the choices available to them, as enabling unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value cannot be achieved without taking into account the importance of the external context. In order to assess an individual's capabilities for work, both the resources they have access to and conversion factors need to be acknowledged (Bonvin and Moachon 2008). The findings demonstrate that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live (Hollywood et al. 2012a, b). Both programmes enabled young people to make informed choices about what they would like to do by providing insights into the realities of certain occupations and sectors and by providing encouragement. However, while young people's aspirations and capabilities to make choices may be developed, it is still a choice shaped and restrained by the context of wider labour markets and education and training opportunities, the personal and social barriers that prevent young people from entering work, and the funding restrictions of programmes that support young people. As such, enabling unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value cannot be achieved without taking into account the importance of the external context (Hollywood et al. 2012a, b).

11.2.5 Pedagogy Back on Track: Enhancing Capabilities for Young People in Education and Work

Niels Rosendal Jensen (✉) • Christian Christrup Kjeldsen

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University,
Aarhus, Denmark

e-mail: nrj@dpu.dk; kjeldsen@edu.au.dk

11.2.5.1 Introduction

The main aim of the Danish case study is to reconstruct the conceptions, aspirations and practices of local actors implementing educational and training programmes, as well as for the young people participating in educational and training programmes in Denmark. Likewise, it is aimed at revealing the factors that promote or hinder vulnerable young people in their transition to the labour market. The Danish case study focused on the arrangements for young people that have failed their earlier schooling (e.g. early school leavers, or students of technical schools that have given up their education, etc.). The case study which, by and large, follows the logic behind a multiple case study (Yin 2003a: 46–53, 2003b: 23–24) is situated on a local municipality level responsible for the counselling and enrolment and with local institutions being responsible for this basic vocational education and training, the so-called EGU programme. The target group in question is affected by having all lost track in the transition from school to further education or work. Due to this, the target group of the basic vocational and educational programme (EGU) can be understood as a subset of the vulnerable target groups that WorkAble have been concerned with. It contains, for instance, early school leavers, ethnic minorities as well as young persons with learning disabilities. In this case, a capability approach-inspired pedagogy could become part of overcoming the crisis of education. A balanced combination of the educational system and the labour market would further improve how to get back on track. By means of the capability approach, the needs of disadvantaged young people could be taken into account, and the support system would then develop into a more holistic, diversified and flexible system than it is the case today.

The Main Research Interests

The methodological, theoretical and empirical design has followed the outline for the common research questions for the WorkAble project, and they thereby serves as the analytical grid. The research aims at giving insights for further EU policy development as a result of revealing how the mutual interrelations between resources (both personal bundles of commodities and institutional resources), space of labour market opportunities the institutional (external circumstances)

and individual conversion factors relate to the transition from education to labour market for young people within this particular educational and vocational programme (EGU) are working and how this influences the individual's capabilities to live a life they have reason to value. The following sub-questions have also been identified:

What are the institutional conversion factors that convert educational and vocational resources into capabilities for learning, work and voice in this case?

What are the most important conversion factors concerning the transition from education to work within the EGU programme?

Methods Applied and Their Limitations

In order to answer these interdependently and mutually relational research questions, a research design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research methods was at first planned. Generally, the case-study design followed the overall strategy: 'for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence' (Robson 2000: 52). Therefore, the research design consists, firstly, of documentary analyses and interviews with relevant political stakeholders/managers that have been identified as key actors in the educational regimes. Hence, the normative judgements and political strategies of local decision-makers – whose work relates to the topics in question as well as interest/pressure groups in the youth welfare and labour market sector – were taken into consideration. This was followed up by an in-depth analysis on how labour market requirements are pursued in different contexts and seek to focus on those who fail within these regimes. Secondly, the central empirical collection took place at four basic vocational education institutions located in two Danish main cities and two smaller cities. Twenty-three interviews were carried out with institutional leaders, teachers, internship practitioners and pupils using semi-structured interviews based on different interview guides corresponding with the research questions, but from a different perspective in order to be able to triangulate these various interviews (Ramian 2006: 26). The duration of the interviews was between 26 and 59 min depending on the interviewee's communication skills and was later transcribed and analysed using CAQDAS¹³ software NVIVO. The capability approach was applied as the overall theoretical frame of the design of the interview guide aimed at assessing the different specific capabilities young people lack in their struggle to live the life that they have reason to value. The qualitative framework also contained semi-structured group discussions with the purpose of tackling the main research questions with respect to all interviewees as well as biographical information with respect to young people. Thus, the interview dynamic resulted in the reconstruction of spontaneous (re-)creations of social situations (Garfinkel 1967; Nentwig-Gesemann 2010).

¹³ Computer-Assisted Qualitative-Assisted Software

Ethical Concerns and the Processing of the Empirical Material

To secure that the involved interviewees had their voice respected and a real freedom to choose not to participate, a written agreement explaining the aim and context of the research, guaranteeing the obligation to deal with the collected data anonymously was made between the researchers and the interviewees. In the first place, data was analysed using open/free coding. Reworking the coding scheme thereby preparing the final node structure led to the final coding of the interviews.

11.2.5.2 Findings

The basic vocational education and training for pupils at risk of leaving the educational and vocational track is characterised as an individualised programme aimed at both employment and continued education. Furthermore, it is seen as a second chance for those adolescents who do not fit into ordinary vocational programmes.

Entry into the programme often happens after a period where the young person does not receive any formal education and is without a job. By the Ministry of Education, the target group is furthermore characterised as not having the: ‘pre-conditions for completing another qualifying youth education’ (Ministry of Education 2010). This description has furthermore been documented in the interviews. As one of the young people phrases it: ‘books or anything with mathematics – it has never been me, ever, so my school ended when I was in the 7th grade’ (I: pupil 2). In the Danish context, this illustrates a very early school leaver, since the Danish primary and lower secondary education is a comprehensive school covering the grades from at least 0 to 9 grade. As one of the professionals states it: ‘EGU-pupils whom I have, they’ve been through some really, really hard things through life, with a bad school experience and they can’t relate to their own age group’ (I: internship teacher).

The target group as it is constructed by the professional actors and the ministry are young people more oriented towards practical skills than subject competences: ‘with a weak educational background, and are not very academically inclined’ (Ministry of Education 2010). The interviews with the professionals as well as the pupils raise some important questions in relation to this. The pupils seem to have experienced situations in their earlier educational path where they were bullied. Quoting the words of Martha Nussbaum they had experienced an assault on their human dignity even though: ‘dignity is a vague idea that needs to be given content by placing it in a network of related notions, it does make a difference’ (Nussbaum 2011: 30). These humiliations have led to low self-esteem that works as an individual conversion factor in relation to further education. Seen from Martha Nussbaum’s perspective, this would also be a violence of or lack of affiliation that also concerns the social basis of self-respect and non-humiliation. In fact, the interviewed pupils often utter experiences with earlier teachers such as: ‘I’ve had a very, very poor schooling at the elementary school. In 8th grade I had a math teacher who

drove me down mentally, which meant I actually merely never been to school in 8th grade. The only hours I attended, was my German class and it was only to talk to my teacher' (IV: pupil 1) or 'I've been picked at and I have been chopped down by all of my teachers through 3–4 years and also in the technical school, I really do not know what they had against me' (I: pupil 2).

This vulnerable group of young people points to an interesting characteristic of the Danish welfare state: 'The reproduction of inequality' (Hernes 1975), which should not be considered as a past stage in the history of educational sociology. Unequal distribution of education exists and reproduces in new forms. At the same time, a decline in the social mobility can be experienced, and the chances for working class children to reach an academic level are by no means increased (Hansen 2003: 99). The educational participation of the working classes has been seen as a sound parameter assessing whether a central political goal embedded in the post-war years is still intact and working (Hansen 2003: 99ff). This challenge seems to be of general interest. As we have tried to demonstrate via the Danish case study, this inequality has to be addressed by other concepts than merely distributional wealth. The inequalities in early school outcome promote inequalities in their opportunities to voice their opinions and participate as democratic members of society. It promotes less valuable (from the individual's perspective) educational and vocational opportunities than they are formally entitled to. It promotes lesser opportunities to enter into the job market and enjoy the mutual recognition with other workers that this entails.

But, who are the pupils, students of the education and training programme? Except for the definition of the Ministry of Education (cited previously), one may add some further characteristics.

Social and Structural Circumstances Characteristic for the Target Group

The majority of the students have a parental background characterised by a non-familiarity with the educational system. Most parents have only completed compulsory education (comprehensive school covering primary and lower secondary education) and have no experience of the next educational levels (e.g. higher education). To some of the parents, education is not valued as important since those parents are not sharing the common values of parents in the Danish society. The parents prefer jobs and wages over the cost of education. Many of them are unskilled workers and have had, or still have, a job primarily in industrial companies. Some of them did not perform well in school, and their main aspiration on behalf of their children is that the children become happy and get a good job, without stressing education to a similar extent compared to middle-class parents (Reay 2001, 2006). An additional explanation is to do with equality of conditions (Erikson and Jonsson 1996).

Hence, the students themselves did not succeed well in primary and lower secondary school. Another point is that the target group experience problems to: 'relate to their own age group' (I: internship teacher). We find that in addition to lack of

success in school these students are often lonely, meaning that their networks – except for their near family – are scarce. This lack of capacity to experience and enjoy affiliation to other young people is worth taking into account. Instead of accounting the lack of affiliation to other young people as a subjective characteristic of each individual's ability to make relations it seems merely to be a structural product of the circumstances.

Other structural circumstances that need to be mentioned in relation to the Danish case is that modernisation in Denmark is almost synonymous with the establishing of the comprehensive school (in a full shape since 1993); the educational system has over time changed into a meritocratic system with new mechanisms of selection and allocation. Schooling has since the 1970s become a still more important factor in shaping youth life and youth trajectories (Young 1998). Therefore, these past school experiences seem to follow them as a 'bad companion' when entering their further education and training.

Similarly, the labour market has undergone dynamic changes pointing to the need for qualified labour. This means that 'education for all' in Denmark is utilised to develop individualised trajectories. Do the students, then, get a proper education and/or training to match the demands of the labour market?

When looking at the institutional level, it seems difficult due to labour market structures to match the students' needs and wants concerning a life they feel reasonable to value. The institutions offer, or perhaps even promise, to help socially integrate young people by way of counselling, training, education and labour market policies. However, in many cases, they reproduce the risk of social exclusion. But this is a fragmented picture, and it seems that much depends on the understanding of teachers, counsellors and social workers/social pedagogues working in the institutions.

The Need of a 'Youth Moratorium' as a Part of Youth Life Course

In many cases, professionals understand the transition through a youngster's life course as a linear one: education leads to employment that leads to marriage, children and so on. In fact, many young people do not follow a linear way of transition. They are trained today; tomorrow they find a temporary job keeping them employed for some time. They try one type of education – shift to another and sometimes return with renewed energy, aspiration and motivation. On their way towards adulthood, they would usually lose the temporary job and have to suffer from unemployment leading to further training and/or to another job of a similar kind. This emphasises the contradictions of the professional understanding of 'what a transition should be', namely, linear on one hand and the young person's factual experience of a reversible transition on the other. At this particular 'time' in the youngsters' life course, they experience a lack of time – understood as the necessary time to shift back and forwards and do their own experiences with the different job and educational opportunities and thereby develop an informed understanding of their potential and wishes. In a way the demand for quick decisions and a linear understanding of the transition from education to job market brings vulnerable young people into

situations where they do not have the time necessary to shape their identity and especially their wishes for their future life. In this dramatic rush of demands for decision-making that influences their future life to a great extent, the actually chosen path for our group of young people becomes arbitrary – in many cases it could have turned out quite differently. For many of the interviewed young people's situation, the content of their individual plan has been shaped merely by chance – even their entrance into the programme happened due to coincidences. With respect to the above-mentioned, much depends on external factors and structures, e.g. labour market development, personal circumstances or uncertain perspectives. What we have found in our case study seems to be consistent with the findings of another European research project (Blasco et al. 2003). We may, therefore, compare our findings with what is called 'misleading trajectories' (Blasco et al.: 26–31) and at the same time call for a sub-concept that could be named 'coincidence trajectories'. Instead of asking the market: 'what a transition should be', it would be necessary to ask, 'what a transition could be'. Beyond the findings, it seems reasonable to argue for a de-acceleration of the many crucial life choices the young person are forced to take and instead open up for a period that could serve as a playing field for better and more informed choices – choices they themselves have reason to value.

But, as can be seen when looking at the target group description and characterisation, other current conditions have furthermore accelerated the opposite development. These are the social changes in society that also influence the life circumstances, perhaps to a greater extent than youth following the main paths.

Bring Society Back In

As shown above much emphasis is put on the individual and less on structural conditions. We, therefore, intend to bring the structural point of view back into the discussion.

There are as always in human development new conditions to bear in mind. At present, they can be phrased as new or changed digital conditions and impacts, not only the young people in question, but also the pedagogical situation that seeks to address the problems as well. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the following: the transition to digital capitalism has led the working society – the industrial-capitalistic modern form of socialisation – into crisis and created a tendency to liberate people in such a way that time and again they are pushed into anomalous mastering constellations (Merton 1964). To the extent that pedagogy stubbornly tries to maintain its traditional dispositions and previously recognised tasks, it becomes a victim of the whirlpool of social 'disembedding'. In times of change, institutions like municipal primary and lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools or colleges of education normally limit their conceptual reflections to self-referential basic assumptions and try to stand their ground or let themselves get carried away or perhaps simply wait for 'it' to pass. But such defensive efforts are unlikely to bear fruit, because they are unable to prevent the social fission of pedagogical practice. Shouldn't educational sociology pay more attention to this as well? (Hansen 2003: 162ff.).

It should, and the subsequent implication is that modern pedagogy in the industrial-capitalistic society of the twentieth century was based on the truism that all people could be integrated into working life and that they would be able to find the right balance between personal autonomy and financial-social adaptation. Because of its orientation towards national society, it presupposed a nation state social and education politics that could regulate the social processes and the distribution of social chances in an autonomous way. This led to significant social changes, and in Denmark, as well as in other welfare states; education became a great laboratory for developing a new social dynamic. This is, without a doubt, a significant reason for the problems we have today: Pedagogy could or would neither predict the consequences of globalisation and rationalisation at the end of the twentieth century nor entire population groups' disconnection from access to social changes in different areas and, by no means, their own economic powerlessness – in the form of the education politics that gained acceptance in the wake of the 1970s crisis. Pedagogy had got used to mastering its own kingdom more or less autonomously. That is, its legitimacy was acknowledged as a change, as a *mixtum compositum* of humanistic pedagogy and an economic development dynamic, now and then understood as education for developing human capital. Unfortunately, it overlooked a significant implication on the part of Durkheim, namely, the educative power and force of the economic-technical system which imposes itself on human beings, leaving them with little chance of affecting the system in a humanistic way. Today, the realisation that pedagogical autonomy is no longer possible is widespread. In the following, some of the consequences of this change are brought to a head:

Asymmetry between human beings and the economy – more clearly than ever before this takes the form of helplessness, which Sennett calls 'new narcissism': a form of socially produced inner helplessness. Sennett argues that society is losing more and more public spaces to which the individual can relate his inner position and thus find inner safety. Human beings can no longer hide – they are transparent. Narcissism is thus a form of mastering in a society without distances, where the individual continuously have to step onto a stage, because he cannot find himself (Sennett 1998).

Flexibilisation requires adjustments that no longer follow the collective strategies that Robert K. Merton generalised in his anomie theory (1964). Beck tries to pinpoint these new strategies in risk society (1986): the process of individualisation has liberated human beings in such a way that they have to find new ways to create social integration. With the fission between human beings' exposure and the integration offer of the working society logic appears, according to which success leads to cultural inclusion and risks to exclusion.

Success vs. responsibility – 'one man's death, is another man's bread' (Brecht). To be successful today means to be able to implement rationalisation steps, outsourcing, precarious engagements, labour-saving measures, using sweating systems, etc. for the sake of companies' profits. In this logic, there is no room for social accountability.

Abstract worker vs. superfluous human being – to be an 'abstract worker' means to be completely engulfed by the ruling production logic. The 'whole person' of past times has passed away.

All four examples are closely connected to the self-images of modern pedagogy and demonstrate how a new ‘pedagogical economy’ has taken over so-called progressive ideas and thereby influence the everyday practice experienced within the relation between social worker/social pedagogue and the young people in the programmes in question. Thus, the continuum between winner and loser dissolves, and each group produces individual, segmented forms of pedagogy. This may, e.g. mean the beginning of the end of the idea of comprehensive schools, but not necessarily so.

Analysing the educational arrangement, we may find the concept of education very broad. In principle, students are participating in a dual-training system composed of the individual EGU plan with relatively short courses at the EGU institution, technical school or production school and longer periods of work or training at a workplace in the local environment. It is of course questionable whether this is at all recognised as a real or sufficient education by employers or not – and by the students themselves, their families and friends. Another problem is the out-of-school period within this dual training, where a structural lack of internship or apprenticeship possibilities is found. Recently, the government and a number of municipalities have developed social clauses. For example, when inviting tenders for building a new hospital, school or railroad, municipalities and the state use their right to demand a certain number of apprenticeships to be part of the offer of the private company; the trend mentioned is rather recently implemented due to the increasing number of unemployed youngsters. This is assessed to be better than just being kept waiting for months or years.

Individual Voice in the Planning vs. Counsellors’ Idea of a ‘Realistic Plan’

As mentioned earlier, the pupil enroled in the programme gets his own individually arranged educational plan. The ministry holds that: ‘Each time an EGU plan is signed, in principle a new individual educational programme is established that is adapted to the individual young person’s qualifications, wishes and needs’ (Ministry of Education 2010). But this could also be interpreted as a result of individualisation that each student will be provided with an individual plan of her/his education/training. Based on the motivation, wishes, interests, etc. of the young person, counsellors have to develop a draft of the plan and get it approved by the young person. As we have observed, counsellors often consider the youngster’s ideas to ‘be unrealistic’ or ‘wishful thinking’. The task of the counsellor is to reach a compromise with the person in order to finish what is seen as a realist plan. Following our interviews, this seems now and then to demotivate the young person.

This further means that the counsellor is in charge of assessing whether or not the young person can be accepted as citizen, meaning that if the counsellor considers his/her ideas to be unrealistic, then he would usually take over responsibility and define the right of the young person. Although such an attitude does not correspond to the formal and legal rights of the young person, the institutional way of working

makes out a structural barrier for the young person. Not necessarily intended, rather, as a practical solution of a challenge or even a threat to the system.

Work First, Life First or Perhaps the Dialectic Third: Combined Work and Life Through ‘Bildung’

The EGU has an overall aim which is not only oriented at the labour market. In the legislation – at least – a work-first perspective is not the primary outcome. Interestingly also, one of the top aims of the programme is that the: ‘Vocational training also will help to develop young people’s interest and ability to participate actively in a democratic society’ (Act 987 of 16/08/2010). The aim is thereby that the young person in question achieves a personal and social development as well as professional qualifications/competences for the labour market. This demand and aim has some affiliation to the German understanding of *Bildung*. Also the enhancement of personal, social and professional competences should enable the EGU pupil to be enroled in either one of the other vocational education and training programmes (EUD) that leads to a professional qualification as a skilled worker (a certificate for a completed apprenticeship) or at least provide the basis for entering the labour market. In other words, either the programme helps the young person back on the educational main track or it secures sufficient competences for the young to seek employment. The programme becomes thereby at the centre of re-transition into the labour market for those who failed the main educational path.

As named earlier, the local municipality decides the number of pupils that are enroled in the programme. This limit is influenced by two factors that convert the economic resources into a number of places offered. Firstly, there are the private labour market possibilities for internship that work as a structural conversion factor of the entitlement of EGU. The companies have to pay an internship wage. Therefore, the main expenses linked to this programme are placed in the private companies if the EGU pupil goes to have his/her internship there. Some professional actors experience a decline in the interest from private companies. As an example, one of the managers states that it ‘has been a tremendous challenge for the EGU programme in relation to the internship situation, because it’s no secret that when a machinist apprentice can’t find his internship, then an EGU-pupil that can’t anything of course have even more difficulty in finding an internship [...] it is impossible to find a craftsman who will take an EGU-pupil today’ (I: manager). It is quite obvious from the interviews with the pupils, as well as the professionals, that this forces the youngster to change their ideas about workplace and work area. This brings us further to the next thematic in the analysis. Another ‘hot’ issue here is the target group’s opportunities to seek internship on an equal basis with others. Based on this case study, we are analytically able to follow Nussbaum’s argument stating that it is a governmental responsibility to secure all citizens the opportunity (over a certain threshold): ‘Control over one’s environment’. This central capability includes: ‘having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others’

(Nussbaum 2011: 33–34, 1999: 235). Due to the target group's lack of capabilities for education and other individual conversion factors such as dyslexia and cognitive abilities, this is in a sense and to some extent an expected situation, which is pushed further by a social and structural conversion factor. It seems to be so that because the private companies have been firing their staff, they find it difficult the next day to take in an EGU pupil in an internship: 'Yes it's difficult for a company to argue; yes we have just fired ten, but we will take five [internship and flex-job]' (stakeholder interview).

Realistic Aspirations for Work and Education: Conversion Factors for Voice

From a capability perspective, it becomes clear that even though the EGU programme intentionally should be planned individually and therefore be giving voice to the youngsters' wishes for a future work life, and this intention is restrained in several ways. The question is therefore whether the pupils and young adults have the capability for voice in these arrangements. We find the adolescents being forced by counsellors to have 'realistic ideas' of themselves and their future plans. Looking more closely, it becomes clear that this happens in a complex relation between three interrelated factors, labelled as:

1. Demand for adaptation to job market possibilities
2. Practical reasoning (the pupils' internal capabilities)
3. The availability of internship opportunities (external circumstances)

Job Market Adaptation as Conversion Factor for Voice

Young people in this programme often need to learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market. Providers find that the young people often need to learn to have a more 'realistic' view of their future choice of employment. In this sense, the young person's individual plan becomes influenced or even manipulated – and absolutely not by the beings and doings they have reason to value. An empirical example is stated by one of the managers:

But their influence is so far formally real, but it's just a pseudo influence because of their competence to know what the possibilities are – this is thus relatively limited. So there will be much talk with the supervisor, who will in a nice way manipulate a lot in the direction that we [EGU professionals] believe is best for them. It is probably to let them see that it can't be done [...] it's hard to let them go the whole way [and try out an internship the EGU professional do not believe is realistic], because we need those internships again, we must use the reputation of EGU again (I: manager)

This does not support the voice of the pupil in these programs. They are only formally entitled to choose between valuable opportunities. This is problematic for the capability for voice, because it: 'clearly contrasts with the call for adaptability (that often prevails in the field of welfare), where people are not allowed to choose freely, but are called to adapt their preferences to the existing opportunities in their social environment' (Bonvin 2009: 58).

Work-First Perspective as a Negative Conversion Factor for the Capability for Work

Employability, human capital and human capability for work are distinct but mutually related concepts. In this respect, our perspective differs from a human capital understanding of the function of work. But the choice dimension is as stated earlier only formal and directly contrasting that work gets a first priority in practice. This leads to a danger of exclusion of the young from different workplaces. An example of the work-first perspective is seen in the following part of an interview with a leader of an institution giving internship offers for EGU pupils:

- Interviewer: [...] you have a couple of young EGU pupils at your institution. Do you have others that you offer such an internship?
- Respondent: So I have educators who have had a long-term sick leave getting financial support. They are at my place, too.
- Interviewer: Ok, so people that need this way into the labour market again.
- Respondent: Yes.
- Interviewer: What is it that you offer the EGU pupils who come to your place?
- Respondent: Uh (?)
- Interviewer: What is the reason that you take them? Do you have to?
- Respondent: No, I do not have to take them. I just need some more hands [...] the main essence is, I suppose to give these young EGU pupils some work skills. So they have something to get up for in the morning. Everything else is coming to them slowly afterwards.

Conclusions

Disadvantaged groups are meeting heavy challenges. The achievement of social integration by securing qualified employment can be seen as a process supported by a number of educational and vocational institutions. The objective of this system is to provide the individual with skills and qualifications or resources to compete in the labour market. As stated above, the municipality is the contextual place for this particular programme and has the main responsibility for offering and implementing it. We find many differences between the ways in which the programme is handled within each municipality due to demography, job opportunities, history and the local governance. These are all environmental circumstances that work as conversion factors of the opportunity to take profit of an EGU offer. The total number of pupils who are currently enroled within the EGU programme in each municipality may to a greater extent reflect factors – such as municipal size, success in relation to reducing the target group through the mainstream educational system, actual number of adolescents in the age group, etc.

This system represents a key instrument to overcome initial social inequality – whether determined by structural, personal or biographical factors. Each young person encounters the demands of education and employment – which is the central point of EGU – with a different equipment of resources. Our study demonstrates that the system does not succeed.

(continued)

We have been able to identify ‘critical transitions’ built into the institutional structures. These transitions refer to situations where youngsters are confronted with a decision or selection to pass to another level within the educational system or to move on to the labour market. At each of these transitions, young people must use their resources to cope with the requirements of the situation. Counsellors apparently act as making the decisions for the young people – not seldom in a paternalistic manor. The first choices of the youngsters are not seen as ‘realistic’, as the study has pointed to.

As education systems become more and more elaborated as well as subdivided into multiple different pathways, the transition within these systems becomes increasingly complex, involving an increasing number of options. This situation may become even more complicated if the consequences of the decision lead to separated pathways with little possibility of passing from one alternative to another. One first very critical transition is the transition from primary to upper secondary education. The age of selection (after ended comprehensive schooling) seems to indicate that early selection is a trap since this first selection is marked significantly by disadvantage. A second critical transition concerns the move from compulsory education to upper secondary vocational education or training.

Among the target group, one finds early school leavers, ethnic minorities as well as young persons with learning disabilities. Their experiences concerning school are not positive. The study shows that young people with learning disabilities are heavily influenced by their earlier experiences of schooling. They become in no way easy to motivate because of these former experiences. A similar characteristic goes for disengaged youngsters. They seem to be rather ‘unreachable’, even in this individualised version of school and training for the job market. Eventually this has to do with lacking coherence between their aspirations and the offers they can get.

Discussion: An Answer to Accelerated Demands for Mastering Choice, Life and Social Pedagogy

This development – presented here in abbreviated form – cannot be altered by pedagogy’s former suggested solutions, as they are included in the pedagogically progressive paradigm. When the social world becomes more individualised, fissured and pluralistic, and when the education system thus has to become more flexible without changing its basic form, this type of pedagogy has little to offer. The digital capitalism of our century has produced forms of socialisation that can no longer be anticipated via ideas of less structure, more flexibility or freedom to choose, because the structure of society itself has changed fundamentally. In the face of these challenges, the paradigm of liberation is soon checkmated. Without acknowledging the tension between liberation and mastering, upbringing and education can no longer

be verified and oriented towards human beings' mastering practice. This is a decisive matter for a pedagogy that both reflects and finds the working society and social politics materialistically. This underlying basis is not unknown to our research, which provides clear documentation of the fact that education in itself does not promote equality in any noticeable way, and which, as a result of changed conditions and the not exactly successful education politics, demands a centralised pedagogy. Erik Jørgen Hansen's worry bears resemblance to the fear one can have of a school in which strong personification (proper adults, mould breakers, etc.) leads to a lack of recognition of anything other than the roles of individuals (Hansen 2003). In that case, neither parents nor the school masters their task. This can lead to new forms of inequality in the knowledge society – extensive inequality in conditions of and opportunities in life. In other words, history seems to agree with an old critique from Karl Marx and on to contemporary educational sociology.

In an information society or a knowledge society, for that matter, the productive utilisation of information and knowledge is central. In the light of the missing social balance, psychosocial well-being becomes a main area. The greatest barrier to growth is the great costs of social entropy – anxiety, victimisation, aggression, frustration, crime and drugs – that is, mental and social disorders and illnesses. There is no doubt that an increase in the psychosocial potential is far more important than many other factors – such as biotechnology, environmental protection and new sources of energy.

Here, it is necessary to add the price of the *flexibilisation* of digital capitalism. Presenting flexibilisation as a pure form of socialisation presupposes significant investments in education combined with significant social investments. If, e.g. the Danish society does not want to focus exclusively on elite education and thus have to face a huge risk of social marginalisation, education investments must be distributed so that they affect all, and new models for social work must be invented, subjected to thorough political discussion and finally implemented. In total, these areas would entail sizeable social investments and can by no means be solved via short-term fiscal or investment policy. But where did pedagogy go?

Discussion: Pedagogy – A Different Productive Force as a Possibility for the Capability Approach?

We have for now pointed to the changes in structural circumstances and the need for period – a youth moratorium that could serve as a playing field. In the field of education, it is therefore important above all to remember that lifelong learning, as a consequence of the knowledge and information society, cannot be conducted via linear extrapolation and new smart learning machines, but by each individual handling the different states of knowledge biographically.

Such ambivalence and several more seem to point to the notion that the capability approach would also be able to integrate pedagogy more extensively in the social discussion of how we organise our future society. This expectation is unlikely to be fulfilled on its own. Central to pedagogy, now as well as previously, is the job to

bring human beings in a state of harmony with themselves and thus promote human integration into society. As in earlier forms of capitalism, the very idea of human worth and dignity is under pressure from digital capitalism. Here, the model of the ‘abstract worker’ rules, which is to say that the modern economy has finally produced its own, socially marginalised ‘whole person’ and thus proclaimed the – hardly intended – funeral of pedagogy. The understanding of social imbalances can result in ideas of a socio-technical optimising of human beings, which precisely aim to produce abstract workers that are forced to seek inner balance in powers that are beyond the worldly, namely, in religion or spirituality (Bovbjerg 2001). So far, pedagogy has taken the diametrically opposite starting point: the socially embedded human beings bound by time and space, who can understand themselves on this basis and who construct social relations in respect of the concrete, experienced personal integrity of others (e.g. Schmidt 2005). That is, pedagogy is unable to just profit from a CA perspective – unless it is willing to renew its human traditions and characteristics. If not, it may in the worst case become ‘pedagogy for the capsized, the superfluous and those who have fallen short’. Instead, digital capitalism will draw on market-oriented learning technologies that focus on human beings’ unconditional flexibilisation. Those who fall through in this process can thus be left to traditional pedagogy (also Sennett 1998; Bauman 1998).

This includes another socioeconomic account for pedagogy to settle. The point in this case draws on a distinctive societal tradition. Essentially, it is a matter of demonstrating that economic growth is possible only when it is reproduced socially via education and social work; this is the only way that it is possible. In this mutually dependent relation, family work, education and social work are not the mere precondition or necessary appendix of production; it is its very motivation. Certainly, globalised as well as rationalisation-intensive capital is no longer thrown upon qualified mass work, as previously. Thus, the value of reproduction work has also dropped – e.g. privatised, again – just like the individualised education efforts (educational inflation). At the same time, the socially threatening problem of social disintegration has increased. This is to some extent connected to flexibilisation’s new anomaly and instances of mastering. If it is going to be possible to ensure social integration, education and learning are in need of a pedagogical and social face and a sociopolitical framework. Learning and mastering are not each other’s opposites, but like production and reproduction, their individual enablement is mutually dependent on the other.

The tension that is presented here is by no means new; traditionally, it is rooted in the industrial society, to which the economic and social importance of pedagogy is related. Therefore, it will take some effort to analyse and define the logic of this relation historically, so as to be able to assess the future significance of pedagogy as a productive force. For this purpose, this text will mention in brief some known material that is arranged in a new way here. The matter at hand includes three features of development which may make available the connection between economic and societal development, between societal modernisation, democratisation and pedagogy. These features include (1) the significance of human capital, (2) the necessity of social integration and (3) the economic-societal

significance of reproduction. At this point, the debate about social capital should be introduced (Offe 1999), as it can be seen in continuation of Gramsci's thoughts on civil society (Gramsci 1972), the establishment of a historical left wing for the democratic renewal of society and not merely thematise citizens in relation to the state, but equally in relation to the economy. In the universe of educational sociology, we are also dealing with a reorganisation of problems and discussions (Hansen 2003).

For the part of the first point, the historical justification is already well-known: for the sake of its development and modernisation, capitalism is thrown upon the development of human capital and thus also the improvement of the living conditions of workers and salaried workers. The improvement of these conditions had and will have a significant pedagogical effect: people develop their own interests in education which cannot be reduced to economy. The required economic development of human capital and the discourse of human liberation determine each other.

With regard to the second point, Erik Jørgen Hansen has thematised that the industrial-capitalistic division of labour generated social disintegration problems (rupture, transition, fissions in different areas of life, immense risk, in brief: anomaly), and at the same time it is thrown upon social integration (see Marx' presentation in Das Kapital Marx 1962–1966). So, a socially integrating pedagogy is – to the extent that social risks can be standardised – used as a biography-related, integrating medium in the modern, labour divided society. Within the modern division of labour, we find a pedagogical structure of invitation.

With regard to the third point, it has been possible to demonstrate in the historical development of the question of reproduction that rigid separation and hierarchisation between production and reproduction and the related gender roles have not only hindered female human worth and chances of social development. It has also hindered the modernisation of industrial capitalism – for the full development of human capital as well as the possible expansion and differentiation of the production of goods. It should also be mentioned that women directed their attention and involvement in reproduction towards a ‘public maternity’ to generate the necessary social integration in society; they also made a special contribution to taming the ‘male’, externalised capitalism socially (Hansen 1988). With regard to reproduction, the meaningfulness of the given production in relation to human dignity and nature preservation was and is still a subject of investigation. This meaning component must be placed in the foreground of the applied pedagogy which (far too easily) allows itself to be enslaved by the dictates of ‘professional force’.

This humanistic tradition within a pedagogy, which should not only be seen as socially satisfying but also as a productive force for social change, should be brought into the debate about the CA. A purely socio-technological vision is inadequate. The basis and production factor ‘social satisfaction’ is oriented towards the cost budget of a growth-fixated capitalism. Here, it is a matter of minimising the human distraction, i.e. closing the ‘technology gap’ of the human self-will (Luhmann and Schorr 1982). Those who can handle it will be able to merge completely with digital

capitalism; the excluded and superfluous are ignored. Societies' social fission and segmentation will drive pedagogy into fundamental conflicts. Well-meaning pedagogues will experience that their paradigms, such as liberation and social justice, can no longer be understood in the logic of digital capitalism and therefore lose their socio-critical potential. From this viewpoint, the aim is the technologically whole person: the external disappears into the digital world, while the internal transcends into the spiritual world. Both are undoubtedly qualified as regards market and growth, because they have been released from their obligation of self-will and social self-education. The basis for this 'paradigm shift' is the apparent success of the gene economy. We are here talking about a basis innovation that will shine on all areas of technology, economy, culture and society. The genetic revolution is already subject to the total economisation of biotechnological potential. On the basis hereof, the positive aspects of the genetic revolutions are nothing but fig leaves. It appears that this 'second step' in the biotechnologically furnished economisation process may end with the economic increase in value of human being themselves. This may be (just about) the highest level of the capitalistic desire for increases in value: the attainment of unity between product, producer and consumer (Jensen 2006 for an elaborate account). In several respects, this corresponds to Foucault's rather pessimistic evaluation of rationality: not liberation, but the establishment of a 'discourse of control'. A rhetorical façade of rationality and plausibility has finally appeared, and it can be implemented via economic-technological 'gouvernementalité' – without even thematising it (Rose 2000).

Thus, a pessimistic development is one possibility. Another is, of course, that pedagogy is subjected to detailed, critical analysis with a view to 'start afresh – under the conditions of a new age'. Whereas the former age focused on the fate of the individual and its social realisation, gene technology turns everything upside-down: social fate from a pre-social condition. This 'either-or' is not easy to handle for a modern pedagogy that still relies on reform pedagogy's evolution-theoretical hypotheses of an 'inner' construction plan for human development (a pure and unspoiled inner childlike nature) – as a basis for excluding social opposites and understanding oneself as autonomous display or creativity, beyond the framework conditions of society.

The optimistic aspect here is that the paradigm of being the master of one's own existence, alone and together with others, has neither become redundant nor been overtaken. Rather, it has been expanded substantially: just as Marx used to write about simple and extended reproduction, in relation to production, we can in the current situation talk about the difference between repressive (primarily socially taxing or even subject to negative social inheritance), simple (the reproduction of living conditions without socially integrating surplus value) and extended mastering options (with social surplus value and thus resources for social change), which also include the societal and sociopolitical. Do we want to or have to accept that some parts of the population undergo socially repressive liberation, while others undergo socially extended liberation?

11.2.6 The Development of Capabilities of Young People in a Public–Private Programme

Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska (✉) • Marianna Zieleńska
Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
e-mail: k.sztanderska@gmail.com; marianna.zielenska@gmail.com

11.2.6.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on the case study¹⁴ of an educational initiative implemented by an international power industry company – subsequently called ENERGET – and one of the upper secondary vocational schools in Warsaw. It addressed the crisis of vocational education in Poland which was detrimental for both of the actors.

Vocational education in Poland has been suffering from a decreasing popularity for years, which has led to a negative selection of students, i.e. students entering vocational schools are those who had worse school results at previous stages of education, and – as quantitative evidence shows – they reproduce the lower social position of their parents in terms of educational level (Fedorowicz and Sitek 2011; Sztandar-Sztanderska and Zieleńska 2012). At the same time, the quality of vocational schooling has been declining as a result of a combination of factors: financial problems, out-dated infrastructure and teachers' qualifications as well as a weak linkage to labour demand. Due to a centrally defined list of vocational curricula and a system of state exams, employers have little influence on the content of teaching, which is criticised for being too theoretical and not adjusted to changes in the economy. This problem concerns some professional specialisations in particular – like in the power industry – where until very recently no educational offer was available whatsoever.

ENERGET found itself in a difficult position – the moment of retirement of an important part of the staff was approaching, whereas potential candidates with specific competences and skills were not available on the market, since no vocational school provided training in the area of power industry. Shortages concerned predominantly lower- and middle-rank technicians, as higher-rank employees were easier to be recruited among graduates of technological universities or by promoting current ENERGET employees. For that reason, the company initiated the programme 'Empowering students to learn', which had a twofold aim. First of all, the objective was to provide vocational students with some basic skills demanded from job candidates in ENERGET by investing in cooperation with vocational schools. The other objective

¹⁴The research was conducted in 2011. Twenty in-depth interviews were carried out with individuals representing various organisations (e.g. the school, the company, local authorities) and with students. In addition, the programme documents were analysed.

was to introduce a specialisation of ‘power engineering technician’ to a state list of vocational curricula, by mobilising different circles to lobby for this change: academics, teachers, local authorities, employers’ organisations. The case study presented here was carried out before ENERGET succeeded in achieving the latter goal, and, thus, the programme was implemented as an extracurricular activity and parallel to obligatory lessons. From 2012, ‘power engineering technician’ became a taught vocation, and the school introduced such a specialisation in cooperation with ENERGET.

The vocational school under study took part in the programme ‘Empowering students to learn’ to make its own educational offer more attractive to students. It had been struggling for candidates to survive on the educational market. Vocational upper secondary schools were losing in competition with general upper secondary schools, and many of them had to face the threat of being shut down, because people started to value more the latter form of education. Furthermore, the school was forced to somehow cope with the problem of scarce resources (for years public funding had not been sufficient to cover the costs of expensive teaching equipment). These problems have been particularly profound in Warsaw, where the number and the quality of educational facilities made competition stronger.

What makes this case interesting is that it might be considered as an example of public action (Lascombes and Le Galès 2007), involving both public and private actors, pursuing their interests and working together in order to answer the structural problems of vocational schooling in Poland and at the same time targeting vulnerable youth population. This type of public–private cooperation is still rare in the Polish context. Moreover, compared to other training and educational initiatives, ‘Empowering students to learn’ may be regarded as innovative, because of its preventive and long-term character as well as a broad range of good quality services. That differentiates it from many ad hoc short-term training programmes designed for disadvantaged groups in Poland (e.g. training programmes for the unemployed in the framework of active labour market policies) (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009).

‘Empowering students to learn’ is analysed by applying Amartya Sen’s capability approach (1992). This theoretical framework can be distinguished from other approaches by taking into account the individual’s perspective on what ‘doings’ and ‘beings’ (Sen calls it functionings) they treat as valuable. By adopting this normative framework, we have evaluated the programme in terms of the mechanisms contributing to or constraining the development of capabilities of young people who participated in it, i.e. their effective freedom to achieve valuable functionings, focusing on three dimensions: Capability for education – (1) commodities provided together by ENERGET and the vocational school, (2) the programme’s contribution to levelling up students’ abilities to use those commodities and building their capacity to aspire – a practical ability to set goals and plan the way to achieve them (Appadurai 2004); Capability for work – the level of formatting to one particular type of work vs. increasing spectrum of vocational choices thanks to learning more general skills; and Capability for voice – the possibility to co-define criteria of assessment and to voice without having to restrain individual preferences about one’s life, to reject unfair judgement and to participate as equal member of the public process (Bonvin and Farvaque 2005).

11.2.6.2 Findings

Capability for Education

In this part, we are concentrating on the aspect of commodities offered in the programme and students' ability to use them as a tool to choose a valued life path. In other words, we pay particular attention to the programmes' contribution to levelling up the initial inequalities in knowledge and skills between students as well as to limiting the adaptation of preferences (narrowing down the spectrum of choices because of not feeling capable enough to achieve some of them) and to enhancing the ability to set goals and strategically plan their realisation.

11.2.6.3 Commodities Offered in the Programme

ENERGET provided the vocational school with financial, material and educational support, which is quite uncommon for programmes in Poland in terms of scope, duration and comprehensiveness of services. Cooperation with a school made it possible to work continuously with youth over a period of their 3 or 4-year educational cycle. The company supplemented a standard curriculum with non-mandatory and mandatory activities: vocational and soft skills workshops, excursions to power plants and 3-week apprenticeships. It also funded scholarships for the best students. In addition, selected pupils were invited to take part in the so-called ambassador programme and play a role of representatives of the company by organising meetings at school, transferring information, etc. ENERGET also provided equipment for school labs and workshops and printed educational materials for lessons conducted by their employees. Classes organised by ENERGET were regarded by youth as more interesting than usual school activities thanks to experiments and references to practical application of scientific theory, while ENERGET employees (called mentors) were praised as good educators willing and able to explain science in a simple way and to adapt the teaching methods to the level of skills of young people and their life experience. This might have been connected to the fact that as practitioners they treated scientific knowledge not as something abstract, but indispensable to their everyday work. Finally, ENERGET also managed to create a new specialisation of vocational education 'power engineering technician', which enabled the opening of a new course with an updated mandatory curricula after the end of research.

The school staff also undertook some actions to deal with the learning problems, in particular the low level of students' initial knowledge. Contrary to what usually happens in Poland, the school provided remediation classes free of charge after obligatory lessons instead of leaving students to deal with the problem through privately paid tutoring. Moreover, the school also hired a psychologist who prepared team-building workshops for students, and all teachers were asked to set a time for individual consultations (Table 11.5).

Table 11.5 Forms of support

Type of activity	Target group	Aim
Educational support		
Excursions to power plants	All students in the classes under auspices of ENERGET	Getting to know the specificity of work in power engineering sector Motivating students to learn more
Vocational workshops called 'power industry workers' club': extracurricular activities prepared by ENERGET employees	Selected students (participation was not meant to be mandatory)	Learning selected theoretical and practical aspects important for the vocation Arousing interest in the field
Soft skills workshops (offered by ENERGET and school psychologist)	All students in the class under auspices of ENERGET	Learning soft skills (communication, self-presentation, writing CV, handling job interviews)
Apprenticeships (3 weeks)	All third grade students in the class under auspices of ENERGET	Getting to know the specificity of work in the power engineering sector and in all departments of the particular power plant
'Mentoring programme' in ENERGET: company workers were encouraged to teach students in the framework of a voluntary programme	All students in all 3 classes under auspices of ENERGET	Initiating the process of knowledge sharing and interaction between different generations
'The ambassador programme': students were chosen to officially represent ENERGET in the school and inform about the company	Selected students in all 3 classes under auspices of ENERGET	Motivating students to involve in extracurricular activities Creating bond with the company Promotion of the company ('employer branding')
Creating a course with the specialisation of power engineering technician (first edition in the school year 2011/2012)		Adapting the programme to the needs of the power engineering sector in general and to ENERGET in particular
Financial or material support		
Providing promotional materials for school	Potential candidates	Support for school in recruitment process by increasing its attractiveness Promotion of the company ('employer branding')
Providing equipment for school labs and workshops	All students	Improving the level of teaching and adapting its content
Funding scholarships for best students	3 students with the best results in every class	Motivating students to learn more

Source: ENERGET (2011) and interviews

To sum up, thanks to joined efforts of ENERGET professionals and schoolteachers, the programme represented an important improvement in access to infrastructure and to well-designed courses and workshops in comparison to what would have been proposed if the initiative had not taken place.

11.2.6.4 The Ability to Use Commodities and the Capacity to Aspire

Although the programme provided students with a full range of commodities (courses, apprenticeships, workshops, etc.) to which they would not have the access otherwise, it did not always give them an opportunity to make the full use of them. It fell short of levelling up the inequalities in knowledge and skills, which occurred among students from the very beginning. For this reason, some of them were not able to take full advantage of what was offered in the framework of the programme. First of all, although remediation classes were provided to those who had difficulties with understanding scientific subjects, not everybody could participate in them. The classes were organised after regular lessons and young people living far from the school or who had many responsibilities at home often could not take part in them. In some cases, lack of motivation to stay after lessons was also an issue. Second of all, the vocational workshops organised by ENERGET were often conducted during the obligatory lessons. On the one hand, many students could not afford to join them, because it would mean falling even more behind in various subjects (mostly science). On the other hand, some of the students participated in them to avoid attending classes they had difficulties with – which only worsened their problems.

Another aspect enhancing the inequalities between students was connected to family support. Some of them had parents working in ENERGET, who could help them understand the specificities of the vocation or issues taught in the programme. One of the mentors confirms it:

This is an inter-generational company. There was a time – not so often these days – that a father, two sons, and sons' wives worked here. (...) And there is this Marek in my group and his father works in the other power plant – he has it easier. Despite the fact that Marek is a very good and polite student... it's that his father helps him. The language of power engineering is specific – similarly to the language of the railway men or miners – you can say a word and another person immediately knows what this is about. Those students [whose parents work in ENERGET] have it easier. They are more motivated. (Employee 2)

In result, the programme tended to reproduce initial inequalities. Classes under auspices of ENERGET soon divided into a small 'elite' of the best performers and the 'rest'. Over the years, this division did not change – there were barely any flows between those two groups. As one of the scholarship holders put it:

It's more that those who received the scholarships in the past years [get it]. They have a knack for it and they just learn, they are more diligent. (Student 2)

The situation described above had twofold side effects. First of all, it also contributed to the adaptation of preferences among majority of the students – the so-

called rest. They excluded themselves from many activities and did not make attempts to change their attitude, as if a failure was inevitable. In the interviews conducted during the research, they defined themselves as ‘not capable of’, ‘not interested’ and ‘not suited for’ and thus did not even try to make an effort. This was partly caused by the fact that improvement was not rewarded in the programme: scholarships were granted only for the best results, not for getting better at something. In most cases, only the best were symbolically awarded by representing the school outside, during official events and presentations:

It is now so, that we have those [ambassadors – KS, MZ], people who are the most responsible of what is happening between the school and the company, and of course the scholarship holders –practically the same people from the first grade, a group of leaders. Those [ambassadors – KS, MZ] and scholarship holders – they are on open days, school and company events, additional meetings. (Teacher 1)

The most extreme example of this process was the situation of female students in the programme. On the one hand, they were not especially good performers, and on the other hand, no one expected much from them, because power engineering was considered a male job – so they would not be suited for it anyway.

However, also some of the top performers had strikingly low self-esteem. As one of the programme’s participants acknowledges, he has never been a good student in general lower secondary school, but here – in the upper secondary vocational school – he quickly became one of the best. Despite acquiring scholarship almost immediately after joining the school, he was still critical of his abilities:

I picked this school as my first choice because I knew that I have no chance to get to better schools, which require higher scores from the external exams – I’m not the best student. And I liked the idea that I wouldn’t have to stress out here (...). Majority of [friends from lower secondary] went to general upper secondary schools. They could afford that, I couldn’t. I’m not eager to learn, I’m lazy and stuff... so I decided on vocational school. (Student 5)

Second of all, many of the students – apart from some of those belonging to the class elite – had also limited chances to develop their capacity to aspire, understood as the ability to set their own goals and to forge their own path leading to achievement. According to the interviews, many students either did not have any precise plans for the future (preferred not to think about it) or had some educational and vocational goals, but were not aware of the formal demands they had to fulfil to achieve them. A frequent example of the latter is not knowing that to become an ENERGET employee it is necessary to first pass the final vocational exam – without which they would not stand a chance.¹⁵

One might assume that it would be more in the interest of the school than the company to work on levelling up the differences between students, since the latter needed only several people for the jobs and the former is assessed on the basis of the

¹⁵ After the completion of our research students’ lack of awareness that “certificates matter” was confirmed by the fact that few had taken the first vocation exam. The frequency was higher next year, when they realised that they could not be employed as power engineering technicians without it (also the passing rate improved and reached approximately 80 %).

students' overall results. Nevertheless, it was the ENERGET employees who contributed to some extent to both alleviating the tendency to adapt one's preferences and developing the capacity to aspire. As for the former, the possibility to interact with professionals from the company turned out to be of great importance, since they represented the world of different values than the school. They appreciated reliability more than official school results, and they were able to go beyond the teacher-student relationship and treat programme participants as partners. For example, one of the students had to provide for his family and therefore neglected school and resigned from the function of programme ambassador. He could count on support from the professional conducting the apprenticeships:

Dawid supports a sister, a brother and a disabled father. And he often used to (...) say: 'I'm so tired, I had been working all night'. He has to earn his living. And you can see that he is honest – he is not a skiver, he just can't make it physically. He kept saying: 'I would like to come to work here'. He has been working somewhere for three months already and he received payment only for one month. And I said: 'I have been working here for 30 years and my salary has never been late. (...) Listen, if I am here next year – and I know I'll be here in a year – I'll be recruiting (...). I guarantee you will have a huge chance to be recruited. (Employee 1)

What mattered was not his low performance, but his honesty, which made him trustworthy. Also the fact that he was determined and ready to work hard was much appreciated. In other words, he fitted the profile of a good company employee rather than that of an exemplary student. Thanks to this, his self-esteem and his confidence were boosted – what could not have been the case if it hadn't been for the programme. This was also the case of a student with ADHD, seen by schoolteachers as a notorious 'problem-maker', who after a face-to-face talk with one ENERGET employee made an effort to change his behaviour and was publically praised for it.

As far as the capacity to aspire is concerned, the programme gave students the opportunity to experience themselves in new situations. Firstly, they had a chance to interact with professionals from a big company, who shared with them their knowledge and views. Many of them made an impression on students because of what they had achieved and represented and therefore could serve as role models. This relation influenced the scope of possible life choices considered by the programme participants. Secondly, the fact that the students had the opportunity to take part in apprenticeships in a real power plant, where they were treated differently than at school, gave them an idea of how a real job can look like. They were expected to behave like adults and treated as such, for example, they received many attributes of employees – overalls, safety helmets and IDs.

Capability for Work

Capability for work is addressed by referring to two aspects of the programme: the degree to which it is oriented on formatting students into desirable power industry employees or to expanding possible future life choices and the emphasis put on socialisation to work, especially shaping certain attitudes to work.

11.2.6.5 Formatting to Work vs. Increasing Capabilities

The types of programmes which are implemented in schools by individual employers pose a risk of being strongly oriented towards preparing students to perform a specific job instead of expanding their possible life choices, i.e. teaching specific rather than general skills (for distinction between economies based on general and specific skills, see Hall and Soskice 2001). Yet, it seems not to be the case with the ‘Empowering students to learn’ programme for at least two reasons.

First of all, the courses offered by ENERGET employees were complementary to the school science curriculum and not a separate vocational training in power engineering. As already mentioned, students emphasised their high quality and orientation towards practice and everyday experience. In result, they were helpful in understanding compulsory classes, which often lacked those traits:

In vocational subjects we have a lot of theory dictated from books, whereas the engineers who were our instructors described the construction and functioning of boiler step by step. (...). It wasn't just theory, they would bring some things, did experiments – generally it was more interesting than the regular lessons. (Student 1)

Apart from that, students could ask mentors about issues they did not understand during the lessons. It was done also outside the official time the company's engineers spent in school. For example, some of the students even called the professionals on their private cell phones before exams in science asking for explanation of some subjects:

My cell phone rings and I get it: ‘Hello?’. ‘Mr. Marek, could you tell me what cast is?’ . And I explain... (...). In no time Marek gets a phone call – something about current. And then we get a text ‘Thank you for helping me pass my exam!’ (Employee 1)

Second of all, ENERGET employees considered that it was impossible to prepare the students to work in the company during the vocational workshops ‘power industry workers’ club’ and a 3-week apprenticeships. The only thing they could do was to try to teach them how theoretical knowledge may be applied in practice – something that school has forgotten about.

In fact, it was the school authorities who perceived the programme more as vocational preparation of the students than an elaboration of school curriculum. From the very beginning, they presented students with a vision of steady job awaiting them in ENERGET after they finish the school (it was their strategy to attract candidates). The fact that company's demand for employees was limited and that there were certain requirements such people would have to meet was not addressed directly. That caused tension between the school and the company, since the latter perceived the message about work prospects as not entirely transparent for the students.

Nevertheless, the process of socialisation to work was visible in some aspects of the programme. As discussed in the previous paragraph, one of the most important elements of apprenticeships was to make students feel as if they were ‘real employees’. This also meant introducing them to the discipline of work, i.e. keeping working hours and learning rules concerning safety at work and the importance of

hierarchy at work (especially in those areas of the power plant where safety was at stake). That was connected to the specificity of working in a power plant, where small mistakes could have had serious consequences.

In addition to the above, also some images of work were conveyed in the programme. On the one hand, the soft skills workshops presented students with a vision of the modern labour market, where communication skills and self-presentation are crucial factors of success. On the other hand, ENERGET employees represented a very specific world of professional values, which were focused on high competences in a well-defined area, reliability and climbing the career ladder steadily, being attached to one place in your professional life.

Those images refer to two different worlds of work. The latter is typical for industrial society with its work stability, affiliation to one company for most of your working life, building your life around work and a specific profession, whereas the former seems to be connected to what could be called after Beck (1992) a ‘risk society’, i.e. today’s post-industrial world characterised by variable, uncertain, flexible and no longer full-time employment with responsibilities shifted to the shoulders of individuals who have to actively adjust to changes.

It is difficult to say whether and to what extent the students internalised any of those images. On the one hand, some of them were definitely lured by the vision of stability of work presented by ENERGET employees – especially certain and relatively high wages and long-term perspective of employment.¹⁶ Additionally, the fact that they could choose a very concrete career path instead of being faced with vague alternatives for future was appreciated. That vision was directly reflected in statements expressed by one of the students from the later years, in the movie prepared in the framework of the WorkAble project¹⁷:

In the future I would like to work at Central Heating Power Station, to earn enough money to buy a house and have a family with two children. (...) I intend to work at a power station, I can’t imagine any other alternative. I don’t have any other idea. (Student 9)

On the other hand, many of them wanted to take a different path than power engineering in the future (e.g. study architecture, go to a police school), but not necessarily had a strategy of achieving their goal. Some had no idea what they could do and tried not to think about it.

Capability for Voice

An important mechanism which contributes to the development of people’s freedom is creating space for their normative judgements on life they have reason to value, which is called ‘capability for voice’ (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006). Bonvin and

¹⁶Nine of the former students are currently working in a power plant as power engineering technicians. Two are studying power engineering at Technical University.

¹⁷All WorkAble teams worked with professional film crew to prepare short movies about the educational programmes they were researching.

Farvaque argue, along with Sen (1990), that the development of freedom demands access to debating public choices and its normative foundations, thus also the effective possibility to co-define criteria of assessment used during the implementation of public policy (so-called informational basis of judgement) in order to voice individual preferences about one's life without restraint, to reject unfair judgements and to participate as equal member of public life. In our case study, we analysed the question of the spectrum of voice at two levels: the programme level and the level of the system of education, i.e. how the voice of students and parents is shaped by the school and ENERGET working together and what voice they have as citizens when educational issues are concerned.

11.2.6.6 Voice Spectrum in School

Students and parents have a limited say, which is connected to the fact that the programme is implemented in the traditional context where the game between students and teachers is played by specific rules and the roles are fairly fixed. There is a very clear hierarchy, manifesting itself in spatial organisation (benches set in rows with a teacher's podium in front) and rules of conduct in class (e.g. raising hands before asking question). The implicit assumptions about who should be given a voice and in which matters, typical for this environment, are linked to two recurring oppositions: 'youth' vs. 'adults' and 'having competence' vs. 'lacking competence'.

Parents are presented by teachers and ENERGET professionals as 'incompetent', 'having no clue about power industry business'; therefore, they are treated as information recipient instead of an equal partner. The students' position is even weaker, since they are regarded as 'immature' and 'not knowing much about the real world'. Therefore, they are expected to acquire a certain life vision and modes of conduct which are valuable according to the school, while other possibilities are compromised as 'juvenile' or 'unrealistic'. For instance, they are asked to learn how to sell oneself to the employer by an impressive self-presentation or how to behave as a student or worker. These voice limitations are not addressed by teachers and ENERGET professionals. They remain – what sociologists call – 'unthinkable', 'self-evident' and 'taken for granted' (see Bourdieu 1980). A good example of this is the fact that both groups of professionals are convinced that they give students space to act but in response students demonstrate a lack of activity. However, the spectrum for action is actually very limited – it is understood as giving possibility to propose topics for discussion or asking for clarification and additional information.

Neither students nor their parents are invited to discuss the criteria of assessment according to which young people are evaluated. In problematic situations, this asymmetry of power becomes particularly evident: as in the case of one vocational teacher who threatens to fail the majority of the class and no one takes action to solve the situation in favour of the students.

11.2.6.7 Voice in Education System

Students and their parents have been assigned a passive role also in the education system. They are atomised, and their voice is reduced to taking educational decisions by choosing one among many educational facilities. Any other kind of voice might be gained only by protest. The typical example of a local protest is when parents, and in many cases also students and teachers, unite against closing down of a school in their town: they occupy the building and enter into negotiations with the local authorities. Large-scale actions remain rare. A recent example of such action is the boycott of the ministerial reform that aimed at lowering the age of obligatory schooling from the age of 7 to 6. Many parents were deeply convinced that schools were not adjusted to meet the needs of the 6-year-olds. With the support of the educational associations – and thanks to the ability to self-organise – they succeeded to postpone the plan for a couple of years.

However, as far as the content of curricula, the scope of external exams and criteria of assessment are concerned, neither students nor their parents have any power. This is connected to the fact that actors external to the system of education are not given any place of influence unless they win it by themselves. A good example of such a situation is ENERGET's pursue for reintroducing the specialisation of power engineering technician to the list of taught vocations, which is centrally defined. The company is a powerful actor and was able to mobilise different circles (employers' organisations, academics, local authorities) to exert the pressure. They succeeded, but it took a long time and required a lot effort and resources (they had to prepare curriculum by themselves).

This kind of public action is much more difficult for parents (not to mention students), because they lack collective representation: they are rarely associated and do not have many forums where they can express their concerns. As long as there is no regular representation of students, parents and employers in the structure of the education system, real impact will be incidental and highly dependent on resources that people and groups are able to mobilise.

Conclusions

The educational initiative presented in this chapter was carried out to answer the problems of vocational education which put both ENERGET and the vocational school in a difficult position. Although the cooperation with one big employer posed a threat that it would focus primarily on preparing the students to be desirable employees for the company, it contributed to the development of capabilities for both education and work of those young people. This was not only due to good quality commodities offered by 'Empowering students to learn' and its complementary role to the obligatory classes but also thanks to introducing students to the world

(continued)

of values and attitudes different from what they encountered at school. Different attitudes and traits of character were valued by school and by ENERGET employees, which should be considered a strength of this public–private cooperation. In result, some of the students, who were not rewarded according to school criteria of assessment (as not particularly good performers), were praised by ENERGET employees for their hard work and reliability, which worked in favour of their self-confidence.

In addition, the programme gave students the opportunity to experience themselves in new situations. The apprenticeships were designed to give students the sense of how work looks like and how it is to be an employee, which was a completely new realm for many of them.

However, the programme had also some failures from the perspective of capability approach. First of all, it did not contribute to levelling up students' abilities to use commodities – the initial division into 'elite' and 'the rest' was reproduced in its course. What is more, in some cases, it even enhanced the adaptation of preferences – as in the case of female students: on the one hand, neither of them was a good performer, and they automatically limited their educational as well as vocational aspirations; on the other hand, they had no motivation at all to use the opportunities to change them in the programme, since a power engineer was considered a 'male job'.

Second of all, voice was not all addressed in the programme. Both teachers and ENERGET employees considered the fact that students could ask questions and propose subjects for discussion a sufficient level of their participation. There was no place for negotiating criteria of assessment (or in other words 'informational bases of judgement') or influencing the programme foundations and goals. Also, parents were not considered competent enough to be included in such a discussion. Thus, general rules governing the system of education were reproduced, with its fixed and hierarchically planned criteria of assessment.

11.2.7 Contributing Within the Social Division of Labour: Young People's Social and Labour Market Integration Through Supra-company Apprenticeship Training in Austria

Bettina Haidinger (✉) • Ruth Kasper
FORBA (Working Life Research Centre), Vienna, Austria
e-mail: haidinger@forba.at; kasper@forba.at

11.2.7.1 Introduction

This chapter will take a closer look at young people's social integration into the world of work via the scheme of supra-company apprenticeship training (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung; SCAT*) in Austria and here within the possibilities to 'actualise their potential' (Murphy 1993, 225). The capability approach on the one hand and the contributive justice approach on the other hand will serve as a framework to go beyond both a mere labour market integration and equal opportunity perspective: focusing on the capabilities for education, for work and for voice, we will scrutinise what conversion factors help (or hinder) youngsters to mobilise the resources at their disposal, to develop these capabilities and to choose and pursue an educational pathway or kind of work they have reason to value.

Before delving into the rich findings of the case study, we will first give a short overview of the case study's institutional embeddedness and a brief description of the measure. In the main part of the chapter, we will trace the following questions:

- What notions of the capabilities for education, for work and for voice emerged in the context of our case study?
- How are the capabilities (for education, work and voice) enhanced? What resources are available and convertible for developing these capabilities and actualizing youngsters' potential?
- What opportunities for capability formation and for being able and 'free' to choose, aspire and realise the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to value do youngsters encounter before and while participating in a *SCAT*? What is the role of contributive justice (Gomberg 2007) for developing these specific capabilities?

11.2.7.2 SCAT: What For?

Austria's educational regime has traditionally been oriented towards the dual system, which puts special emphasis on young people's vocational education and on-the-job training. Of all Austrian teenagers born in 1993, about 42.5 % entered apprenticeship training upon completion of compulsory education (Schneeberger and Nowak 2009, 1). However, uneven business cycles, economic restructuring processes towards a

service economy (in particular in cities such as Vienna), the concentration of apprentices in a small number of occupations and the decreasing willingness of Austrian enterprises to provide training facilities have led to a decrease in available company-based apprenticeships (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011, 18–19).

One of the reform measures aimed at tackling these structural problems was the introduction of the *vocational placement guarantee* (*Ausbildungsgarantie*) in 2009, which included the incorporation of *supra-company apprenticeship training* (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung; SCAT*) into the Vocational Education and Training Act (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2011; Bergmann et al. 2011). The institutionalisation of *SCAT* was a political signal to acknowledge a kind of third pillar next to school-based education and company-based apprenticeship training after compulsory schooling within the Austrian educational system. However, due to the deep-rooted persistence of the dual system, it is still regarded as a ‘buffer’ when the former fails to provide sufficient placements.

SCAT is provided and financed by public employment service (PES) funds, and potential participants need to be registered as unemployed or jobseeking. As participants’ wages (*Ausbildungs-/Lehrlingsentschädigung*) are paid for by the PES, the measure is part of labour market policy targeted at young people. Therefore, those who are guaranteed a vocational placement in *SCAT* are still PES clients and regarded as unemployed, i.e. disintegrated into the labour market. They are not (just) young people to be trained or educated. At the same time, *SCAT* is a form of *vocational training* preparing participants for graduation in the end. It provides high-quality vocational training and education for young people who could not find a company-based apprenticeship. For some professions, it even offers broader training in a wider range of skills than most companies can provide. The programme also includes tutoring and socio-pedagogical support for apprentices with learning difficulties or deficits in the vocational school accompanying apprenticeship training. The innovative aspect of this training is its supportive and workshop-like character which gives the young people more time and space to develop their (occupational) potentials than company-based apprenticeship settings.

Still, the main target of the *SCAT* scheme remains preparing the apprentices for a company-based apprenticeship: at least from the point of view of the PES, the *SCAT* is not to become an alternative to traditional company-based apprenticeships. Much rather, it is a ‘safety net’, and the majority of enroled youngsters should ultimately complete their apprenticeship outside the institution.

11.2.7.3 Youth at Work: The Case Study

Our *SCAT* case study was conducted at *Jugend am Werk* (*JaW; Youth at Work*) between April and December 2011. *JaW* is a rather large provider of a range of labour market and vocational education and training programmes for young people as well as persons with special needs. *JaW* provides places for more than 1,500 people of different target groups including some 250 *SCAT* places in a range of craft, industry and service-sector professions.

For our case study, in the beginning, four trainers, three social pedagogues as well as senior staff of the training provider were interviewed covering two clusters of professions (catering and cooking as well as the metalworking sector). Next, two group discussions designed interactively with role play elements, brainstorming rounds and associative methods with apprentices were conducted (Bohnsack et al. 2010). On the basis of the group discussions' results, a combination of biographical-narrative and problem-centred individual interviews with 18 apprentices was deployed (referred to as JaW_Y1 to JaW_Y18 throughout the text; Rosenthal et al. 2006).

The empirical findings will be analysed by looking at three dimensions of capability formation: the role of education as a capability to be achieved and as a conversion factor, the capability for work and the opportunity to self-realisation at work and the process freedom and opportunity freedom to voice.

11.2.7.4 Education as a Conversion Factor

Following Walker (2005), education is a basic capability that itself affects the development and expansion of other capabilities (what someone is able to do, to be and to imagine) and therefore the opening up of more opportunities for choice. Promoting functionings in childhood or youth ('enhancing education') means to develop the 'relevant mature capability' and to expand the freedom youngsters will have in the future (Walker 2005, 107).

This means that education *first* is a capability to be desired and achieved itself; following Bonvin (2012), the capability for education is the real freedom to choose the education or educational pathway one has reason to value. The capability for education must imply the capability not to be educated (in a specific institution) if one chooses to via a valuable exit option. It must also involve the capability to participate actively in the definition of the educational content, organisation, conditions and modes of remuneration. We will come back to this notion of education as a capability later on and entangle it analytically with the capability for voice.

The *second* notion of education from a capability approach perspective is its significance as a conversion factor for choosing a (life) trajectory one has reason to value. As a conversion factor – how empowering is the SCAT training for the youngsters involved? What individual abilities to improve the youngsters' capacity to act are enhanced?

We identified three main features of education as a means to adopt on the one hand those capabilities the youngsters have reason to value as such and on the other hand those particularly crucial for a trouble-free integration into the world of work: the provision of an appropriate institutional support in social matters and for learning to learn and to labour as well as the enhancement of constructive learning.

11.2.7.5 Learning to Learn and Learning to Labour

Paul Willis (2013 [1977], 110) described the basic paradigm of education in school as a relation of exchange between (teachers') knowledge against (pupils') respect and instruction against direction. This principle legitimates instructors to exert control over those to be educated. It is a first link in a chain of further

exchange deals such as knowledge against qualification, skills against good wages and wages against goods and services. The youngsters in *SCAT* become aware that when going through such a measure you receive – when accepting this deal – something very much valued by society: an exam which recognises you as a professional. The reproduction of this paradigm needs an institutional and adapted setting to unfold:

SCAT is performed in a workshop setting with school-like organisation but practical contents. The young people appreciate the additional study support and especially the good preparation for the final apprenticeship exam as well as the socio-pedagogical support provided. Learning-friendly instruction conditions imply a respectful, mutually benevolent and friendly relationship between trainers and apprentices where the young people feel free to make mistakes and ask questions. A good learning and working atmosphere, finding friends among the apprentices and the feeling of being supported (by trainers/co-apprentices) if necessary are crucial factors for being able to unfold resources. One interviewee even talked about the apprenticeship ‘peer group’ (including the trainers) as her ‘second family’ (JaW_Y1).

To maintain the exchange relation, the transfer of knowledge and respect must to certain extent also function into the opposite direction: apprentices appreciate trainers respecting them as *capable persons* (*not* in terms of their learning progress); conversely disrespectful treatment does not enhance learning processes. For instance, to accept the usage of the apprentices’ language of daily usage (which often is not German) in conversation among them and with trainers is perceived as very positive. It is a gesture of personal interest, of friendliness, of respect and ultimately of trust. Conversely, to be constrained to speak German is a form of non-usage of available resources. This prohibition impedes the positive perception and acknowledgement of the institution as a conversion factor of apprentices’ resources and consequently the willingness to learn in such a surrounding.

Shaping the youngsters’ personalities and behaviour is not only accomplished by providing a supportive learning atmosphere. In the course of training, youngsters succeed to a greater or lesser extent or fail to adapt to the requirements the world of work outside a protective framework expects. What they shall adopt is ‘the right attitude’ to learn, to work and to conduct their lives. Then, according to Willis (2013 [1977], 117–125), material exchange relations between instructors and apprentices are becoming transformed into ideational and imagined ones. The ‘right attitude’ – and not contentual achievement – is said to be the basis for successful integration into the world of work. Consequently, learning to labour shall become more and more integrated into the youngsters’ habits, routines and fantasies. Their daily routines – and dreams – are to be structured newly and ‘realistically’ around working time and working issues (Plomb 2001, 62). Becoming ‘normal’ and adhering to norms required in working life necessitates the internalisation and the non-questioning of being disciplined – in terms of ‘behaving properly’, executing what is expected – and of being punctual. Punctuality is a key welcome behaviour as was expressed by institutional stakeholders on all levels of *SCAT*. This process of becoming used to being on time and the reflection of its importance is perfectly voiced in the following statement: ‘Punctuality is really important. Myself, I am not punctual’ (JaW_Y17).

11.2.7.6 Constructive Learning

The motivation for contentual learning and working was positively influenced by youngsters' chance of doing something productive, useful and tangible. Here, not only the opportunity to learn and the future opportunity to enter after a successful adoption of skills into a competitive labour market are central aspects of a fruitful learning process. Even more important is being allowed, expected and encouraged to contribute with one's skills and creativity to society in detail (the *SCAT* setting) and as a whole (Sayer 2011, 9). This is what Paul Gomberg (2007) calls the equal opportunity to contribute. This concept stands in stark contrast to an understanding of equal opportunity as equality of competitive opportunity (Gomberg 2007, 1). The latter refers to the right for getting the opportunity to attain limited positions of advantage: no one should have unfair advantages in competing for scarce resources or merits such as jobs (or apprenticeship places). However, as Andrew Sayer notes (2011, 14), 'increasing access to education [i.e. levelling the playing field for job competition] without increasing the number of opportunities (quality jobs) does not increase access to opportunity – it just intensifies competition, reduces the scarcity and hence the exchange-value of qualifications and leads to demands for still higher qualifications'. The structure which creates this competition is not challenged. And this structure – following Gomberg (2007, 17) – is heavily shaped by an unequal social division of labour.

Referring to an Aristotelian idea of human flourishing, Murphy (1993, 5) resumes that it is closely connected to justice in production processes and to the opportunity 'to realise fully our capacities in complex activities'. Consequently, meaningful work, i.e. work promoting self-realisation, involves 'enough complexity to be a challenge', is 'discretion about how to perform the work', 'depends upon a dialogue between conception and execution' and 'is directed to an external goal' (Murphy 1993, 226). Our research showed that for the young apprentices the opportunity to do something productive, useful and tangible is a crucial element of a successful learning process within the *SCAT*. It involves several features:

Learning processes in apprenticeship training must imply the production of something visible and a useful outcome (1). The production process itself is not only physically or psychically tiring but also makes youngsters aware of their capacity to form and shape raw material into something of completely different appearance (2). The production of things for daily usage opens up immediate alternatives of agency and 'empowers' them in daily life – as professionals and as social agents. Youngsters not only learn for an abstract exam or for the commodification of their labour but for the application of their skills in daily life (3). Finally, taking on responsibility for entire production processes – their supervision and self-determined organisation – strengthens the motivation to learn and consequently enhances the development of capabilities (4). These four features of constructive learning and of meaningful work actualizing youngsters' potentials (Murphy 1993, 225) shall be described in more detail:

First, this form of learning is defined as *being productive* in terms of its *use*: to produce something of value (for others) and for practical application because ‘the abilities of an individual must first be developed and then be deployed’ (Murphy 1993, 225). To accompany an entire production process and to have a final and useful output is seen as a very positive way of adopting a capability to – for instance – construct something. Conversely, the destruction of what has been constructed or repaired by the apprentices fosters quite sad images of their work products: ‘We “repair” cars provided by MA48 [municipal waste management]. They are, so to say, taken from the scrapyard. After we’ve “had” them, MA48 picks them up with a claw, dumps them into a container and makes small tin cubes out of them’ (JaW_Y1). ‘Meaningless doing’ in terms of doing without a direction to an external goal demotivates the youngsters to work ‘because whatever I construct is taken apart again. It’s useless what I am doing. I don’t produce anything. It’s just practice I learn from. But it’s useless, you cannot call that doing “work”, you can just call it “learning”. What I make I dismantle again. It’s “production-free”, that’s simply demotivating, the whole motivation is gone’ (JaW_Y2).

Second, it implies the deployment of your *senses*: the product, in the end, must not only be ‘of use’, but it also must be tangible. The motivation to learn, do and work stems from the fabrication of a formable product which changes its features, taste, smell and shape during the process of production. Many of the future cooks described production processes in fond detail and were impressed and proud of the transformation process they initiated and accompanied and of the creatively arranged products of their doing they could present. Hence, meaningful work depends upon a dialogue between conception, i.e. the idea about a product, and its fabrication, i.e. the concrete execution.

Third, learning how to produce things of *daily usage* is a real – almost pure – capability. It opens up alternatives of agency in daily and working life: ‘We bake our own bread and we produce almost everything ourselves. We even make the pasta ourselves. We don’t just open bags and empty them into the pot. (...) And imagine a restaurant runs out of pasta. There’s no pasta and you can’t buy it just like that. Then I have the chance to make it myself’ (JaW_Y12). To be interested in forming this capability for work is closely connected to the conception of ‘apprenticing a trade’ and of learning a handicraft: ‘It’s good to see that I can do something for people. Life without a plumber is impossible. Can you live without heating, without warm water, without a stove? No!’ (JaW_Y7). Apprentices can thus show that they can contribute to society something that has value for themselves and for others. Providing others with know-how and suitable advice empowers the young person and can have a positive effect on his/her self-esteem. As the young people realise, they can bring their own capacities into their future profession – such as their creativity or strength – their interest in distinct activities of the apprenticeship profession rises; many apprentices begin to appreciate the profession and develop a kind of passion for it.

Fourth, and as a consequence of the above-mentioned points, doing something that makes sense with all your senses means that you are highly motivated not only

to learn ('automatically') but also to take on responsibility for the production process. Becoming responsible for taking decisions throughout the production process and for its supervision implies – as an apprentice – becoming more autonomous from the trainer. Walker stresses that 'the education that best articulates Sen's capability approach is one that develops autonomy and judgement about how to exercise autonomy and that develops the capacity to make informed and reflexive decisions' (Walker 2005, 108). Through the dialectic of conception and execution, through applying general principles on the one hand and learning autonomously and process oriented by solving problems that arise during the production process on the other hand apprentices become 'autonomous subjects, rather than mere instruments of labour' (Murphy 1993, 8). *JaW*'s apprentices frequently work on their own or in groups without constant and direct supervision. The fact that the trainers appreciate and trust their abilities raises their self-esteem and their motivation to learn: 'I love it when we are two or three persons in the kitchen – without the boss [trainer] (...) we do our own thing ... It's stressful between eleven and half past eleven [before lunchtime], but that's the wicked thing about it!' (*JaW_Y15*). They realise that they posses 'discretion about how to perform the work' (Murphy 1993, 226).

The empowerment dimension of *JaW*'s pedagogical approach to enhance the youngsters' capacity to act as self-confident but also as 'adjusted' workers can be summarised as follows: First, the provision of institutional support for learning and in social matters including a respectful and non-discriminatory treatment and cooperation is an incisive factor for the youngsters' social integration into training. Second, *JaW*'s training prepares the youngsters for their labour market integration – this is an empowering and constraining exercise at the same time. Empowering – it is because youngsters are becoming prepared for an 'autonomous' living in terms of being self-supporting. Constraining – it is because youngsters' habits and routines are newly transformed and structured around working issues and work ethics towards 'the right attitude' (Willis 2013 [1977]). Third, from our point of view, important empowerment dimension stems from the kind of vocational and practical education the youngsters are going through: the encouragement for participating in constructive learning in terms of productive, useful and tangible learning processes and for realising 'meaningful work' (Gomberg 2007; Sayer 2009).

11.2.7.7 The Capability for Work: Options for Choosing the Work, Doing and Labour Processes One Has Reason to Value

This brings us to the second capability to be examined. The capability for work is of particular interest in an educational setting, such as the *SCAT* scheme, preparing explicitly for the world of work. First, some principal thoughts about the capability for work shall be formulated. Furthermore, we will elaborate on the social function of the capability for work taking into account what 'work' signifies for youngsters.

Finally, we will outline how the voice character of work – how work ideally shall be organised – is imagined by the young people interviewed. An understanding of justice as contributive justice becomes more than evident.

11.2.7.8 Work and Contributive Justice

Following Bonvin (2012), the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activity one has reason to value. He refers to work as labour, as paid work, and asks what is perceived as a valuable activity or job. This notion of capability for work has to be related to the embeddedness of work in a society traversed by the accumulation of capital and competition. First, antagonist forces between labour and capital as well as power asymmetries feeding this antagonism may be an issue to be addressed or even challenged when promoting a ‘job one has reason to value’ but never to be removed. Secondly, because there are simply not enough jobs meeting the requirement of ‘reason to value’, because workers compete for meaningful work in capitalist societies, contributive *injustice* arises. It limits what some people can do, what they can contribute to society and ‘hence the extent to which they can develop their own abilities and find fulfilment, respect and self-esteem’ (Sayer 2011, 17). And even more as contributive injustice ‘shapes the contexts in which the next generation is brought up, it also tends to produce inequalities in abilities and aspirations which appear to legitimise the very same unequal social division of labour that gives rise to contributive injustice’ (Sayer 2011, 17). What matters for justice from this point of view is not only the unequal distribution of income and opportunities but inequalities in the availability of meaningful work. Gomberg (2007, 17) therefore argues that equal opportunity requires that the most important social goods – the opportunities to contribute and to earn esteem – shall be of unlimited supply.

11.2.7.9 The Significance of (Meaningful) Work

When youngsters think about work and a future job, two observations stand out. First, the interviews show that working itself is an important ‘value’ for the young people: from their point of view, it is (almost) always better to work than to be unemployed – even if the financial outcome is (almost) the same. Therefore, work has a very basic function in terms of personal well-being and is perceived as the main safeguarding factor against social exclusion. Additionally, the social function of work has to be considered: personal work experience is an important topic among friends: ‘You feel silly if you are unemployed because everybody talks about work. [If you are unemployed] you don’t have a say’ (JaW_Y2). Second, the simple repetition and – in an advanced stadium – internalisation of capitalist work ethics also plays a role and is expressed directly, for example: ‘Everybody who can work should work’ (JaW_Y6). These ethics also imply that hard work pays off in financial terms or – the other way round – that you only earn good money if you are willing to work ‘more’ (than the average working time). You merit what you contribute?

Secondly, when youngsters speak about their concrete doings, about their immediate work at *JaW*, the appreciation of sensuous and sensible doing and the wish for a ‘just division of labour’ become apparent. This is exactly what Murphy (1993), Gomberg (2007) and Sayer (2009, 2011) refer to as the critique of the unequal social division of labour. The division between complex and routine labour as well as the division between conceptualising and executing tasks (Sayer 2009, 8) are the basis of contributive injustice. At the same time, the unequal social division of labour is neither natural nor a simple technical imperative but rather a contingent form of social organisation – one which plays a major role in the reproduction of inequality (Sayer 2009, 15).

Concretely, the youngsters are pooled in working groups, practice co-working and permanently swap roles in the labour process. Labour within the concrete labour process is divided; however, tasks are shifted from day to day from person to person. A just division of labour from the youngsters’ point of view implies that everybody should do everything (including the annoying tasks) and implicitly opposes a functional division of labour within the production process. Rather than the person who is ‘best’ specialising in a particular task, everyone should get the chance to learn everything and everyone should be allotted to unpleasant though necessary tasks.

What is more, the *SCAT* apprentices perceived labour, which does not make immediate sense or proves immediately useful to them, as well as industrialised production, where the production process itself cannot be observed, tracked and controlled, as ‘alienated labour’. Interestingly, sniffing the air of ‘real’ working life during the compulsory internships also foreshadows their possibly monotonous deployment in the working process. One girl remembers her internship and puts it in stark contrast to the learning and working processes experienced at *JaW*: ‘When I did my traineeship in a canteen, they just had tinned food. I didn’t see how to do things. And here we hardly ever take food from a tin’ (*JaW_Y12*).

These findings suggest that youngsters even more explicitly than implicitly aspire to suspend the division of labour between control of labour tasks and their execution and between routine, closely supervised labour and more complex labour (Gomberg, Chapter 7, 75–90) in order to unfold their capacities and to create more opportunity for self-realisation at work. All should have the opportunity to participate in the planning of production and to master complex skills and knowledge. If this is to be pursued, then ‘the corollary of sharing complex, interesting, rewarding tasks is of course that we share routine, tedious and unfulfilling tasks as well’ (Gomberg 2007, 153). This means laying the ground for all to realise their capacities, to actualise their potential and to pursue the kind of work they have reason to value.

11.2.7.10 The Capability for Voice: Opportunity Freedom for Choice and Process Freedom at *JaW*

The capability for voice must be contextualised with the other two capabilities for education and for work building the framework of interpretation for this case study. Following Bonvin (2012, 16), the capability for voice in young people’s lives and

educational trajectories relies on the availability of political resources (ability to constitute a collective body); the availability of cognitive resources (ability to communicate and argue, access to information, representative bodies); and available entitlements, i.e. de-commodification options or a reasonable fall-back position. Are these resources available and viable for the youngsters and what (kind of) process freedom and what (kind of) opportunity freedom do the youngsters encounter in the *JaW* setting?

In this last section before concluding, we want, first, to come back to the principal opportunity freedom youngsters envisage when they stand at a crossroad of several pathways to continue. Next, we will turn to the question what resources and conversion factors the young people encounter or miss for realising the freedom to intervene in the daily schedule and organisation of this educational *and* labour market measure they are going through?

11.2.7.11 Opportunity Freedom

First, the decision-making process itself in the transition process from one (educational) institution to another (educational or labour market) institution or to the labour market itself must be taken into account. How can a youngster judge his/her 'real' opportunities? How can he/she gather all information necessary to decide on one or the other pathway? How can he/she make the right decision, loaded with the expectations of maturity and responsibility?

Schittenhelm (2010, 95) refers to *collective status passages* between education and employment which young people experience when they have completed school. This phase of transition may be undergone collectively; peer groups do have an incisive influence on decisions about future educational pathways. However, due to the diversity of educational and professional decisions of colleagues/friends, they may suddenly find themselves alone with their future, left over or trapped in a gap between two systems and the big responsibility to choose the right, future-oriented and most prosperous alternative. Having overcome this phase, their desire 'to choose' may be exhausted.

Within a limited timeframe the public employment service (PES), parents and peers expect young people in search of a career or educational path to take a decision and to start pursuing socially valued activities such as working, going to school or attending a training. What youngsters rather needed, though, would be additional support to help them stay in school or a 'break', a phase of reorientation, to reflect about themselves, their abilities and their potentials and maybe to reformulate their wishes in order to allow them to choose an educational pathway they really have reason to value. However, such a time-out is hard to justify against the social and institutional surrounding. In contrast, 'the lack of a comprehensible, visible and generally acknowledged activity [becomes] a heavy burden' for the searching youngsters (Plomb 2001, 61).

Second, all youngsters should be adequately equipped to escape from the constraints of valueless training either through the real possibility, i.e. entitlement, to

refuse the training or through the possibility to transform it into something they have reason to value. However, the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of ‘getting lost on the street’, becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living. As one interviewee puts it, ‘Most of those who are on the street have lost in their life. If I have such friends and join them outside at this time of the day and simply don’t do anything but just botch things up then at some point I don’t have any future anymore. (...) Some of those going through this measure have already been in jail. And this I don’t want. You have this on your criminal record. And what can you do then? You can’t do anything. You can go and clean toilets – that’s all what is left for you to do’ (JaW_Y2).

To sum up, opportunity freedom is limited by the fact that youngsters face major difficulties in judging their ‘real opportunities’ when being expected and actually socially coerced to choose deliberately and autonomously the most reasonable option for their professional future. ‘Autonomy’ is here to be interpreted as a feature rather constraining than opening up a freedom to choose. What is more, the non-availability of entitlements in case of ‘rather preferring not to’ (Melville 2002 [1856]) and the lack of a reasonable and equivalent fall-back position are also factors hampering a real choice of what the youngsters have reason to value.

11.2.7.12 Process Freedom: Intervening in Daily Schedules

The concept of capability for voice also addresses the issue of process freedom: to which extent are (young) people allowed to express their wishes, expectations and concerns in collective decision-making processes and how can they make them count? (Bonvin 2012, 15).

The daily routine within supra-company apprenticeship training is determined by a fixed schedule consisting of theoretical and practical modules. This structure cannot be modified by the apprentices. It is not foreseen that youngsters going through this measure participate in its design. In addition, time management is very strict – in order to inure the youngsters to the required punctuality and discipline in the ‘real’ working world – encompassing a very early start at 7.15 a.m. and rather short lunch breaks. What the apprentices can sometimes influence are their concrete activities: they can suggest doing practical work instead of studying theoretical modules or vice versa. Although several apprentices criticise these strict time requirements, they see little or no need for a change in terms of a more ‘democratic’ way of determining their daily time structure. Two reasons for this are particularly interesting: First, several apprentices feel that their trainers do try to consider their wishes if possible. The trainers know what is ‘best’ for their pupils. Following Ley and Düker (2012), this attitude can be interpreted in the following way: ‘[the youngsters] comply with the decisions and actions of these authority figures and do not expect that their needs and

requirements are a legitimate basis for social work interventions'. Second, many youngsters are simply not interested in intervening: this attitude might have to do with their perception of SCAT as a temporary solution on their way into a company-based apprenticeship. Another aspect is that many apprentices generally sense and experience having few choices. This may be explained by the fact that they are (continuously) told – by their parents, the media, PES counsellors, etc. – that they have to adapt their dreams to 'what is possible', which leaves few ways open on how to imagine and organise life, especially when it comes to learning and their (future) professional life in a competitive society.

Nevertheless, as we laid down in the previous two sections on the capabilities to learn and to work youngsters do have an idea of how process freedom within work processes could look like. Meaningful work is work promoting self-realisation, i.e. including concept and execution as well as routine and complex tasks. Labour processes that are shared equally imply a democratic organisation of work and foster opportunity freedom for choice and process freedom.

Conclusions

JaW is a measure standing at the crossroads of labour market and educational policy (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011). Therefore, one main challenge of providers of SCAT have to cope with is to prepare students on the one hand for their placement within the regular apprenticeship system and on the other hand to provide high-quality vocational training as a valuable offer. This Janus-faced pedagogical treatment of students has a major impact on the students' development of capabilities for education, for work and for voice in a system with notably transitory character. The article aimed at identifying the main aspects of how youngsters want to contribute to capability formation and of what resources and conversion factors support or impede the development of these three capabilities in a SCAT scheme.

In terms of the *capability for education and learning*, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. The experience of working with and shaping material (of high quality) for a visible and meaningful purpose is an important and motivating aspect of the entire learning process for the youngsters. It is the starting point for learning 'meaningful work'. Second, trainers, both as teachers and as persons appreciating or depreciating youngsters' abilities and resources are crucial factors for enhancing or impeding youngsters' capabilities. They are seen as positive role models, as professional craftspersons, as those with whom youngsters have to struggle and to argue about their own learning process (and skills) and their acknowledgement. Conversely, they can also be perceived as negative social figures reinforcing the distance between the established institution and the aspiring

(continued)

youngster. In the positive interpretation, (teachers') contentual knowledge is exchanged against (pupils') respect and curiosity; in the negative interpretation, teachers just offer 'ideational' achievement: the instruction of the 'right' attitude to learn – and to work (Willis 2013[1977]).

As a third aspect, the strict daily structure has an impact on the learning processes at the training centres. These structural constraints of the *SCAT* turn out to be ambivalent for the development of the capability for 'self-organisation', 'agency and autonomy' (Walker 2005, 108), which serves as a prerequisite of the capabilities for learning and work. On the one hand, from the very beginning of the training, the youngsters are trusted with creative and responsible tasks. On the other hand, due to the tight institutional and pedagogic scope set by *SCAT*, the individual strengths of the youngsters are only marginally taken up, acknowledged and developed.

Thinking about the *capability for work* needs a critical reflection of what work actually signifies. Possible answers are diametrically opposed: Does 'being capable for working' mainly mean preparing a young person for the labour market or does it imply teaching her/him to be proud of what he/she is *doing* – of what the person is able to create? In the first case, the focus of the training will be on how discipline (and self-discipline) can be encouraged among the youngsters in terms of secondary virtues and principal 'work ethics', but also by providing psychosocial and learning support to sustain a searching young person's process of maturation into a valuable worker in a company. At the same time, *SCAT* is a space for 'practical capability formation', and the training very much endorses the quality of work, understanding production processes and sharing tasks within it. However, leaving the protected *SCAT* setting may jeopardise this notion of contributive justice since 'the unequal social division of labour of the kind that has developed in modern societies makes the contributive principle of each according to their ability impossible to achieve, and tends to produce an adjustment of abilities to that division' (Sayer 2009, 13).

'Capability for voice' encompasses opportunity freedom and process freedom. In general, the youngsters feel that they have little opportunity freedom in their lives – in terms of raising their voice as citizens but as well concerning more concrete issues, such as freely choosing a particular educational pathway. In the so-called transition phase, opportunity freedom is heavily restricted, and there is hardly any chance in choosing an educational pathway and life trajectory one has reason to value. Admittedly, finding the appropriate pathway is hard to achieve in view of the external pressure from society, labour market institutions, peer group and family. At the same time, we tried to outline that youngsters in this particular educational setting have the capacity and do develop a sense for judging what activities are and what pathway is worthwhile for their professional future. According to the motto 'we become what we do' (Murphy 1993, 1) ideas about meaningful work, work one has reason to value, may spread.

11.2.8 Establishing Caseness and Working on ‘Realistic Perspectives’: A German Case Study on the Transition from School to Work

Jan Düker (✉) • Thomas Ley

Center of Social Service Studies, Faculty for Educational Science,

Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany

e-mail: jan.dueker@uni-bielefeld.de; thomas.ley@uni-bielefeld.de

11.2.8.1 Setting the Scene

The current situation in the vocational training sector and the educational system in Germany are the main contexts determining the position of and conditions for vulnerable youth in the transition from school to work.¹⁸ We contend that this situation is characterised by three main problems:

- The general education system as the basis of the German transition sector has been repeatedly criticised for the early selection for secondary schools and the resulting lack of equal opportunities. The school system is usually differentiated into Hauptschule (lower secondary school), Realschule (secondary school) and Gymnasium (grammar school). In addition, about 5.9 % of young people do not manage to get any lower secondary school certificate ('early school leavers'), and more than half of those come from schools for special needs (Förderschule, not exceeding lower secondary school; Klemm 2013). This is also one of the reasons why Gomolla and Radtke talk about a four-tier system and highlight the 'institutional discrimination' of this type of school (2007). As a consequence, social inequalities are not compensated but reinforced in educational and vocational settings (cf., e.g. Solga and Rosine 2009).
- In the annual national reports, an 'extended' definition of supply and demand on the vocational training market is advocated, which includes not only unplaced applicants but also young people who have started an alternative to an apprenticeship (e.g. vocational preparation measures, work experience, etc.) but are still looking for placement in vocational training. In 2012, the ratio has been 93.2 apprenticeship training positions for 100 applicants (cf. BMBF 2013). Thus, there is a lack of 200,000 training positions in Germany (Solga 2011a). Furthermore, according to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court from 1980, the constitutional right to free choice of employment is only guaranteed as of a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants (cf. BVerfGE 55, 274). Although there is no scientific proof of this ratio (i.e. derived from games theory, decision theory, social demand approach, etc.) and it did in fact emerge from a political bargaining process, the myth of total supply in an employment-centred transition regime produced several institutional antagonisms (see Granato and Ulrich 2013

¹⁸This is a revised version of Düker and Ley (2012a, b).

for a deeper analysis of different actors). We argue that this constitutes a systematic injustice, and the causes of which are to be found in the structure of the transition sector. This injustice severely limits the possible effects of institutional and pedagogical efforts.

- Furthermore, disadvantaged youths in particular are facing an increased risk of unemployment and poverty in later life (Solga 2011b). This is why Heike Solga coins the term of ‘certificate poverty’, where young people not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education are in a vulnerable position as well as those 15 % of young adults who cannot obtain a training position in the course of their transition process (cf. Solga 2011b: 415). Since the 1980s, formal educational standards have continuously increased while within the same time frame poverty risks and income inequality massively accumulated as well – to a considerably larger extent than the average of all OECD states (vgl. OECD 2008; ILO 2008). Nevertheless, in public discourse, material inequality has been regarded as a natural consequence of educational inequality. Against this background, people affected by poverty – and especially parents of poor children – are ascribed the responsibility for their situation, while socioeconomic and political constraints of opportunities did not feature prominently as causes of unequal social and class positions, despite empirical evidence to the contrary.

These three aspects – inequality in the school system, insufficient training positions on the apprenticeship market and the aspect of ‘certificate poverty’ – are not only characteristic for the situation (and the expansion) of the transition sector but are relevant to all efforts within this context. Again, the question arises if the established institutions and organisations reproduce inequalities rather than reducing them.

From the perspective of the capability approach, these structural contexts are most important in terms of the real opportunities they provide or withhold. In the following, we want to advocate an understanding of inequalities that does not only focus on the allocation of material goods and the classification of status hierarchies. Inequalities are not only relevant in respect to unequal resources and commodities but are to be understood as constraints and enablements of the life young people want to realise and of having access to objects, relationships and practices they appreciate and have reason to value. Insofar, poverty is not merely understood as material poverty, but as the absence of capabilities (cf. Otto et al. 2010: 150). In this perspective, educational interventions into the life conduct of individuals are relevant to questions of inequality and vulnerability and thus to social justice.

Capabilities – in this case study – are regarded as a relational concept, that is, a concept that has to be explored ‘between structure and agency’, as real opportunities and the dispositions to make use of them to be able to realise one’s concerns are both preconditions for capabilities. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in. However, before the process of realising valued beings and doings, aspirations are formed, and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where such realisation might occur. Hence, we scrutinised the context in which capabilities might be

realised, based on the assumption that institutions in the transition from school to work should act as enabling structures. This also means that capabilities ‘themselves’ were not identified in the course of the research. Our perspective is on ‘talk’, not on ‘action’, and we took a retrospective (ex post) perspective so that decisions in action could not be grasped.

Furthermore, it turned out that sometimes it is hard for young adults to reflect on what they value, on their social positioning as the major predictor of life chances and especially on the desirability of different options which are all essential preconditions for moving beyond functionings, that is, valuable beings and doings that are already realised, and towards capabilities, that is, the enhancement of options for a flourishing life that might be chosen by the individual. Major reasons for this barrier to the enhancement of capabilities could be found in the almost exclusive focus of the institution – contrary to its conceptual underpinning – on the functioning for work (in terms of the labour market). On the other hand, this hints at the basic question of agency in the capability approach, which is still in need of more clarification. In this respect, we want to emphasise the concept of institutional selves, which could be a contribution to embedding the concepts of agency into the capability approach. Agency should not just be regarded as a ‘rational choice’ to be taken by individuals who are on a level playing field. Rather, the different individual preconditions for being able to reasonably choose and the provided ‘pedagogical space’ need to be taken into account, that is, a space in which aspirations and desires are reflected upon and formed.

After illustrating some empirical findings from the case study, we tackle the question of how capabilities for work, education and voice can be formulated as an evaluative framework and as goals for interventions in the transition sector.

11.2.8.2 Research Methods and Main Research Questions

The research was designed to answer the question of what kind of (pedagogical) space was provided by the institution and the social work professionals by employing expert interviews.¹⁹ Document analysis was applied in order to provide contextual knowledge and embed the programme into social policy agendas. Secondly, it aimed at capturing a subjective account on the formation of aspirations (interviews with young people). In this paper, we want to especially focus on the expert interviews, which see the interviewees as representing a specific field of knowledge. Thus, the professionals are the ‘hinge’ connecting policy and practice as they have to ‘translate’ objectives of social policy to the lives of individuals and interpret what they could mean with regard to specific cases.

In our broader case study (for details, see Düker and Ley 2012a, b), we focused on a ‘local transition management institution’ (LTMI) in a middle-sized Western

¹⁹The interview partners are anonymised, the audio recording of the interviews have been transcribed, line numbered and translated into English by the authors; interviewers’ interjections are shown in brackets.

German town which serves as a single point of contact ('one-stop shop') for young people with 'difficulties' in the transition from school to work. The LTMI's two basic aims are firstly the creation of a coherent local structure of support and secondly the constant and conceptually coherent guidance and individual counselling of young people in their transition process. In the following, we want to focus on one specific programme situated in this LTMI, namely, the 'competence agencies'. We contend that the concept of transition management and this programme represents one main strand of policy answers to youth unemployment and is characteristic for newer ways of dealing with this social problem in the German transition regime in that it is committed to 'steering from a distance', both with respect to the local transition sector (similar to the idea of 'care management' in health services) and with respect to the individual case, implying an emphasis on personal responsibility and a 'pedagogisation' of social services.

Focusing on this programme, several (basic) research questions can be specified:

- (a) How is the current policy context translated into institutional settings? What kind of social policy space is created for and through these institutions?
- (b) Which pedagogical space is constituted in these programmes? How is 'closeness' established, maintained and transformed?
- (c) Who is addressed in which manner? What can be said, what is (not) problematised?
- (d) How are counselling settings arranged and intentions, aims and goals (i.e. integration into the labour market) of counselling (institutionally) processed and (interactively) negotiated?

11.2.8.3 No Youth Left Behind?: Embedding Competence Agencies into the Social Policy Agenda

By choosing the competence agency and situating it within a sociopolitical context derived from theoretical analysis, one constructs a case study in a specific way (rather than 'finding' it as a ready-made entity). This process of case construction and modelling the object of research is especially important in our study as it aims to say something about current social policy that influences and is reproduced through pedagogical practices.

Competence agencies target young people under the age of 25. Established in 2002 as a pilot project, there are now over 180 of such agencies in Germany. They are financed by the European Social Fund through the Federal Government, but are locally adapted to the situation in every municipality and integrated into the local transition management institution(s). The competence agencies are clearly oriented towards the rationale behind child and youth welfare services incorporating modern social work methods, mainly case management. This rationale includes forming a 'working alliance', which is based on the agreement between social worker and client about goal and counselling tasks of the intervention and explicitly includes the personal bond that develops between them.

Competence agencies are supposed to be a ‘guide’ through the transition sector (with its many commercial, half-commercial and noncommercial actors) for young people.

According to the Federal Ministry, the mission statement of competence agencies is to:

...support particularly disadvantaged young people in finding their way into an occupation and into society. They offer help for those who cannot – or cannot anymore – be reached through the existing system of interventions for the transition from school to work. Contact persons locate young people and jointly agree on an individual support and qualification plan. The social worker then guides the realisation of these plans. They accompany the young people on a long-term basis and involve their families and personal context. (...) The goal is to enable them to lead an independent life. (BMFSFJ 2012, transl.)

Competence agencies combine streetwork and networking processes to gain access to young people with providing long-term support and counselling on their work orientation and transition into work. They act as guides through competence testing, case management and counselling. Many concepts of these agencies point out that this provides an opportunity to tailor interventions towards individuals, instead of trying to fit young people into pre-existing interventions. This is facilitated through contracts that are supposedly voluntary, with the competence agencies ‘offering help’ and young people themselves taking the lead. Furthermore, their ‘families and personal context’ are involved, so it seems not just to be about labour market-related skills, but life conduct in general. Therefore, young people aged 15–25 who are ascribed multiple problems have to align their life plans, aspirations and desires to their transition into the labour market. Competence agencies seek to regulate and support this transition, mainly through case management and counselling.

As a federal guideline puts it, case management should be about ‘individual career and life planning leading to labour market integration through comprehensible steps’. This also implies that, although the measures should be tailor-made, the goal is the ‘primary’ labour market. Further on, the concept points out:

Competence Agencies target especially disadvantaged young people who ‘got lost’ after school on the way to their vocation and who can hardly be reached by the different social support systems, viz. (vocational) school education, active labour market programmes and communal youth welfare. (BMFSFJ 2012, transl.)

On this conceptual level, it becomes obvious that a clear notion of a defensive social policy is put forth, addressing the danger of young people getting lost or being unprovided for (‘down, but not out’). This on the one hand reflects the idea of ‘no youth left behind’ (quite similar to the idea of ‘no child left behind’ in North American or ‘every child matters’ in European child welfare; i.e. Garrett 2009). On the other hand, the idea (and sometimes myth) of a pedagogical feasibility to solve these (structural) problems on the individual level is purported. In this context, the issue of ‘certificate poverty’ plays a major role for the competence agencies: They are not meant to be an intervention themselves, but steer cases from a distance and

network existing measures. As a consequence, formal qualifications cannot be obtained, which severely limits their scope of agency in terms of labour market integration – although it is not clear how adequate jobs could suddenly be created and made available to young people even if they had higher qualifications. The lack of formal qualifications and hence concentration on the more pedagogical (people-changing) aspects of interventions is a major feature of most measures in the transition sector.

The risk of young people ‘getting lost’ is one of the dominant problematisations in this context legitimising the intervention on a social policy level. Accordingly, case management in the competence agency is also mandated to monitor the structural demand for transitional measures on a municipal level and establish new interventions if necessary. ‘Getting lost’ can thus be seen as a complex and demanding problematisation social work has to react to.

As also stated in the concept, this programme aims to ‘empower young people for an independent conduct of life’ which does not directly and at any cost lead to a school qualification or vocational training. Here, a clear notion of pedagogical premises and an explicit ‘life-first approach’ – in contrast to a purely labour market-oriented ‘work-first approach’ – are advocated. Nevertheless, in the expert interviews, the (bureaucratic) diagnostical terms of a ‘lack of apprenticeship entry maturity’ or ‘multiple placement handicaps’ are often emphasised and the professionals turn to a clear notion of integration into the labour market (which points to a work-first approach). The ‘lack of apprenticeship entry maturity’ or the ‘multiple placement handicaps’ are based on ascriptions from the perspective of the labour market, leading to a reappraisal of the dynamic correlation of ascription and personal growth. As was also stated in the expert interviews, this programme is not meant to be general life coaching, but remains job-oriented counselling. Insofar, this programme is neither fully driven by a life-first nor a work-first approach. Furthermore, the question has to be raised whether and how the balance between a work-first and life-first approach is held in individual counselling. As in our opinion the conceptual relationship between these two is crucial for the question of how capability enhancement is supported by the institution, we will elaborate on this in more detail in the following chapter.

11.2.8.4 Empirical Findings

The empirical findings are condensed into three aspects: beginning with the questions of which pedagogical space is constituted and how caseness is established, maintained and transformed ([Sect. 11.4.1](#)), the issues of identity work and institutional selves within these programmes are pointed out ([Sect. 11.4.2](#)). Finally, the handling and negotiation of ‘realistic perspectives’ is a crucial point within this work and a link between the institutional and individual levels ([Sect. 11.4.3](#)).

Establishing, Transforming and Maintaining the Case: Which Pedagogical Space Is Constituted in These Programmes?

According to Yeheskel Hasenfeld's organisational theory (1983), three modes of technologies in human service organisations can be distinguished: (a) people-processing, (b) people-sustaining and (c) people-changing technologies. People-processing technologies attempt to confer a social label or public status on clients. The core technology of people-processing organisations 'consists of a set of boundary roles which define the input of clients to the organisation and mediate their placement in various external units' (Hasenfeld 1983: 256). People-sustaining technologies attempt to prevent or retard deterioration in the personal welfare or well-being of clients; an example is the use of income maintenance programmes by municipal social services. Lastly, people-changing technologies aim directly to alter clients' personal attributes to improve their opportunities and well-being. These technologies include, for instance, psychotherapy or pedagogical and social work interventions.

Although these three dimensions cannot be exclusively assigned to specific organisations – rather, they converge in every social institution – the predominant working mode of the competence agency is people processing. In their own conception, they call themselves 'pilots or guides through the widespread transition system'. After the assessment, the process of people changing is transferred to an intervention that is usually at the same time pedagogical and labour market oriented. The further development of the case is then monitored and evaluated by the case manager, who comes in again if modifications or changes in other programmes are needed.

When taking a closer look at people processing in the competence agency, it can be divided into the aspects of establishing, maintaining and transforming the case. 'Establishing caseness' (White 1999) as well as 'maintaining the case' (Böhringer et al. 2012) refer to a concept (mainly derived from conversation analysis) that in social work interactions, available information about the client is matched with the institutional options and in consequence a subject with its own life story and specific problems is transformed into a case, which can then be worked on. Pedagogical aims are embedded into these processes to varying degrees such that Hasenfelds' aforementioned 'technology' of people processing is not merely bureaucratic treatment, but always includes the reference to young adults' aspirations, desires and preferences. Hence, people processing is not a technology in the sense of a predetermined programme, but part of a negotiated order, constituting a 'pedagogical space' in which young people themselves take part in constructing and managing their case.

Each of the social workers has about 100 cases in their databank, of which 40 are active cases and 15–20 cases demand more intensive attention (weekly contact). People processing starts with securing access to hard-to-reach young people based on an initially unspecified 'need for help':

there are enough of those without support still scurrying about in X-town who would never go somewhere of their own accord and say help, I need help. (Marie, 72–74)

After reaching them, they are offered long-term support (up to 3 years or even more) and counselling. A support plan is set up that regulates rights and responsibilities of all parties. This support plan encompasses more than work-oriented goals which is also crucial for the legitimisation of the competence agency as a whole:

just to show everyone that we do good and successful work (hm) which cannot be evaluated simply through successful placement statistics (yes yes), success means something different for us (yes) [laughing]. (Björn, 1356–1368)

Here, a demarcation is jointly drawn by interviewee and interviewer which creates a distance from societal demands and problematisations, namely, the political fixation on placement figures. These are not completely rejected as indicators of successful work, but rather are relegated to the background and are not seen as the primary goal of the competence agency.

Bernd Dollinger offers a theoretical perspective on this common way of constructing cases in social work: ‘Social-pedagogical action entrenches in its clients the idea of a general legitimacy of the social order by pedagogically translating and flexibilising regulations and behavioural imperatives of superordinate institutions’ (Dollinger 2011: 232, transl.). For the social workers, this translation and flexibilisation is a central characteristic of their work:

Interviewer: So, this was also my impression that you are really pedagogically-minded, in a positive sense of course (laughing), so to speak...

Marie: That is indeed the case and the project Competence Agency really works pedagogically in contrast to the other colleagues, because they do a more pure counselling presenting facts. Of course they also look at what fits, but we also do this social-pedagogical work which is also important because if you do not solve the problem of the youngster somehow, you cannot look towards a job, an apprenticeship or whatever, that just doesn’t work, their head is always full of other things. (Marie, 659–670)

In this longer quote, the self-conception of the competence agency is presented in a nutshell: it is about more than placement figures, namely, about pedagogical relationship building in addition to the more prosaic, issue-oriented ‘pure’ vocational counselling. This perspective includes solving young people’s problems in terms of life conduct, but at the same time, wage labour and apprenticeships remain the backdrop to this work on the individuals life conduct. To this end, the ‘social-pedagogical work (...) is also important’.

Taking a closer look at the case work itself, this professional demonstrates (when asked for a typical counselling process) an idea of people processing with its dimensions of establishing and processing caseness.

ok in the first counselling session, at least this is the way I do it, mostly I look at, it’s like somebody is sent because of a recommendation by someone or he already knows us and somebody comes and makes an appointment. Well, and then in principle the first counselling session is a bit about clearly determining what happened up to this point, and what brought this about and what does the adolescent want ehm what are his ideas and then I already end the first meeting. (Peter, 797–803)

First of all, this description begins with the constitution and establishment of the emerging case. The reason for their presence is clarified – mostly, the person is

known and referred by other actors in the wider social support system – first information is gathered and the case trajectory is reconstructed, notably including failures and breakdowns within the transition process. Within the next counselling interviews, a formalised case management logic emerges, characterised by a detailed anamnesis, a self-assessment by the young people complemented by an assessment by others and a process of care planning.

In respect to maintaining the case, ‘stabilisation’ is seen as a central pedagogical aim in the competence agency.

The young adults just had extremely bad school experiences and it is difficult to lead them back and as I said before, stabilisation is the first thing that has to happen. They have to learn to be punctual in the morning, to appear there at eight, half past eight and to sit through a whole day, which they all don’t manage. (Marie 229–232)

The issue of ‘stabilising’ their clients in the long run in terms of minor virtues (such as punctuality, reliability, discipline) points to a general problem that makes the ‘working alliance’ between client and social worker fragile: its primary limit is the motivation of the young people, which is often emphasised as the basic condition of working with them (lack of motivation might also be a legitimisation for cutting social benefits).

then you know it reaches the point where you say, ok, then ehm I unfortunately can’t work with you, because it’s always a mutual thing and I simply want that you come along in the process and at some point in time you have to say, ehm the adolescent does not want to be counselled by me anymore, the case is being closed for now. (Björn, 941–946)

Although support by the competence agency is voluntary, understanding the relevance of the need for help is a necessary condition. ‘Troubled selves’ have to be constructed, processable problems have to be identified and ‘untroubled selves’ have to be opposed as an ideal type (Gubrium and Holstein 2001, see below).

Young people, as has become a very popular reading of modernity (for a scientific account of this argument, see, e.g. Beck 1992), have to shape their own biographies, which means they have to independently develop aspirations and life plans and take responsibility for their realisation. Doing the right thing and being the right person out of one’s own volition is the most important aspect of being an ‘untroubled self’ and a central precondition for the identification of capabilities. A ‘pedagogical space’ precisely consists in eliciting these volitions:

I always try to give the young people the feeling they can decide for themselves and it only works like this, if I would just present them with something and say ‘You have to do this’, that doesn’t work. (Marie, 989–932)

It is noteworthy however that this is not only an ethical argument in the sense of not forcing anyone to live a life they do not want to live. Rather, voluntariness also has a functional dimension: orienting and regulating young people’s transitions demand their cooperation and compliance; otherwise, it ‘doesn’t work’ – at least young people should have the feeling that they are making their own decision.

Counselling with its principles of voluntariness and respect for the autonomy of the consulter works on the knowledge young people have about themselves. To this

end, knowledge-producing methods are applied such as the obligatory competence testing at the first meeting. This is pedagogical knowledge as it is not merely about facts about the outside world, but about what the subject should know about itself to be able to act accordingly. The results of such testing are in turn processed pedagogically, as knowledge which cannot be standardised and applied technologically, but is used for reflection on life plans and aspirations:

or they have completed a longer internship and so on, and it is clear for him what he wants to do, then I don't need a Geva-test . If he says to me I tried this and this, it works, then it's ok, but it [testing, T.L./J.D.] is the thing to do if it is afloat. (Björn, 1254–1258)²⁰

Testing is only necessary if 'it' is 'afloat', that is, if everything is unsure, and young people's ideas about what to do with their life are imprecise. At the same time, it is always the institution that decides which wishes, plans and aspirations are to be worked on. The participatory dimension is central for this way of governing young peoples' lives: as Stefanie Duttweiler (2007: 269) has pointed out with regard to the ideal of counselling, it would be irrational to not align one's actions to knowledge that has been produced in a voluntary and open-ended discourse.

As could be shown so far, institutional and professional processes precede and frame the space for biographical reflexivity of the young adults as well as their aspirations within the counselling setting. However, as could also be seen, constructing the case in a pedagogical intervention indispensably includes the construction of the client and the production of pedagogical knowledge to this end. In the following chapter, we want to go deeper into this issue while at the same time retaining the institutional perspective.

Institutional Selves: Who Is Addressed in Which Manner?

The capability approach focuses on the possibilities of individuals to realise what they reasonably value. Accordingly, institutions of social work are ideally designed to offer a framework in which young adults can orient themselves in terms of forming and critically reflecting their conception of the 'good life' (practical reasoning) and where they can 'translate' their concerns, aspirations, desires and needs into 'realistic life plans' and concrete steps and actions. The concept of biographical reflexivity seems to be adequate in this context, where the genesis of the individual biography and subjectivity is seen as a starting point for pedagogical interventions (cf., e.g. Alheit 1995 for a theoretical grounding, Schneider and Rieder 2011 for a practical application). Nevertheless, the question must be raised whether and how institutions provide space where reflexivity within the pedagogical relation is enabled or constrained.

In this respect, the concept of 'institutional selves' seems to be helpful (cf. Gubrium and Holstein 2001; Koch 2010). It is defined as an interactionist concept of identity work. Institutional selves are therefore alternative identity

²⁰The 'Geva-test' is a standardised instrument for testing vocational aspirations and skills.

formations and meaningful life stories offered by social work institutions. These narratives orient professionals as to which kind of life conduct should be accomplished through social work interventions. For the clients, they are not direct instructions of what to do, but enable young people to make sense of their situation and prepare them for a certain kind of conduct associated with these identities and life stories. Within this concept, 'troubled' and 'untroubled selves' are essential parts of identity work. In social work settings, a troubled self (i.e. disadvantaged youths with missing competencies, lacking 'apprenticeship entry maturity' or having 'placement obstacles') has to be identified and constructed, and on the other hand – positive and socially accepted – an untroubled self has to be juxtaposed (i.e. one able to pursue a gainful occupation and/or a jobseeker with 'realistic perspectives'). If a young adult has certain job prospects which seem to be unrealistic and not accomplishable in the view of the counsellor, this is seen as an occasion for working on problematic preferences. The young adult has to revise his or her primary aspirations to commit to the proposed identity formation. Here, interventions are seen as necessary to bring the young adult to reason and to make clear that his or her attitudes are (socially) problematic. This makes attitudes the legitimate object of institutional work. Insofar, it is a characteristic of pedagogical fields to attribute and label persons with a deficit that can be removed through learning processes. With this addressing of the person and the following identity work, new and specific options (of people processing and changing) are evoked.

In the context of taming aspirations, another basic problem in the view of the social workers is young people's unidimensional fixation on a specific aim like a school leaving certificate, an apprenticeship or gainful employment:

that is a very very rigid systematic, systemic perspective somehow, right, it works like this and not any other way and [bang] and then one has to crack that open, these thought patterns which many of them have internalised (hm), through school and also through their parents.
(Björn, 771–774)

This citation emphasises the ambivalence of counselling within the transition process. 'Nonproductive' aims and perspectives (here the fixation on specific aims) have to be broken up. New forms of reflexivity have to be anchored ('cracking thought patterns'), and therefore, new possible courses of action can be established to accomplish what young people 'really need' and even 'desire'. These new orientations mostly involve less pay and recognition; hence, the young people need to be 'cooled down' to become an untroubled self, which very often takes the form of confronting them with 'reality' (see Sect. 11.4.3):

as I said before, at first you have to the basis, and then of course to jointly work on the self-conception of the individual, meaning which conceptions has the, does the person develop himself and then to link this to reality (hm) is it feasible (hm) that is to say to always clarify that is, a lot of things are feasible but not everything can be realised immediately, meaning to clarify the process again and again, (yes yes) that it needs a certain period of time to get there. (Peter, 840–847)

This idea of 'jointly working on the self-conception' points to the relevant aspect of oscillating between a troubled and an untroubled self. However,

constructing troubled selves can be problematic when the ‘link to reality’ and the existing resources and commodities (‘is it feasible’) are seen as indissoluble and thus the client has to be adapted to the current opportunities instead of widening their possibilities. Here, a reference to the concept of ‘cooling out’ is useful as well (cf. Goffman 1952, concerning the transition from school to work: Scherr 1997: 164ff; Walther et al. 2007). Within a ‘process of redefining the self’ (Goffman 1952: 5), it has remarkable consequences for the client (called ‘the mark’ by Goffman). ‘For the mark, cooling represents a process of adjustment to an impossible situation – a situation arising from having defined himself in a way which the social facts come to contradict. The mark must therefore be supplied with a new set of apologies for himself, a new framework in which to see himself and judge himself. A process of redefining the self along defensible lines must be instigated and carried along; since the mark himself is frequently in too weakened a condition to do this, the cooler must initially do it for him’ (*ibid.* 5).

By utilising the concept of constructing and handling (un)troubled selves, we do not mean to portray the case work done in the competence agency as being totalitarian and a deformation of subjectivity. Indeed, the construction of a troubled self and a deficit-oriented perspective is indispensable for social work to legitimise interventions into the life conduct of individuals, but the professional task to reflect on these labelling processes and the underlying mechanism of social inequality needs to be institutionally embedded into everyday practice.

The Handling and Negotiation of ‘Realistic Perspectives’: Regulating Aspirations?

Essential for the constitution and processing of caseness and the working on ‘institutional selves’ is that life plans, concerns and aspirations are matching with or can be connected to the demand of the local transition sector. This is reflected in the topic of ‘realistic perspectives’. Within the interviews, experts often describe young people as:

- Evaluating themselves in an ‘unrealistic’ manner (Björn, 872)
- As being ‘unrealistic because they don’t have any idea of the demands in the working world’ (Peter, 534f.)
- Having an ‘unrealistic conception of the labour market’ (Björn, 922f.)
- ‘And one has to see, what is fitting to the youth and was is realistic’ (Marie, 1275f.)

These ‘realistic perspectives’ are adaptable to many dispositions exhibited by young people, and as in the perspective of the social workers, it is not them who morally demand a change of attitudes and behaviour, but reality itself demands these changes, which can hardly be argued with. They are also multifaceted as they have to be aligned to the self-concept and to the demands of the apprenticeship and labour market.

The code of ‘realistic perspectives’ can be read in two directions: in a positive version as the creation and support of a biographical reflexivity – or in CA terms as

a condition for practical reasoning. In a negative reading, it could be seen as a form of adaptive preferences (Steckmann 2008).

In a negative interpretation, individual reflexivity is transformed through institutional practices with the aim of aligning individual aspirations with institutional demands. In this respect, aspirations and opportunities are curtailed by the adaptation to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of ‘adaptive preferences’. As Otto and Ziegler (2006: 276) declare: ‘The problem of adaptive preferences points to the insight that people tend to adapt to circumstances which may be “objectively” unfavourable [...], because people’s desires and preferences respond to their beliefs about norms and about their own opportunities. Thus, people usually “adjust their desires to reflect the level of their available possibilities”’ (Nussbaum 1999, 11). As David Swartz (2000: 103) puts it, the adaptive internalisation “tends to shape individual action so that existing opportunity structures are perpetuated. Chances of success or failure are internalised and then transformed into individual aspirations or expectations; these are then in turn externalised in action that tends to reproduce the objective structure of life chances.” In this sense, unobtainable aims are excluded from the horizon of aspirations (see also Steckmann 2008, and again the issue of ‘cooling out’ outlined above).

As adaptation of ones’ preferences to prevailing circumstances is inevitable (unless ‘pure’, inborn aspirations, desires and preferences are presupposed), they might legitimate inequalities and suffering and potentially provoke passive suffering and a further curtailment of the capacity to act.

Nevertheless and despite the aforementioned aspects, there is a positive reading of ‘realistic perspectives’, which can be defined as necessary biographical reflexivity or in terms of the capability approach as ‘practical reasoning’ (Nussbaum 2001: 42): ‘Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s own life’. This entails ‘protection for liberty of conscience’ and the negotiation of pedagogical aims and interventions. Corresponding to this, the CA emphasises the relevance of the ‘informational basis of judgements of justice’ (IBJJ), which is in large part negotiated in counselling processes. The IBJJ is defined as ‘the set of information that will be considered as relevant when assessing a person, be it a worker, a welfare recipient or any other member of society. The IBJJ constitutes the yardstick against which people, their behaviours, wishes, beliefs, etc. are assessed and considered as legitimate or illegitimate. In the capability approach perspective, the selection of the informational basis should not be the prerogative of the government, public administration, experts, managers or shareholders’ (Bonvin 2012: 12).

11.2.8.5 Reframing the Case Study Through the Three Relevant Capabilities

The aforementioned analysis already gives an indication of the conditions for what could be understood as capabilities in this particular context. Within this chapter, we examine three capabilities: (1) the capability for work, (2) education and (3) voice and thus reframe the empirical findings in the terms of the CA.

Capability for Work

If we follow Martha Nussbaums reasoning, it is a governmental responsibility to secure the opportunity to live a dignified and flourishing life for all citizens. Everyone should among other things be provided with ‘control over one’s environment’. This capability includes: ‘having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others … in work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers’ (Nussbaum 2001: 42). Therefore, ‘the main objective of public action in the field of welfare should not be to put people back to work at all costs (i.e. a functioning), but to enhance their real freedom of choice with regard to the labour market’ (Bonvin 2009: 2). In our view, two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of work.

The Dilemma of Orientation Within the Employment-Centred Transition Sector

The flexibilisation and erosion of traditional employment structures are currently turning discontinuous employment histories as well as temporary and precarious employment situations into those fragments from which subjects are confusingly forced to derive some sense of ‘security’. This construction process of generating a sense of self-confidence or security is made even more difficult by material and social inequalities and deprivation. The ‘dilemma of orientation’ as described by Michael Galuske (1993) refers to the crisis of the promise of realisable lives and life plans, as held out by the model of normal employment, which are to ensure social and cultural participation. The dilemma of youth vocational counselling services refers to the (homeo)static ‘standardised pattern’ of a continuous employment history, which however corresponds to an ever diminishing degree to the real freedoms and possibilities in the life worlds of youths. To put it differently: the prospects of permanent employment or secure transition from school to the labour market as promised at present are illusory. Galuske contends that the labour market-oriented youth vocational counselling services have to face the end of the full employment society, creating apparently insoluble dilemmas. In addition, because of its institutionalised fixation on the labour market, it wastes the chance to establish individualised learning settings within the framework of projects that promote the development of young people and make it possible for them to lead sufficiently self-determined private and vocational lives.

The Unanswered Question of What ‘Good’ Work Means on All Levels

Within all interviews with stakeholders, professionals and clients, we asked for their idea of ‘good and meaningful work’. Mainly, the response was silence, irritation, perplexity or just a questioning look. This circumstance indicates that a normative orientation – and institutional reflection on what ‘good work’ should and could be – is missing within the transitional sector. It shows that placement is the overriding

concern and ideas of and aspirations for valuable work are not developed. The aforementioned normative yardstick of the capability approach in terms of work could provide an appropriate orientation in this context.

Capability for Education

Even though the emphasis on education as an end in itself has been stated many times by scholars working in the framework of the capability approach, a sharp definition of the capability for education is hard to find. The conceptually important difference between capabilities and functionings is stressed throughout, placing the essential weight on each individual's 'freedom to choose one kind of life rather than another'. 'However, the ability to exercise freedom may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach' (Sen 1989: 55). Therefore, in the words of Melanie Walker: 'A just education would promote a good life constituted by what is reflectively good and valuable to individuals and communities' (Walker 2010: 913). In our view, two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of education:

The Inequality of the Educational System and the Aspect of 'Certificate Poverty'

This case study concerns interventions on a municipality level that promise to prepare youngsters whose educational achievements in compulsory school are regarded as not sufficient and who have no upper secondary graduation that would grant them access to further education. Even preconditions for a graduation seem to be lacking in the eyes of providers and policy consultants. In this view, the youth in question have all 'lost their track' in the transition from school to further education or work. In that sense, not very surprisingly, we find inequalities in the capability for formal education (cf. the statistical data of the two chosen measures mentioned in Chap. 1) as discussed via the question of 'certificate poverty'. The question is whether this structural problem of unequal distribution of educational capabilities should be compensated at this later stage or rather be avoided at earlier stages of the educational path, providing in Walkers (2010) terms 'a just education'? This could also mean to level differences in outcome in terms of status position (income and recognition) based on educational achievement, that is, to equalise the remuneration of jobs that are socially deemed valuable.

Practical Reasoning and Biographical Reflexivity

The second notion is the aspect of capability for education as 'Bildung'. A precondition for processes of Bildung is to create a context for and stimulation of practical reasoning and the enabling of biographical reflexivity. 'Bildung points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and aesthetic concerns. (...) It

entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. Bildung, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the ‘good life’, of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creation’ (Bleicher 2006, S. 365). The identification of these processes of Bildung would have demanded a vastly enlarged research design. Curiously however, the stimulation of practical reasoning and the enabling of biographical reflexivity could not be found as a goal of the working alliance, neither in the expert interviews nor in the interviews with the young people themselves. This is striking as conceptually these processes seemed to be of major importance. Rather, processes of ‘Bildung’ in the sense of cultural self-formation were to be found in the way young people interpreted and dealt with the institutions they faced. Often, they exhibited a clear understanding of the problems and dilemmas of the interventions described above, nevertheless rationally trying to make the most of their situation. This mainly involved questions of remuneration and strategies to prevent interventions into their life conduct which they deemed to be too intrusive, thus widening their understanding of the world and adjusting their actions to retain or augment their agency.

Capability for Voice

The concept of ‘capability for voice’ designates the real freedom to voice one’s opinion and to make it count within the public policy process on the one hand and social work practice on the other hand. ‘It implies that he/she can choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or exit so as to be able to escape these collective norms at an affordable cost (e.g. by refusing to take up a badly remunerated job without having to abide by excessive financial penalties imposed by the unemployment insurance)’ (Bonvin 2009: 12). According to Hans-Uwe Otto and Holger Ziegler, this implies ‘the creation of places where individuals get the opportunity in public and social work action to express their own opinion, as well as the creation of a space for the “meta-capability” of reflection [...]. This “meta-capability” can be referred to the ability and opportunity to “form a conception of the good” (Nussbaum 2000: 79). It is also a basic precondition for processes of generating informed and considered decisions that matter to plan and shape one’s life’ (2006). In our view, two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of voice:

Participation and Managerialism

Participation is a long-standing issue in social work, which is often related to the (broad and often proclaimed) concepts of citizenship and the democratisation of social work practice (i.e. Arnstein’s ladder of participation, cf. Schnurr 2001). But this process of democratisation is even more important when looking at the dominant practices of managerialism which implement formalised measuring tools

meant to capture the quality of the pedagogical work that is done and enforce the processing of (un)troubled selves. As participation is necessarily an open-ended process and standardisation implies prefixed ends, managerialism is inherently hostile towards participation. Participation has to be implemented as a permanent phenomenon, so that in each step of the support process the client can choose between exit, voice and loyalty.

The question is whether young adults have the capability for voice in these arrangements. As shown before, referring to young people's aspirations is central to the competence agency. However, the restrictions of the available opportunities severely delimit what can be the object of negotiations and thus voice. The case study unveils that young people in these institutions often need to learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market and, more frequently, in the transition sector. Thus, loyalty seems to be the most plausible option, as the price for exit is relatively high and the voicing of one's concerns remains without consequences. In effect, participation is not fully realisable considering the whole support process. Furthermore, these restrictions are often anticipated by the young people leading to an adaptation of their aspirations and curtailing the number and quality of concerns that could be voiced, leading to the issue of a sense of constraint.

Sense of Entitlement or Sense of Constraint?

Voice is enhanced by something Annette Lareau ([2003](#)) defines in her study *Unequal Childhoods* as a 'sense of entitlement' (which especially shows in middle- and upper-class kids) on the basis of Pierre Bourdieu's notions of field and capital. It is a self-conscious expectance of young people that institutions and their agents respond to their own desires, needs and expectations. Lareau opposes a 'sense of constraint', which is typical for underclass youth (and our target group as well). They are not seeing themselves in the position of demanding anything and remain sceptical and doubtful towards agents of social institutions. Furthermore, they tend to comply with the decisions and actions of these authority figures and do not expect that their needs and requirements are a legitimate basis for social work interventions. According to the concept of a 'capacity to aspire' (cf. Appadurai [2004](#)), this points to the pivotal role aspirations and the exercising of voice play with respect to social and public issues. Concerning disadvantaged groups, there is a need of strengthening the capability for voice 'to debate, contest, and oppose vital directions for collective social life' (*ibid.*: 66).

To sum up briefly, if institutions in the transitional sector are to enhance capabilities, they need to take seriously their pedagogical task of creating a space where young people can reflect on their concerns and enter an open-ended process of grappling with the realities of the labour market. At the same time, structural conditions have to be set up that make opportunities to function in the desired ways (as a 'productive worker' and as a citizen) a real possibility. This demands first and foremost the democratisation of processes in the transition sector so as to avoid cooling out mechanisms and open pedagogical spaces in which the realisation of young people's reasonable concerns can become the paramount aim.

On a societal level, a further fundamental question has to be raised: Is the (German) transition sector an institution of social mobility or is it merely about class-based allocation to status positions through pedagogical means (down, but not out)? Are young people provided with real opportunities and a perspective for a good life? If valuable options and choices are effectively missing, the processual dimension of freedom within public and social work action turns out to be a chimera.

11.2.9 Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice from the Perspective of ‘the Less Employable’ University Graduates

Gunilla Bergström (✉)

Department of Sociology and Work Science, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: gunilla.bergstrom@sociology.gu.se

11.2.9.1 Introduction

During the last decade, the benefits of higher education has been challenged from a utility perspective (Garrick and Rhodes 2000). According to the utility perspective, the primary aim of higher education is to provide the labour market with a skilled work force, and there are voices raised, questioning whether this goal is achieved (e.g. Almerud et al. 2011; Korpi and Thålin 2009; Sahlén 2010). This idea is closely related to ‘employability’ that has become an aim that governments around the world have imposed on national higher education systems to varying extents (Yorke 2006). However, employability is by no means an unambiguous concept, there are many interpretations, but Yorke (2006) states that most of them can be broadly subordinated under one of the three following categories: employability as demonstrated by the graduate actually obtaining a job, employability as the student being developed by his or her experience of higher education and employability in terms of possession of relevant achievements.

The official debate, as well as the politics of higher education in Sweden, is very much influenced by the first interpretation; the proportion of graduates obtaining a job corresponding to their education is viewed as an important indicator of the quality of higher education (Dahllén 2010; National Agency for Higher Education 2010b; Prop 2007/08:1; RiR 2009; SSCO 2009; TCO 2008). Consequently, young graduates facing trouble in getting a job corresponding to their qualifications is defined as a sign of failure on the part of the higher education system. A main point of departure in the official debate is that young people are not provided with the right possibilities to make educational choices that will give them a prosperous life (Almerud et al. 2011; Sahlén 2010). The underlying

notion is that noninstrumental choices, such as choosing an education not clearly leading to a job, are a kind of uninformed mistake on the part of the student. Carrying the matter to its extreme, the measure suggested to prevent the ‘straying from the rational path’ is that educations not obviously in demand on the labour market should not be offered or that the size of study allowance should be reduced for ‘unprofitable’ educations (Fölster et al. 2011).

In the present study, the experiences of ‘less employable’ university graduates are explored by applying a capability perspective (see Sen 1992, 1999). The concept ‘less employable’ will henceforth be used when referring to the target group of the study, which is broadly defined as young graduates not yet employed in a job corresponding to their educational qualifications within a reasonable time after graduation.²¹ Here, it is important to underline that although the definition of the target group is based on the ‘utility-assumption’ (not yet employed), the work-motive should not be taken for granted. A focal question of the study is whether other motives guided their decision and to what extent the education enhanced their capabilities related to other valuable aspects of life *from the graduates’ perspective*. Hence, in contrast to the utility perspective, the point of departure in the current text is that choosing a university education might be based on intrinsic values as well (Walker 2009). It should also be pointed out that although having a university degree puts the individual in a general favourable position compared people with lower education, the situation of the ‘less employable’ graduates is nevertheless relevant. The overall issue is the same; to what extent are young people provided with opportunities to form their lives based on what they have reason to value?

The capability approach (CA) is a useful tool for exploring people’s expectations and their possibilities to realise those expectations in general. It is also a helpful tool for capturing a wider aim and meaning of higher education. In doing so, the distinction between capabilities (the extent to which a person is free to lead a life she has reason to value) and functionings (what a person actually is or does) is crucial. Although ‘not obtaining a job’ (functioning) is the core principle defining the target group of the study, the focus is on young graduates’ experiences of capabilities, and here, the distinction between resources and capabilities is important as well. The availability of resources necessary for specific outcomes is crucial but does not automatically result in freedoms; the relation is heavily influenced by conversion factors, i.e. factors affecting the possibility to convert resources into capabilities. The significance of conversion factors highlights the social embeddedness of individual agency. For instance, resources in terms of an open and accessible higher education system do not mean ‘equal access’. The individual’s real freedom to enter higher education will be influenced by personal, social as well as environmental characteristics – e.g. self-confidence, family traditions and norms, infrastructure, etc. (e.g. Robeyns 2005).

²¹The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, which is the authority assigned to review the quality of higher education, annually investigates the rate of labour market establishment associated with different educations. Graduates who completed their education between 3 and 4 years previous the time for each investigation constitute the sample.

Although resources solely is not enough, they still constitute an important basis framing what opportunities there *might* be, and with the purpose of ‘setting the scene’, an account for available resources for education, work and voice will be given before the research questions are presented.

Resources for Education Work and Voice

That all education should be available to everyone on equal conditions irrespective of gender, social background and place of origin is a prevailing idea within the Swedish education system, an idea transformed in the extensive expansion of higher education since the middle of the 1990s (SOU 2007:81). In line with this, higher education is free of charge, and there is a fairly generous state governed allowance system available, securing possibility to study for everyone irrespective of social background and financial situation. There is a variety of ways to achieve graduation regarding content (variety of subjects), form (vocational programmes, general programmes, single courses) and organisation (distance learning possible, change of seat of learning/location, possibility to take a year off, etc.). Consequently, the *educational resources* could be defined as propitious.

Resources for work are closely related to educational resources. On a general level, having an academic exam is definitely a resource in itself since high employment rates and favourable working conditions are aspects proven to be positively associated with educational level. However, it is also known that there are differences related to *kind* of education (Wennström 2009; National Agency for Higher Education 2010b). Several studies, mainly conducted by student organisations, unions and other interest groups, suggest that unequal access to labour market contacts during the time of study as well as unequal access to qualified career and study counselling are the main reasons for the differences (Jusek 2011; Gemmel et al 2010; SSCO 2009). It is also stated that some fields of education are relatively unknown or underestimated on the labour market, i.e. employer’s knowledge about what skills and competences the education provides is assumed to be insufficient (Jusek 2011; Schoug 2008; Projekt Athena 2011). Consequently, the measures proposed to equalise the differences are more labour market contacts during the time of study together with more and better career and study counselling.

Since the measures mentioned above are proposed by interest groups, unions and the like, acting on the behalf of students’ and graduates’ interests, the *voice dimension* is highlighted. On a general level, capability for voice could be described as the ability to express one’s opinions and to make them count in the course of public discussion, commonly with reference to groups of individuals involved in social work practice (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006; Bonvin 2012). Hence, a crucial aspect of voice is whether the individual can choose between loyalty to the prevailing norms and prescriptions or voice in order to negotiate the content of the measures provided (Hirschman 1970). Looking at the target group of the study, the service and measures provided to unemployed and the regulations framing these measures are a relevant social work context. Still, the main focus of the study is resources necessary

for voicing one's opinions and to make them count within the higher education system, on the labour market, and within the politics of education and work. According to Bohman (1996), the prevalence of collective actors such as trade unions or other interest groups is a crucial resource for creating genuinely public space where one's concerns might be taken into account. As reviewed above, there are such actors highlighting the situation of the 'less employable', and in fact, the politics of higher education has taken their arguments into account. For instance, a political initiative was taken in 2009 when the Swedish National Audit Office was assigned to scrutinise the measures promoting employability²² taken by the authorities concerned (RiR 2009). Another example of resources for voice is that all seats of learning are obliged to carry out follow-ups on student's views on their education – including aspects such as labour market relevance – as a part of the quality assessment of higher education (National Agency for Higher Education 2011).

Information about labour market options associated with different educations is another resource for voice. Such information is necessary for young people's ability to make a conception of 'the good' (Nussbaum 2000: 79) and to make educational choices in line with this conception. In Sweden, it is regulated by law that students should be given access to study- and vocational guidance and that the education providers should ensure that anyone who intends to begin an education have access to the information needed about that education (Higher Education Ordinance §3, ch 6). To meet this requirement, there is at least one study counsellor employed at every department within the higher education system.

Research Questions and Case Description

Focusing on a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being and doings, the main issue at stake in the present study is whether the 'less employable' university graduates perceive their education as an experience enhancing their possibilities to lead a life they have reason to value. More specifically, the questions raised are the following: Was their decision to enter higher education considered and based on aspects they had reason to value? Were their motives to enter university related to future job opportunities or rather pure educational values? Do these people resist the utility agenda or have they internalised it, but made the 'wrong' choice of education? Do they consider that their educational experience comes up to their expectations or not? If not – what is missing and what could have been done differently?

Although education generally means improved labour market prospects and reduced risks for unemployment (OECD 2011; Jusek 2011; National Agency for Higher Education 2010), the labour market of academics seems to be quite heterogeneous. For most fields of education, the opportunities vary considerably between

²²The Audit Office does not explicitly define employability, but state that enhanced employability through better development and career opportunities on the labour market are probably important motives behind people's choice to apply for higher education.

periods of recession and upward trends, whereas some are generally insensitive (Wennström 2009). Another dividing line is between the three different *types of exams* available within the Swedish higher education system, e.g. vocationally oriented programmes and general programmes within specific disciplines (political science, computer science, geography, etc.). Students may also design an individual exam composed by a number of single courses of his/her choice. In terms of labour market opportunities, vocationally oriented programmes are generally advantageous compared to general programmes and exams put together by single courses (National Agency for Higher Education 2010b).²³

Graduates with individually composed exams within the humanities and the social sciences are among the categories traditionally hit by less favourable labour market options, and this group was selected to represent ‘the less employable’. The sampling was made by selecting relevant graduates from the register of one of the bigger universities in the country. An enquiry, asking questions about their working situation since graduation, was sent to all graduates under the age of 31 years and who completed an individually composed bachelor’s degree, either within the humanities or the social sciences during the period of 2007 and 2009 (totally 140 individuals). Those with an unstable position at the labour market in terms of unemployment, employment in a job not corresponding to the education (or former experiences of the same) and who agreed on taking part in the subsequent study were contacted. Finally, two male and seven female graduates aged between 26 and 30 agreed to take part in the study. The graduates were interviewed with the purpose of exploring their sense of capability. In order to understand how the available resources of education, work and voice are put into practice, document analyses were made along with interviews with five university employees, four employers, one union representative and four officials at the employment office.²⁴

11.2.9.2 Findings

By way of introduction, there will be a short description of the nine university graduates’ current situation. Thereafter, their experiences of capability for education, work and voice will be reviewed and analysed. For the purpose of readability, the interviewees have been given the following feign names: Tomas, Karin, Anna, Lisa, Louise, Erik, Sara, Eva and Maria.

Except for Anna and Erik, all the interviewees were in some kind of transitional phase at the time for the interviews. Karin’s goal was to get an employment in a

²³The analyses referred to do not distinguish between general programmes and exams composed by single courses, probably because the establishment of general programmes is a quite recent trend.

²⁴Interviews with three employers, one union representative and one official at the employment office were conducted by Karin Berg as a part of her report “The labour market of Sociologist – conditions and conceptions” (2011), internal document; department of Sociology and Work Science, Gothenburg University.

non-profit organisation dealing with the issues she was dedicated to. That the organisation stands for the 'right' values was more important to her than the content of the job. Despite her rather low ambitions, she had so far not been offered any employment. Maria had experienced periods of unemployment mixed with a couple trainee jobs, mainly organised and supported by the employment office. At the moment, she held a post with conditional tenure working with unqualified tasks. She was not satisfied with her job, but she expressed great hopes in having an internal career within the company. In that sense, her current job was not only a means of livelihood but also part of a strategy possibly ending up in a desirable work situation. Tomas, Lisa, Louise, Sara and Eva had continued their studies. Tomas and Sara was studying a master programme which was more or less a part of their educational plans at an early stage and to some extent based on expectations of improved labour market opportunities. For Lisa, Louise and Eva, the decision to apply for further studies was mainly a consequence of the hardships met in finding a job. All of them were actively looking for work after their graduation, and they all had experiences of shorter employments, either in desirable jobs but with temporary contracts or employments in jobs not corresponding to their conceptions of a desirable working life. Lisa and Eva finally decided to enter a vocationally oriented university programme, whereas Louise studied a master course.

Capability for Education

Capability can be defined as 'a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being' (Sen 1993: 30), and for the young people interviewed, to study at the university was indeed a valuable act. Their stories also indicate that there were no obvious obstacles restricting their freedoms to participate – on the contrary, the opportunity to study was more or less taken for granted. That the Swedish higher education system is open to everyone and free of charge and that there is a fairly generous state governed allowance system available certainly explain much of this. However, as Nussbaum (2000) points out, our subjective preferences and choices are shaped by material as well as cultural circumstances. Our understanding of what opportunities that is available to us is deeply shaped by the social context. That all interviewees stated that they were brought up in an education-friendly atmosphere could therefore be regarded as an important conversion factor (see also Robeyns 2005: 99). Furthermore, a history of good experiences from school and a sense of being an 'easy learner' are common features in the interviews that also constitute significant conversion factors since they create self-confidence and a desire for knowledge.

To enter higher education at some point was always a matter of course. I've always liked to study and I was quite ambitious during both compulsory school and upper secondary school. (Lisa)

Capability for education not only concern opportunity to study or not but also whether people are able to choose *the kind* of education they have reason to value.

Since all the interviewees except Maria stated that their choices were driven by personal interests all the way, at least up to bachelor's degree, the results indicate a strong sense of freedom to study based on personal preferences.

I have absolutely only studied out of personal interests and I have always been convinced that to do something you are committed to will pay off in one way or the other. (Louise)

Capability for Work

For a majority of the interviewees, labour market expectations were not obviously a motive for entering higher education in the first place. If anything increased, employment chances could be described as a latent motive, something that was unconsciously regarded as a given consequence of education. Crucial to the capability approach is the process for people to come to a decision about what they have reason to value (Sen 1992: 81), and in the course of time, a desirable job, either corresponding to their education or a job within an organisation corresponding to their personal values, became a part of the plan. Having a university degree was then increasingly understood as an activity that would enhance their opportunities to get a desirable job. For everyone except Eric, this expectation was not met, and the interviewees' freedoms to actually enjoy the lives they had reason to value in this respect were not obviously enhanced by their education. The focal question then is why this is the case, and what resources or conversion factors are missing? The interviewees stories are dominated by constraints related either to the education provider or the labour market, which will be described below. The role of the employment office is also discussed.

Constraints related to the provider of education: In line with previous research (Jusek 2011; Gemmel et al. 2010; RiR 2009; SSCO 2009), difficulties in entering the labour market were primarily explained by the educational system's shortcomings in providing measures facilitating the graduate's transition between education and work. Lacking elements mentioned were labour market contacts, guidance and a way to translate and communicate educational skills in a way that correspond to labour market demands. There is also a stress on the need for information on what you *are* in terms of vocational competence and identity, and what kind of jobs you can apply for.

Some of the resources mentioned were in fact available at the time when the interviewees were studying but the conversion into freedoms was constrained by different factors. Although the university offered a practice course, the interviewees either had no information about it or expressed a strong critique against that it was offered first at master level and that it was poorly organised with few supporting structures arranged by the university:

Although the department had scheduled a work place located practice, they had no suggestions on where to go, they had no connections, they had not explored or prepared anything and it was very unclear regarding what should be done during the practice..., the instructions from the department on what they expected me to achieve were incredibly unclear. (Louise)

The students themselves had to find a proper employer and settle the agreements for the practice, and the lack of structure and support from the university seems to have jeopardised the quality of the experience. The fairly common notion among the interviewees is that elements of practice is desirable, preferably at an earlier stage of the education compared to the current situation, but it needs to be better organised in order to take away the responsibility from the students.

The lack of information might be viewed as a central constrain regarding the possibilities to convert resources such as study counselling and career advice into capabilities. At the time for their studies, the graduates knew about the existence of the study counsellors but did not recognise that their future working life was an issue for her/him. At the university, there was also a specific unit for career advice (Career Centre), but the interviewees had either no knowledge about it or thought that the service was designed for vocationally oriented categories of graduates. Bearing in mind the support that after all was within reach, it is stated that the resources ought to be made more visible to the students:

I had no idea at all that it (Career Centre) existed. Maybe I had heard about it a long time ago, maybe I had seen a small note somewhere or maybe someone once mentioned it incidentally, but I never gave it a serious thought. Then, a friend told me that a friend in common had been there and she thought I should check it out. So I went there and they have lots of good stuff.... I didn't get the information that there was someone there who could help me. That ought to be more involved at department level. (Louise)

This suggestion is quite in line with the view of the career adviser who was interviewed. She states that students and graduates who look for support at the centre usually have no idea regarding how and where their educational competences might be of any practical use. Most of them also seem to think that they are the only ones feeling that way and they are ashamed about their ignorance. In order to reduce those negative experiences, the adviser advocates that some of the service provided at the centre should be included *during* education instead. The adviser also highlights her own problem of having to rely on the study counsellors at each department in order to reach out with information to the students. Students' access to information about available resources is thereby heavily dependent on whether the counsellors are committed to the 'work issue' and on whether the counsellors are heard by their colleagues. According to the adviser at Career Centre, if labour market issues are given space and if opportunities are provided to convey, such information might not be a matter of course since learning is the focus of an educational enterprise. The uncertainty of the flow of information puts many students in an unfavourable situation – especially those who do not follow a coherent educational programme.

Erik is clearly of an opposite view when it comes to labour market connections. He takes up a critical attitude towards any politics aiming at 'economisation' of higher education. He regards himself as 'spared' since he escaped these kinds of elements during his time of study. It should be noted that Erik is the only interviewee describing the transition between education and work as completely unproblematic. Still, one of the university employees expresses a similar point of view by highlighting that one should not assume that all students are interested in labour

market connections. Her view is that many of those studying general educations within the humanities, for instance, resist being imputed with a commercial way of thinking about education. Some of them have deliberately chosen an education based on pure interest, and they do not expect that the knowledge acquired will be transformed into professional skills.

Constrains Related to the Labour Market: Other aspects constraining the opportunity to convert the academic exam into capability for work were the graduates' experiences of the labour market's 'resistance'. A notion expressed is that their educations are not in demand because employers lack knowledge about the skills acquired through their specific educations. This notion is based on the fact that employers rarely look for professional categories corresponding to their educational profile: concepts equivalent to their studied disciplines do not occur in recruitment contexts. This is then experienced as something constraining the possibilities to market themselves as someone having the right qualifications.

When you have a general exam, it is not that easy to write the words, or to convert it to something that fits in to what the labour market demands. It is not self-evident when you don't study a vocational education or something that more obviously fall into place within an occupation. (Eva)

The labour market representatives tend to confirm these misgivings. According to one of the employment office representatives, employers cannot 'decipher' what skills and competences some jobseekers have since employers lack knowledge about their educations. The labour market representatives states that this is particularly true for exams composed of single courses where the subjects do not clearly correspond to relatively established occupations. Consequently, the less known education one has the greater demands on your ability to market both your education and yourself.

An increasing focus on personal characteristics might also be defined as a constraining factor. For instance, the ability to present oneself in a way that fall the employer in taste is highlighted by several labour market representatives as well as by the adviser at Career Centre. This is connected to a general surplus of jobseekers with adequate skills; in order to sort and sift through all the applicants with qualifications corresponding to the demands, employers tend to look at more personal criteria. The focus on personal characteristics could imply a reduction in the relative importance of formal merits, and by that, individuals with a less known education could benefit from such a development. But the present study indicates that the phenomenon has the opposite consequence. Interviews with labour market representatives indicate that employers tend to transfer a perceived ambiguity or vagueness of the less known educations on to the individual; since the educations are not perceived as having a clear direction towards a specific professional field, it is assumed that individuals who have chosen these kind of educations are indecisive about their career, and it is assumed that they will not as easily go into a role as an employee compared to someone who has an occupational training. When talking about individuals who have put together a general education package without a clear professional profile, one of the employment office representatives state that:

There is always a fear that these academics will fixate too much on problems or new ideas, that they will call everything into question and that they will not be productive. (Employment office representative)

A related tendency is the increased importance of social networks that is brought to the fore, preferably by the graduates. This not viewed as a positive development – far from it! Louise names the phenomenon ‘the recommendation society’ and is quite upset since being nice and attending to social networks seems to be more important than being educated:

You have studied for five years and you are damned good and skilled and then you realize that people get the job just because they are nice at the coffee break. (Louise)

Despite her critical attitude, Louise and everybody else pay a lot of attention to their social networks. On the whole, every single social interface is looked upon as a potential source of employment options. This also holds for the social contacts established through the non-profit organisations most of the interviewees are committed to. Although the basic purpose is not to improve the list of merits, or to establish work-related social connections, the interviewees regard the experiences received and the social contacts established within these organisations as significant opportunities to get a job.

The Employment Office: A last court that possibly could serve as a factor converting education into capabilities for work is the public employment office, which is the national authority assigned to match available competence with labour market demands. However, the confidence in the service offered by the office is very low. A majority of the graduates had not been looking for their support at all; either because they felt no need for it or because they thought it would be a waste of time. Karin, Eva, Anna and Maria actually did get in touch with the employment office, but their encounter could foremost be described as a constraining experience since no ways to overcome their hardships were proposed. A dominant experience reflected on is a reduced self-confidence as a consequence of the encounter. Karin and Eva state that, if anything, they were categorised as hopeless cases and they felt that their choice of education was questioned by the staff at the office. Furthermore, the staff seemed to lack all sorts of knowledge about their education, and therefore, they did not offer any advice regarding what kind of job to apply for or what to do in order to improve their job chances:

I went to the employment office this winter and they were very negative. I felt very depressed. Well she (the employment office employee) said; ‘There are only three relevant jobs right now and none of them suits you. It looks rather bad’. And then she questioned why I had chosen this kind of education since there were no jobs and I felt like, well, she wasn’t that good at her job. I think her job is to help me realize what possibilities there are, not to be pessimistic. (Eva)

Capability for Voice

The interviewees understanding of why they are facing problems in getting a desirable employment and what actions that should be taken to reduce the obstacles is very much in line with the view expressed by student organisations, trade unions

and interest groups who more or less directly act on the behalf of students and young graduates. In that sense, the interviewees seem to have capability for voice. That their opinions count in the course of public discussion is also indicated by the fact that the issues and measures defined by these groups have been highlighted on national level, leading to political initiatives aiming at equalising the availability of ‘employability promoting elements’ (RiR 2009:28). The voice of the students is also confirmed by one of the university employees interviewed who state that several of the resources that actually are in place (workplace-located practice courses, services provided by Career Centre) are measures taken by the universities at least partly in order to meet students’ requirements.

Still, to be able to convert ‘employability promoting elements’ into capabilities requires that the students have knowledge about their existence and a notion of the relevance of using them. The interviewed graduates express that this was not the case. Here, the question of individual responsibility is brought to the fore. The capability approach understands people to be agents, i.e. a dignified and responsible human who critically reflects and makes worthwhile life choices from alternatives that are available to her (Walker and Unterhalter 2009: 15). Here, it could be argued that it is the individual’s responsibility to seek relevant information, but most people are quite young when they set off for university studies and it could be questioned whether it is reasonable to expect that labour market prospects would be of such interest that the students actively would look for information. This notion is also put forwards by the interviewees.

When you get here as a 19-year old, you don’t know that much about society or how the labour market works. I didn’t think about it back then, but now, afterwards, I would have wanted much more information about how it works, what paths to take, what jobs you could get. There was no such information, no advice or winks about how to create a niche for oneself that could help you to move on. (Lisa)

In the quote above, Lisa refers to some kind of nativity or light-heartedness – an attitude that most of the interviewees refer to when recalling their thoughts and emotions during their first years of studies. Another reason for not reflecting about the future is a (unconscious) conviction that a university degree more or less guarantees good job opportunities. According to some of the interviewees, taking the significance of education for granted was also reinforced by the fact that work-related issues were never mentioned by teachers or other university representatives during the education: the value of education seemed self-evident from the university’s perspective as well.

Age as a constraining factor regarding capability for voice is also highlighted by Maria in her experiences of encountering the employment office. After graduation, she contacted the office since she had difficulties in finding a job. At that time, she was young enough to be categorised as youth according to the employment office’s definition. But the service, measures and programmes directed to ‘youth’ are mainly addressing completely different situations compared to Maria’s, e.g. dropouts from compulsory school or upper secondary school. Maria tried to make her needs clear to the staff at the office, but her efforts were fruitless.

I was defined as youth due to my age. Therefore, I was placed in the same group as people who recently left upper secondary school or even had dropped out from it. I almost felt that they offended me intellectually. ... I tried to explain that I needed support in my efforts to find a job, not a lecture in how to behave on the labour market...I asked if I could see an official in charge who worked with adults rather than youth, but that wasn't possible. (Maria)

There were no real opportunities to negotiate the content of the measures, and since the collaboration with the employment office is a prerequisite for economic benefits for those lacking other sources of income, exit was neither an option (Hirschman 1970; Bonvin and Farvaque 2006; Bonvin 2012). From Maria's point of view, lowered self-confidence and mistrust regarding her competences are salient experiences connected to the general resistance she has met in her efforts to find a desirable job. The 'help' offered by the employment office did not contribute with neither practical nor emotional support – quite the opposite:

...for one thing, it was the practical part, that you sort of didn't get any help, and then it was the emotional part, that you were in a situation when you started to doubt whether you were as good as you thought, and I felt that they (employment office employees) added to that feeling rather than helped me to put up with it. (Maria)

Before concluding, some final remarks should be made. All the interviewees except Maria, and to some extent Lisa, state that they are pleased with their education and that they would choose the same education today despite all the uncertainties and troubles they have faced. Above all, pure educational values and ability for voice, such as personal growth, a widening intellectual horizon, ability for critical and analytic thinking and self-confidence, are aspects put forwards when talking about the positive meaning of their education.

...for my own part it has contributed incredibly much in terms of personal growth so to say, in terms of my understanding of the world and other people. (Louise)

Still, at the time for the interviews, the dominating perception of a valuable life among the interviewees includes university studies guided by personal interests and enhanced opportunities to get a desirable job. To make both ends meet raises some obstacles. The question then is what to do? Who ought to shoulder the responsibility and in what way?

Conclusions

Given the lack of knowledge about available resources in terms of study counselling and career advice, a possible measure would be to create an information system securing that all students are given real opportunities to make use of these services. A closer cooperation between the upper secondary education system and higher education institutions would probably be necessary. This would reduce the risk of making the wrong choice from the start. Nevertheless, making the wrong choice was not the main problem expressed

(continued)

by the interviewees. Instead, the expected contribution of the study and career counselling would be to make work-related aspects of the education clear, i.e. pointing out what kind of labour market skills and competences they achieve during their education and in what jobs these skills and competences might be useful. Perhaps the greatest challenge for universities and colleges concerning the information issue is the difficulties associated with the educational structure of single-course students. Single-course students are not involved in any given long-term relation with a specific provider of education (seats of learning, departments), and subjects might vary from term to term which makes the flow of information more precarious. Consequently, the transient character and the unpredictability of the ‘single-course route’ need to be taken into account in order to enable all students to be real agents, to make informed choices and to shape their lives in the light of goals that matter to them.

Given the importance of labour market connections that are associated with good job opportunities, universities and colleges should review the form and quality of the practical features that are offered during the period of education. The lack of connection between their education and working life that the interviewed graduates experience are of two interrelated kinds. First, the view is that the education includes too few and/or poorly organised practical events involving actual employer contacts and professional experience. Second, one experiences a lack of clear professional identity and understanding of the labour market contexts in which the education is useful. *Well-organised* labour market connections, such as workplace-located practice, are initiatives potentially attending to these problems. Furthermore, since it is argued that job opportunities increasingly depend on personal characteristics and private social networks, a well organised workplace-located practice provided by universities and colleges could serve as a general equalising factor, enhancing the opportunities to get the necessary labour market contacts for those with less favourable conditions in terms of educational as well as social and personal resources.

Both the young graduates’ perceptions and statements put forwards by labour market representatives indicate that the labour market is characterised by an ignorance of what a general degree in disciplines not obviously associated with an occupation means. Among employers, there are also statements indicating an unfavourable perception of the individuals who have a degree within this kind of education. Consequently, the current study points to a need for an increased knowledge and appreciation of these educations among employers, staff at the employment office and other labour market representatives. It also seems necessary to combat negative attitudes towards specific groups of academics. To do this, the higher education system, employers and other labour market representatives need to extend and renew their cooperation.

(continued)

It could be argued that the main message conveyed in this study is a call for an equalisation of opportunities between different educational paths concerning access to employability-enhancing resources and conversion factors. This is an important issue, but as a final comment, I want to emphasise the risks posed by focusing on higher education as a means for work. A lot of young people study out of pure educational and personal interests, and it is very likely that the single-course route within less vocationally oriented subjects is the path of their deliberate choice. So far, the possibility to make this choice is quite good, but the current focus on getting a job as a given outcome of university studies is threatening this possibility. If a narrow employability perspective will unfold and further imprint the politics of higher education, the risk is that the supply of education will be governed by short-sighted labour market needs at the expense of wider social and political benefits such as personal development, enhanced civic participation, etc. (Walker 2009). To get these seemingly contradictory aspects together (to maintain the generous educational system providing opportunities) for individuals to study out of interest (capabilities for education) and at the same time equalise the *possibilities* to transform the education into something in demanded on the labour market (capabilities for work), we need to make an effort to restore the value of non-vocational/‘Bildung-oriented’ disciplines and knowledge on the labour market and in society at large.

11.3 Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice: A Concluding Remark

Christian Chrstrup Kjeldsen (✉)

Department of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University,
Aarhus, Denmark

e-mail: kjeldsen@edu.au.dk

Thomas Ley

Center of Social Service Studies, Faculty for Educational Science,
Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany

e-mail: thomas.ley@uni-bielefeld.de

11.3.1 Introduction

This chapter takes up some of the central aspects from the presented case studies and reflects on the cross-sectional work within the EU project *WorkAble*. It is a revised and condensed version of a previous comparative comment on the case studies (see Kjeldsen et al. 2012; the basis of this work were extended versions (WorkAble 2012) and previous publications (i.e. special issue in *Social Work and Society* 2012) of the case studies, as well as common grids for juxtaposition of the case studies during the empirical work). This concluding remark aims at bringing the case studies briefly together within the analytical and heuristic framework of the capability approach. The aim is to conceptualise the *capabilities for education, work and voice* as *fertile capabilities* (referring to Wolff 2009) that have positive effects on other central human capabilities – and can be seen as a subject- and field-oriented adaptation of the capability approach. These three theoretically and empirically driven concepts will be addressed one by one when confronted with the findings of the case studies. Towards the end of this article, we will broaden the conceptual focus further by analysing these capabilities in their relational dependencies, conditions and consequences as well as in relation to the different contexts they operate within. Hence, the mentioned subset of *capabilities* is regarded as an important *relational framework* that can ‘enable young people to act as capable citizens in European societies’ (according to the *WorkAble* objective). Furthermore, it can also be used as an evaluative framework raising new questions on which social and institutional conditions that are necessary not only to keep young people in the labour markets but also to maintain their autonomy and freedom of choice. Mentioned in the theoretical chapter by Kjeldsen and Bonvin of this volume was Martha Nussbaum’s conceptualisation of a list of ten central capabilities. The list seeks to figure out ‘an objective account of human well-being or flourishing. The aim is to identify all of the functionings needed for human flourishing. For each of these functionings, the ideal is that each person should be sustained in the capability to engage in every one of these functionings at a satisfactory or good enough level’

(Arneson 2002). Our specific focus on three partly different capabilities should not be understood as a departure from Nussbaum's list and claim that 'all ten of these plural and diverse ends are minimum requirements of justice' (Nussbaum 2007: 175); the insights are here broadened, however, taking into account that '[m]uch depends on our purpose. On the one hand, if our intention is simply comparative, all sorts of capabilities suggest interesting comparisons across nations and regions, and there is no reason to prescribe in advance: new problems may suggest new comparisons' (Nussbaum 2011: 29). The tension between the perspective of vulnerable youth on the one hand and education and labour market structures in Europe is understood as such a problem.

The target groups of the WorkAble project may be seen as 'vulnerable' in terms of lack of capabilities, understood as real freedoms to be or become what they have reason to value. Secondly, these vulnerable groups represent particular problems to policy (and practical implementation) in their different national contexts and, therefore, have been identified as exemplary but still crucial issues within the transitional regimes from school to work or referring to basic problems of the educational regimes (such as dropouts). Furthermore, they are embedded in different educational and transitional regimes (Atzmüller in this volume, Walther 2006; van de Velde 2008). The focus is on diverse target groups, such as early school leavers, young unemployed, young adults with no qualifications in secondary education and, finally (as a part of theoretical/purposive and contrastive sampling), unemployed young people with higher education qualifications. While the comparative EU project started with these broad and unspecific target groups, one of the first insights was that these groups converge in several transitional regimes and are hard to differentiate from one another. Due to this diverse variety of regimes, target groups and research focuses (cf. Bifulco/Edgell/McQuaid in this volume), this chapter will shed light on *some* of the questions and discussions emerging from the comparison of the individual case-study findings in an attempt to bring them together in a – necessarily simplified – analytical matrix.

11.3.1.1 Reflecting on Capabilities Research in Qualitative Case Studies

Capability research has proven to be a powerful orientation when capturing the often very complex relation between societal conditions, structures, the individual's freedoms and their actualisation of these at a specific time and context. The exercise of agency and the realisation of freedoms one reasonably values – the core of the capability approach – is always bound to the social context in which people actually live and act. Therefore, capabilities have to be explored in relation to structures and agency. However, before the process of realising valued *beings and doings*, aspirations are formed, and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where they can be achieved. Consequently, the different resources and commodities that the individual has access to have to be taken into account. This was done in an earlier comparison of the case studies (Kjeldsen et al. 2012) in an attempt to capture this by using the distinction between an *empowerment* and an *opportunity to choose*

dimension of the capability approach. As Kjeldsen and Bonvin argue in this volume (2014: 7), '[t]he reasons for this are that liberals tend to insist only on freedom to choose without caring to empower people, thereby running the risk of falling into Marx's objection to formal freedom [...]. By contrast, some radical versions of social democracy focus mainly on the material empowerment of people and end in another pitfall, failing to adequately guarantee the freedom to choose'.

To build this empirical bridge between this societal level and individual's perspective, the case studies provide possibilities to investigate the actions of individuals as well as those of collective actors. When the research interest is centred on the former, then it is focused on both the individual actions and the interpretations of different situations. If, on the other hand, the focus is placed on the understanding and explanation of collective actions – which allots individual actors some room for manoeuvre – the actions and, in particular, sequences of actions of divergent actors (such as professionals, addressees, social service managers and the organisations in a whole) are at the centre of investigation, and the range of possibilities in which this collective structure can reproduce itself. It is clear that neither of these research perspectives can do without the other; individual agency cannot be explained without a conception of social selection mechanisms; furthermore, for the explanation of action structures (e.g. organisations), the reasoned nature of individual actions is a necessary presumption (cf. Ludwig 2005). These two perspectives are taken account of in as much as biographical processes and addressees' interpretations and their coping with the transition processes are explored; moreover, opportunity structures and institutional restrictions are analysed. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that preferences and choices are deeply shaped by social contexts, structure and opportunities available (see as well Bergström in this volume). For this reason, the perspectives and choices of the young people were central to the operationalisation of the capability approach in the case studies. While mainly focusing on individual accounts and subjective perspectives, the aim of the comparison of the case studies was to consider how these preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or even enabled by institutional factors, which translate central policies into local practices. In summary, within the empirical research, it became clear once more how resources and commodities as well as social conversion factors are shaped by and also shape capabilities and opportunities of young adults.

11.3.2 Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice as Fertile Capabilities

In the following, some of the main issues addressed in relation to the three capabilities in question are presented. They are related to essential resources and commodities, incorporate enabling and constraining aspects and integrate an explicit normative orientation (see Table 11.6). They are all interdependent, but the starting point here is education to work, ending by emphasising the decisive weight of *voice*.

Table 11.6 Empirically found dimensions of the capabilities for education, work and voice

According to...	Fertile capabilities		
	Capability for education	Capability for work	Capability for voice
Resources and commodities	Inequalities in educational regimes/certificate poverty	Sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs/activities	Voice as a substantiation of citizenship and social rights
Constraints and enablers	Negative schooling experiences	Prevention of discriminatory practices and labelling processes	Dominance of people processing
	Misrecognition of informal and non-formal learning	Infrastructure and (material) resources of the measures in itself	Invisibility of exit options
	Education as 'Bildung'	Work-first vs. life-first approaches and the 'realistic' reference to the labour market	Participation within the support process
	Informational base for choice making in a professional working alliance	Enabling of adequate skills vs. realistic perspectives	Democratisation of social service organisations
Normative orientation (for institutions)	Capacity to aspire	Good and meaningful work	Sustainable capability space

11.3.3 *The Capability for Education*

Capability for education is on the one hand the real freedom to choose an (formal) education or training programme one has reason to value (and even includes the choice of not being educated); on the other hand, this concept entails the idea of being adequately empowered to make such a choice and therefore calls for processes of *practical reasoning* and 'Bildung'. As can be seen from Table 11.6, in relation to the capability found, the following issues are relevant to take notice of.

11.3.3.1 *The Role of Inequalities in Educational Regimes and the Issue of Certificate Poverty*

The youths in question have 'lost their track' either in the transition from school to further education or from education to work. With respect to the latter, not very surprisingly, inequalities are found in several case studies in the capability for

formal education as discussed via the questions of ‘certificate poverty’ (Solga 2011b; Düker and Ley in this volume) and ‘educational inflation’ (Hansen 2003; Kjeldsen 2014; Jensen and Kjeldsen in this volume: 210). Should this structural problem of unequal distribution of educational capabilities be compensated at this later stage (see the question of early school selection in Austria or Germany)? Or should inequalities rather be avoided at earlier stages of the educational path, providing for what Walkers (2010) terms ‘a just education’? This could also imply equalising differences in outcome in terms of status position (income and recognition) based on educational achievements, that is, to equalise the remuneration of jobs that are socially deemed valuable (see Germany).

11.3.3.2 Negative Schooling Experiences as a Dominant Issue

In nearly all case studies, one of the threats found against aspirations for (further) learning, job-related desires and ideas of future prospects is negative schooling experiences – or at least as a very important shift in their lives (i.e. Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, France). As the Swiss case study sums up, ‘[a]ccording to all young persons interviewed, school played a decisive role in their life course. Many of them recall the end of compulsory schooling as a turning point in their biographical trajectory, understood as a succession of situations that occur longitudinally throughout their life-course’ (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 4). Further, the German case study reveals the ambivalence of young people who have had bad schooling experiences and do not want to go continue their school education, but for whom, at the same time, staying in school seems quite easy and familiar, while also being aware that it is both reasonable and promising to achieve higher educational qualifications (Düker and Ley 2012). The young people adapt their aspirations and preferences to what they assume to be within their reach (caused by negative experiences and low self-esteem). For institutions mainly handling the transition from school to work, these experiences are not only a precondition for their work but a constant phenomenon they have to cope with and overcome.

11.3.3.3 The Misrecognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning

These constraints of formal education and the broad perspective on education within the case studies (see as well the definition of education as ‘Bildung’, as will be presented next) entail a wider perspective on *informal* and *non-formal*²⁵ learning that

²⁵The understanding of lifelong learning and the differentiation between formal, non-formal and informal education can be found in communication from the EU Commission on ‘[m]aking a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality’ (COM (2001) 678) where the ‘Member States will be encouraged to provide the legal framework to implement more widely the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning’ (*ibid.*: 17). The three terms are defined as: (1) *Formal learning* – ‘Learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to

points to artistic, creative and non-standardised experiences that can also be crucial for the orientation, formation and recognition of young adults. This has particularly been found in the Swiss and French cases. In fact, artistic expression is often not acknowledged as a resource due to the dominance of labour market employability. However, apart from the intrinsic value of artistic expression, there is a risk that focusing solely on hard skills will prove counterproductive in relation to aspirations for education and learning, as observed by Nussbaum: ‘the literary and artistic humanities are essential to cultivate the capacity for creativity and innovation’ (Nussbaum 2012 [2010]: 151). In terms of the capability approach, education can be understood as an end in itself, concerning ‘a truly human life’ – a part of Nussbaum’s capability for *senses, imagination and thought*, which is ‘informed and cultivated by an adequate education’ (Nussbaum 2011: 33) – and, ultimately, as a means to supporting and achieving democratic citizenship (cf. Nussbaum 2006). In this sense, non-formal and informal learning become important issues: spare time activities are relevant when cultivating the imagination needed for innovative practice. Pointing to Pestalozzi’s Gertrude, Nussbaum reminds us that ‘practical activities, carried on in a playful spirit, enriched the personality’ (Nussbaum 2010: 101).

11.3.3.4 Education as ‘Bildung’

An important notion is the aspect of capability for education as ‘Bildung’, which has been emphasised in several of the case studies (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, etc.). A precondition for processes of ‘Bildung’, understood here as cultural self-formation, is to create a context for and stimulation of *practical reasoning* and biographical reflexivity. ‘Bildung points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and aesthetic concerns. [...] It entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. Bildung, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the “good life”, of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creation’ (Bleicher 2006: 365). In the terms of Nussbaum, *practical reasoning* will therefore secure education that ‘on the one hand relates to the ability to evaluate and to form independent judgements, whilst, on the other, establishing the prerequisites for the more mature capability to exercise practical reason in terms of forming a conception of the good and planning one’s life’ (Terzi 2004:

certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective’ (ibid.: 32); (2) *Non-formal learning* – ‘Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective.’ (ibid.: 33); (3) *Informal learning* – ‘Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or ‘incidental/random’)’ (ibid.: 32). For a more comprehensive discussion and literature review on the these three types of learning, see Colley et al. (2002) and Hodkinson et al. (2003).

18). This is closely entangled with the next dimension found in relation to the capability of education, namely, the conception by professionals of the good and the informational basis for these judgements that they may or may not support the young persons with.

11.3.3.5 The Informational Base for Choice Making in a Professional Working Alliance

It has been found that different guidance professionals and services – such as study and career counsellors in compulsory schools, and in the transition from school to work or further education – should strive to equip the individual with a *comprehensive informational basis for making choices*. This should not only pertain to the transition but also to employment-related aspects, as well as the potential decision to return into education for a certain period (lifelong education). For the group of vulnerable young citizens, this service could also include professionals in these services mediating between the youngsters and the company or training placement when problems occur in the relationships. For instance, as in the following example in the Swiss case study: ‘the coaches also play an important role in relation to employers. Indeed, they may act as intermediaries and/or mediators between the youngsters and their bosses. [...] Indeed, they have two functions that may be contradictory on certain occasions as they are called to, concomitantly, defend the JAD’s rights in front of his employer and push him to adapt to the demands of this latter and to the requisites of the labour market. In other words, they have to be both advocates and compliance officers’ (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein in this volume: 185–186). In this way, professionals could help to avoid a rupture in the internship/apprenticeship placement (see also Denmark). Furthermore, the case studies demonstrate that it is important to go beyond the sole question of getting full access to information. Moreover, the transition from education to choice and decision-making is a fundamental aspect of this crucial process and can only be established within a trustful and persistent working alliance between professionals and addressees (France, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland).

11.3.3.6 Capacity to Aspire as a Normative Orientation (for Institutions)

Institutions can make a major difference if they facilitate a *capacity to aspire* in young people. The capacity to aspire indicates the desires for and imagination of the future and the normative frameworks from which they take form (Appadurai 2004). Thereby, institutions can become the main driving force behind the development of positive attitudes towards learning and becoming *capable citizens in European societies*. This could entail discussion with young people in vocational training about the possibility of continuing in higher education at a later period in their working life. It has been found that one of the main drivers against positive future prospects are the dominant *negative schooling experiences* named earlier.

Of course, the capacity to aspire has its limits when expression of limited educational aspirations is not the outcome of adaptation to a limited set of opportunities. Partly, the capacity to aspire can be helpful when individuals characterised by very negative schooling experiences are brought into situations where they experience themselves as ‘able to learn’ or experience success for the first time in a school setting. Therefore, it is of paramount importance not to go for the quick fix and lower the educational expectations for youngsters at risk. Education is a full capability when standards are not torn down and when youngsters have the feeling to succeed at the same level of expectation encountered by other youngsters. The role of institutions, therefore, is to function as enablers so that the learning process becomes empowering.

11.3.4 The Capability for Work

Even though there are several similarities to the aforementioned capability for education – indeed both are close to the subject matter and field that the case studies are oriented at – the capability for work is the main objective of the researched institutions and encompasses future-oriented opportunities for young adults. Hence, the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activities (also including informal care work, etc.) that one has reason to value. This central capability includes ‘being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition’ with others (Nussbaum 2011: 33–34). It encompasses being free to choose a job or activity without being forced in a specific direction. In this sense, at least some entitlement to be inactive without unbearable costs should be offered. Again, passive empowerment matters – e.g. the issue of available cash benefits for inactive people, and their conditionalities: i.e. what kind of inactivity is socially recognised and compensated for, and what kinds of inactivity are not? This entails a crucial link to the capability for voice, which will be addressed below. In relation to the capability for work, the case studies point to the following issues.

11.3.4.1 Sufficient Valuable Opportunities in Terms of Available Jobs and/or Activities

As can be seen in many of the case studies, the lack of internships, practice or work opportunities in terms of available jobs is not only a question of resources, commodities and social justice in general but is also the condition and the predetermined corridor wherein the institutions and measures have to navigate (i.e. Germany, Denmark, Austria, Italy); if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, professionals are not able to create a broader and deliberative information basis and are trimmed to external market conditions. Moreover, the free

choice of occupation is often formally granted, but if the related internships or apprenticeship positions are not guaranteed it remains merely an empty formal right with no possibilities for realisation and thereby no capability. An empirical fragment from the German case serves as a suitable example: to guarantee the freedom of vocational choice the Federal Constitutional Court proclaimed that a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants should be secured (Düker/Ley in this volume); however, with a current ratio of 89.9 to 100, this resource is not provided. This has an impact on the capabilities for work and education. Therefore, enabling youth to actualise their voice and choice in the selection of placements cannot be achieved without taking the external context of services into account, such as local labour market conditions, funding issues, the social responsibility of companies and the wider policy environment. For now, this may serve as an example of how a capability can be missed when a needed *commodity* is not obtainable (see the capability model presented in this volume by Kjeldsen and Bonvin). In this regard, the Austrian government passed a so-called training guarantee for all young people under the age of 18. The aim of the guarantee is to provide every school leaver, who cannot continue school-based education, with an apprenticeship place. The main instrument for this is to replace existing measures within *active labour market policies* (ALMP) that mainly served to prepare young people for an apprenticeship in the regular labour market with so-called supra-company apprenticeships (see Atzmüller in this volume and the Austrian case study as well). Despite the differences in national transition regimes, this policy can serve as a practical answer to the growing crisis in vocational education and training (VET), but only if the earned certificates are not devalued due to their misrecognition.

11.3.4.2 The Prevention of Discriminatory Practices and Labelling Processes with Regard to Measures and Institutions

Keeping in mind that the target group in this project has been designated as being ‘vulnerable’ in terms of a lack of capabilities, the question of labelling processes becomes apparent and questionable at the same time. On the one hand, the individualisation and contractualisation of programmes is one of the objectives in several institutions and seems to be conducive due to the variety of biographical transitions. On the other hand, this promotes the idea (and sometimes myth) of a pedagogical feasibility to solve (structural) problems on the individual level (see the cases of Germany, Denmark and Switzerland). As the Swiss case illustrates, ‘the move towards contractualisation is intrinsically ambivalent. It potentially opens the way towards social policies fostering individual emancipation, but at the same time, it also makes access to welfare benefits more constraining and selective’ (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 1); furthermore, it induces a transfer of responsibility from society to the youngster, and, in some cases (see Polish case), discriminatory practices became evident to some degree.

11.3.4.3 The Infrastructure and (Material) Resources of the Transition Measures in Itself

The infrastructure and (material) resources of the transition measures act as a yardstick for practical learning and the encouragement for participating in constructive – in terms of ‘productive, useful and tangible’ – learning processes. According to the Austrian case study, this involves several features: ‘Learning processes in apprenticeship training must imply the production of something visible and a useful outcome (1). The production process itself is not only physically or psychically tiring but also makes youngsters aware of their capacity to form and shape raw material into something of completely different appearance (2). The production of things for daily usage opens up immediate alternatives of agency and “empowers” them in daily life – as professionals and as social agents. Youngsters not only learn for an abstract exam or for the commodification of their labour but for the application of their skills in daily life (3). Finally, taking on responsibility for entire production processes – their supervision and self-determined organisation – strengthens the motivation to learn and consequently enhances the development of capabilities (4)’ (Haidinger/Kasper in this volume: 231–232). Here, the importance of a practical and supportive work environment in helping young people sustain their work placement and educate them about the world of work becomes essential.

11.3.4.4 Work-First vs. Life-First Approaches and the ‘Realistic’ Reference to the Labour Market

One of the research questions in the case studies was ‘which skills are seen as relevant and how are they enabled’. In several case studies, the question of ‘realistic’ reference to the labour market became crucial. A follow-up question might be ‘do professionals refer to concepts of employability and do they go beyond this instrumental perspective’. This involves how each measure is structured (work-first vs. life-first approaches) and which opportunities they provide. Whereas in some case studies there are direct and concrete link to the working world (see the cases of Austria, Poland, the UK), in other studies the working world is dominant but more virtual (see the German, Danish and Swedish cases). Both can be empowering and constraining at the same time; on the one hand, this transition phase can be a space for manoeuvre in both ways – as a safe space or as a leeway for creativity – while, on the other hand, the working world and the labour market can be an objective in itself that problematically becomes very dominant in the interactions between professionals and young adults. So, while it may be important for the young adult to be integrated into society partly through meeting their wider obligations to others and society, only some of these may be met through (paid) work in general, and the young people should not be explicitly or implicitly forced into a particular type of work when other forms of work or activities may be more appropriate and valued.

11.3.4.5 The Enabling of Adequate Skills vs. Realistic Perspectives

The findings of the case studies provide useful insights into what kind of work young people find reason to value. Still, sometimes it turned out that it is very hard for young adults to reflect on what they actually value, on their social positioning as the major predictor of life chances and especially on the desirability of different options which are all essential preconditions for moving beyond *functionings* and realising the possibility for (positive) social mobility in the sense that measuring progress is by the extension of freedom (Sen 1998: 8), which is at the heart of the capability approach. This also implies that the constraints of the labour market and aspirations for valuable work may not be developed because of a lack of education or a lack of knowledge about working life due to the biographical backgrounds and social networks in which the young person operates. Furthermore, the type of work that young people value is not static and preferences change over time.

‘Realistic perspectives’ – and their handling and negotiation – became a crucial point within several case studies (see, for instance, the German and Danish case studies). This may be read in two directions: in a positive version, it becomes creation and support of conditions for practical reasoning, in a negative reading as a form of adaptive preferences. In the negative interpretation, individual reflexivity is transformed through institutional practices with the aim of aligning aspirations with institutional demands. In this respect, aspirations and opportunities are curtailed by the adaptation to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of ‘adaptive preferences’. However, ‘realistic perspectives’ are not inherently a bad thing: they are inescapable; however, if the adaptation leads to a massive displacement from a person’s original inherent concerns, wishes and interests, young people are forced to cope with alienation: an eminent issue in this context. Our assumption is that young people’s concerns are already supported by reasoned valuations, which themselves are bound and adapted to their context. This dialectic of respecting and regulating young people’s aspirations has to be coped with institutionally.

11.3.4.6 Good and Meaningful Work as a Normative Orientation

In a normative reading, capability for work entails a social definition of ‘good and meaningful work’ (i.e. those jobs that are recognised as valuable by society at large) and ought to be wide ranging enough to encompass all types of activities that young people consider as valuable. This means that the definition of what is a ‘valuable job’ should be wide enough to take into account the wishes and desires of all young people. This normative idea of good and meaningful work becomes relevant on all levels. It does not only pertain to what could be desirable for each young adult and which aspirations are favoured (and socially accepted) but also to the opportunities offered by the transitional sector as an institution of social mobility or as an institution tending only to the demand side of the labour market and thus activating young people for employability. In several institutions and transitional regimes, the idea of what constitutes good and meaningful work is lacking (i.e. Germany, Italy).

11.3.5 The Capability for Voice

The concept of capability for voice designates the real freedom to voice one's opinion and to make it count within the process of public policy and policymaking on the one hand and social work practice on the other hand (cf. Bonvin 2012). On a subject-oriented (but not individualistic) level, capability for voice is the real freedom to express one's wishes, expectations, desires, etc. and see that they in actuality are taken into consideration when decisions concerning the individual are made. In relation to this capability, the following issues were found to be of relevance within the case studies.

11.3.5.1 Voice as a Substantiation of Citizenship and Social Rights

The capability for voice becomes relevant on the societal level when looking at questions of citizenship and social rights within national transition regimes. Being in a (material and facing) situation in which the transition from school to work is seen as a developmental space, and is socially perceived as less problematic, would be generally desirable and a productive normative orientation for youth policy. Nevertheless, in employment-centred regimes, disadvantaged young people are – quite paradoxically – even more pressured to make decisions on their future that might have only partly predictable consequences by applying practical reasoning, but without the preconditions for practical reasoning being met (such as access to all relevant information or time for reflecting one's conception of the good in light of available options, etc.). Thereby, the voice as a substantiation of citizenship and social rights become a resource that goes beyond mere commodities even if conceptualised as 'all goods, services and incomes available to a person' (Kjeldsen & Bonvin within this volume). The capability for voice becomes a substantial resource in relation to practising citizenship.

11.3.5.2 The Dominance of People Processing

Looking at the institutional level, the main objective of public action is – in the words of the capability approach – to create a broader (and deliberative) informational basis, on the one hand, and open up new opportunities, on the other hand. Within the case studies, critical questions were raised about whether the dominance of people-processing technologies and a narrow view on employability within active labour market programmes (ALMP) is constraining these aims (see especially Germany). This entails basic discussions about new conditions of professional work or rather the ambivalence of managerialism and professionalism as it is pointing not only to changing societal conditions but as well the paradigmatic shift from welfare state to competitive state and changes in professional practice (see Ziegler/Rosendal Jensen in this volume). Furthermore, in almost all countries, one of the main instruments of ALMPs is the idea of contractualisation (see again

Sect. 11.4.2), and a critical stance on this characteristic people-processing technology is needed. As the Swiss study sums up: ‘The ambivalences of contractulisation are particularly strong in the field of youth policies. Indeed, in this context, the impact of ALMPs goes far beyond the relation of the youngsters to employment, it conditions the way young adults engage in their future or, to put it another way round, it influences their capacity to aspire and the ethical horizon (Appadurai 2004) against which youngsters’ build their present and future citizenship’ (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 1).

11.3.5.3 The Invisibility of Exit Options

Furthermore, in several local transition institutions, the possibility of an exit option was not made clear or even not assumed, and the young adults felt like having the last – and not very likely – chance to jump on the bandwagon to the labour market. Coming from the capability perspective, Bonvin states that ‘the achievement of this processual dimension of real freedom requires the equal availability of three alternatives (Hirschman 1970) for each and every individual: he or she should be able to choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or exit so as to be able to escape these collective norms at an affordable cost’ (Bonvin 2012: 12). However, as the Austrian case study puts it, ‘the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of ‘getting lost on the street’, becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living’ (Haidinger/Kasper in this volume: 236). Therefore, the assumption of voluntariness within the programmes and the aspect of agency in general have to be challenged.

11.3.5.4 Participation Within the Support Process

Within the case studies, it was asked to what extent young people are able to have voice in the design and delivery of the institutions and measures. In almost all case studies, ‘voice’ options are mainly available in the young adults’ relationship with local agents and professionals. Thus, participation within the support process becomes crucial. This does not only entail that multiple opportunities and aims are possible and made transparent in the support process but also that youngsters are involved in the process of decision-making and perceive themselves as part of a working alliance. According to Lareau (2003), a ‘sense of constraint’ can typically be observed in working class and ‘underclass’ youth. Many young people may have very narrow horizons in terms of what type of employment they aspire to, partly shaped by gender stereotypes and a lack of role models; however, ‘while young

people's voice and choices may be developed through providing role models and encouragement; the extent to which they can articulate their voice and choice is still shaped and restrained by the context of wider labour markets, notably where UK youth unemployment rates are currently far higher than other age cohorts, often negative attitudes of employers towards low skilled young people and by the skills and experience of the young people themselves' (Hollywood et al. 2012:12). This is, furthermore, related to the last two dimensions: namely, the need of democratisation of social service organisations as well as what we will name a 'sustainable capability space', where the capability of voice becomes a substantial resource.

11.3.5.5 The Democratisation of Social Service Organisations

One of the constraints against democratic participation within services is that young persons do not see themselves in the position of demanding anything; furthermore, they remain sceptical towards agents of social institutions while tending to comply with the decisions and actions of state agents, at least on the surface. Moreover, they do not expect that institutions meet their needs and requirements. A 'sense of entitlement' has to be institutionally enabled and subjectively enacted, aiming at fulfilling young peoples' self-conscious expectation that institutions and their agents respond to their needs and aspirations. Here, the basic question of adaptive preferences and code of realistic perspectives were traced (see above as well the German and Swedish cases). There was even less evidence that programmes sufficiently involved young people in the development and implementation of the programmes (see every case study). This is interpreted as a lack of democratisation.

11.3.5.6 The Need for a Sustainable Capability Space for Young People as a Normative Orientation

In this respect, basic questions of self-determination and agency have to be raised within this concept of the capability for voice (i.e. Zimmerman 2006). This pertains to methodological issues as well as to the evaluation of transition processes and finally to a normative orientation in transitional regimes and society in general.

Understanding youth as a specific transition period can be seen as an important aspect when securing the opportunity to remake choices made within this time of transition either from school to further education, from school to work, or even from early youth to adulthood. This period could be conceptualised as a sustainable capability space (see Denmark, Germany in detail but other case studies as well). In our conceptual understanding, a sustainable capability space preserves a period and a space for flourishing in a supportive and developing environment. Whereas adolescence is often seen as a delay or suspension of an activity or a law – which would point to stagnation – the concept of a sustainable capability space refers to a time of growth and human flourishing, wherein the

young persons have time and space to voice their desires and develop their aspirations and life plans that they have reason to value. This is therefore a new kind of understanding, and it fits well to the dynamics of the capability approach: ‘This amounts to seeing a person in as it were, an “active” rather than a “passive” form (but neither the various states of being nor even the “doings” need necessarily be “athletic” ones)’ (Sen 1990: 44).

As can be seen in the different case studies, it appears that the issue of voice was a crucial element. A capacitating project – which means a measurement or programme within the field of education and work – in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate. More generally, a project will be enabling if its operation is one of value in the eyes of the young adult and they, for that reason, chose to participate. Young people should not be compelled to participate in experimental programmes; rather, they should be invited to get involved, which requires that they are well informed. According to this, among the studied projects, very few, if any, pay special attention to the capability for voice per se. Capability for voice is not explicitly an end or a means to be achieved by the projects.

11.3.6 Conclusions: Combining Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice

So far, it is possible to state that the capability for voice can be seen as a ‘transmission belt’ for the other two capabilities and, perhaps, as a link between them; furthermore, the triangle between the three capabilities should be secured as a sustainable capability space that the individual has an effective voice within – even after choices have been made, they should be open for renegotiation and chances if the young person’s new experiences make them change or alter their values. These iterative changes may, instead of being seen as a failure in choice making, be understood as development of the individual’s capability for practical reason. On the one hand, having a voice only becomes crucial when (real) opportunities of education and work are provided; if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, this processual dimension of freedom turns out to be a chimera and can be stated as a biographical reflexivity without embodiment and materialisation. On the other hand, these opportunities are in need of practical reasoning to be able to form a conception of the good, engage in reflection about the planning of one’s own life and, in the end, value educational and occupational choices.

11.3.6.1 Means and End Confusion in Relation to Education and Work

Education and certificates gained through educational programs are supposed to be necessary prerequisites for work opportunities and thus related to the capability for work. As can be seen from the case studies, however, in some cases

learning on the job is the best method. Therefore, one may call education a *means* and for another *end*, namely, the freedom – or capability – to seek the work position one has reason to value and as a result have the freedom to shape one kind of life rather than another, and vice versa. In many of the cases, work and education are situated in bi-dimensional relations. Within the relation between capability for work and education, it has been found here that education often assumes an instrumental role and is devoted to a substantial capability, namely, the capability for work. Capabilities for education become valuable because being successful at school is important to guarantee the realisation of what the youngsters met valued. If this cannot be achieved, it leads to unbearable situations: ‘without studies, no work and your life is ruined’. Therefore, the capability for education is not seen as an end in itself but rather as a means for access to a chosen life. As a result of the empirical investigation, it has become quite clear that one of the three single valuable capabilities should not be promoted at the cost of the others. The studies show that the capability for education in particular is an important necessity for the good life in other domains. In the French case, for example, students’ diplomas matter in different situations. The Baccalauréat (A-level) is envisaged here as a conversion factor, increasing the young persons’ positive ability to achieve something worth doing. The social norm does indeed favour this qualification in order to access the job market more securely. Thus, formal educational achievements act as a social conversion factor. This has important implications for the young people that will not be encouraged or even given the opportunity to choose the life they have reason to value. Instead, they are being persuaded to pursue a kind of life conduct which is valued according to external norms. As can be seen from the Polish case, this is outside their real influence, and thus, ‘[i]n this sense, it is connected to Bourdieu’s assessment that its role is to reproduce social order and legitimise this reproduction’ (Sztandar-Sztanderska and Zieleńska 2012:12). The reproduction of inequality through education is by no means ground-breaking or an unexpected finding. In a sense, education forms the ‘ability to exercise freedom’, and individual freedom ‘may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach’ (Sen 1989: 55).

As mentioned earlier, there is a conceptual and important difference. It can be observed in the different case studies that education is often closely connected to the capability for work. This double perspective on education in relation to work and the good life one has reason to value raises several problems for vulnerable young people within Europe, especially when the certificates and qualifications are unequally distributed and thereby cause inequalities in the space of other valuable capabilities, such as the capability for voice or even the capability for education when provided as lifelong learning through the workplace. Therefore, on a macro level, this causes several paradoxes and counterproductive practices particularly in life course transitions whether from finished education into the labour market or from compulsory education to further job-qualifying education. For instance, in the case of Germany, when leaving lower secondary school, it is

obvious that finishing school with a general qualification for apprenticeship entrance is by no means an absolute guarantee for a job and training placement. Therefore, it can be stated that to foster the capabilities for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. We find similarities across several different contexts as risks when facing these transition periods.

11.3.6.2 The Capability for Voice as a Just Negotiation with Exit Options

When making informed professional and political decisions within this field of interest, it seems of relevance to have in mind the relation between resources and commodities and the different structural and individual conversion factors. The decisions made need to secure what could be called a *just negotiation with exit options* between youth services and families with the young persons' aspirations, wishes and needs at the centre. *Just negotiation with exit options* would imply that a young person is not forced to adapt their choices to the counsellors' or families' idea of 'realistic perspectives' in relation to the labour market situation at the present. Real freedom to choose in this matter requires that the choices the young individuals make do not result in discrimination when it comes to valuable social and professional integration. On the other hand, this does not indicate that the young person should not reflect his or her wishes in relation to the de facto structures in the labour market or educational system, but that they should be equipped with *an adequate informational basis for making choices*. In this manner, just measures will tend to allow youth, on a well-informed basis, to choose what type of education they have reason to value. This opens up for a double-sided understanding of education, both as a means for *good and meaningful work* and as an end in itself. In addition, the French case study highlights that the capability for voice can be developed through education; thereby, the capability for education becomes fertile for the development of young people's ability to voice their concerns. When '[t]he interviews show that developing capability for voice is at the very heart of the educational approach' and 'a weak performance at school is generally related to a poor capability for voice' (Berthet/Simon/Castets-Fontaine in this volume: 156, 158), then the three capabilities have transversal characteristics between each other and, for this reason, should be understood together as an important part of a sustainable capability space. Then again, 'the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education. A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two other capabilities while, on the contrary, a strong capability for education drags up and reinforces voice and work' (*ibid*: 159) But 'on the one hand, claiming and voicing requires some self-confidence and skills provided by education. Capability for voice is not given per se but comes out of a formal and informal education. On the other hand, the access to the labour market and a valuable job is in France strongly dependent on the kind of degree gathered in education' (Berthet et al. 2012: 15).

Accordingly, job orientation could therefore be understood as a long-term issue and leave acknowledged ‘space’ for trial and error as a part of a period of self-determination. In this regard, the needed space of capabilities has to be sustainable. In the case studies, young people often experience a lot of time pressure in terms of decision-making (Austria). In this sense, the resources provided by schools aimed at equalising skills of their students, catch-up classes and individual consultations (see Poland) could become part of a sustainable capability space. Likewise, the informational basis seems of importance as it influences unintended programme dropout (France).

If the above is brought into perspective, it could be discussed whether *enabling young people to act as capable citizens in European societies* in a just educational (transitional) system would entail a *sustainable capability space* for young adults that would secure:

1. Through a manifold service system that each young person not only has access to information but can form their own *informational basis for choice making in relation to education and work*.
2. Real freedoms and not merely formal entitlements (veto or exit opportunities and necessary commodities for their actualisation), in relation to transitions between employment and education. This implies that the voice of the young is seriously taken into account.
3. *Interventions based on individual needs and resource alignment* for all young citizens that secure the real opportunity to enjoy the capabilities for voice, work and education, meeting or exceeding a threshold determined through a democratic political process.

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Part VI

EU Youth Strategies from

a Capability Perspective

Chapter 12

Employability Versus Capability: European Strategies for Young People

Regine Schröer

12.1 Introduction

Youth transition from school to work in the EU falls mainly within the competences and responsibilities of the Member States (MS), who have in the past developed very different responses to address the needs of young people in this crucial phase of their life.

Difficulties and failures of young people to succeed in this transition are anything but new. Member States' strategies and policies differ a lot in a context of different welfare regimes, cultural traditions as well as political and economic change, therefore enabling some countries to show better results than others. In these areas so far, the role of the European Commission (EC) and the effect of European policies have been very limited. The changing (mostly worsening) realities affecting all Member States and the negative impact of the crisis on the living conditions of youth are common challenges that need to be addressed. Europe 2020 and the related initiatives put in place by the EC and the MS to tackle the problem of youth unemployment represent concrete steps in addressing the challenge. Especially remarkable in this sense is the stronger role played by the Commission in the context of the new governance mechanism set up by Europe 2020 (the European Semester) and its reinforced effort in stimulating, assessing and monitoring common policy frameworks in the areas of education and employment. However, beyond the strong prioritization of education and (youth) employment undertaken by EU Institutions and Member States, the persistent crises and the worsening indicators of the life conditions of young people in Europe call for a shift and a change in the policy perspective when addressing such themes. There is a need for a stronger

R. Schröer (✉)
BBJ Consult AG, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: central@bbj.be

impetus for a positive future for young people as a precondition for an inclusive, economically healthy European society, to bring young people in disadvantage (social, education, job wise) in the centre of policy-making and to look more at their comprehensive well-being and empowerment as an investment not only in view of an increased work productivity but rather in view of the development of healthy, active and motivated European citizens. The theoretical framework elaborated by the Workable project based on the principles of the Capability Approach could offer a plausible approach in this respect.

The Workable research collaborative project mainly investigated national, regional and local policies in some European countries surveying whether and how the match between (socially disadvantaged) young people's supply of skills and competencies and changing labour-market needs is sustained and secured, while simultaneously broadening their options for living in and actively shaping European knowledge societies. It has explored how educational strategies are implemented and assessed and if they enable young people to convert knowledge, skills and competencies into capabilities to act as fully participating active citizens.

This paper seeks to complement the rich harvest of scientific findings and information collected through the work carried out by the Workable research team, carrying out the empirical analysis of the elements of the CA that can already be found within EU education and employment strategies set-up (mainly but not only) in the framework of Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

First of all, in regard to the EU policies and measures, we present a definition of the analyzed target group in search for CA-friendly elements. We provide a glimpse into different definitions of the analyzed target group according to country-specific social, political and historical backgrounds. Furthermore, we establish how policy-makers and academia have been focusing their work on the specific group of young people neither in Employment nor in Education. NEETs have thus become a widespread indicator of the conditions young people are facing during the period of financial crises and sociopolitical reform and adjustment.

In the next section, after a brief outline of the mainstream policy approach informing of the EU and Member States' education and employment policies, i.e. the human capital approach, we recall the three main elements regarding the policy analyses adopting a Capability perspective: Capability for Education, Capability for Work and Capability for Voice.

The following section brings an analysis of the three of the main strategies – reducing early school leaving (ESL) to less than 10 % at EU level, tackling youth unemployment through the Youth Opportunity Initiative (YOI) and EU policy cooperation in the field of youth (European Youth Strategy) – that the EU has put in place to match the education-related headline targets set by the strategy Europe 2020. We try to identify the elements on these EU policies comparable to the three capabilities. Specifically, we look for elements of Capability for Education in the ESL

strategy, for elements of Capability for Work in the YOI and for elements of Capability for Voice in the EU ‘Youth in Action Programme’ and the underlying EU strategy for the recognition of the informal learning.

Whereas education and employment policies fall within the competences retained by the Member States, the European Commission is the leading actor in coordinating and streamlining the efforts undertaken by the Member States towards the achievement of the policy objectives set jointly with the European Council. In the last section, before drawing up some conclusions and possibly outlining some policy recommendations, we try to better describe the necessary substantial shift of the policy strategies, developed by the EU and Member States, to bring the focus on the individual needs of youth at risk of social and labour-market exclusion. We acknowledge the importance of the empowerment of these people as a key issue in order to facilitate the transition from school to work and adult life and the importance of the recognition of their own values and choices as well as the provision of adequate opportunities to access relevant information and the possibility to actively participate in the relevant processes and decisions with which they are concerned.

12.2 Youth, Young People with Fewer Opportunities and NEETs

Over the past few decades, young people’s transitions from education to work have undergone fundamental changes and have become an important policy focus for the EU and its Member States. Especially in the last few years, youth unemployment has been rising dramatically, exceeding 23.5 % at the EU level in September 2013.¹ The increased competition on labour markets, the shift of low-skill production to low-wage countries as well as the general shift towards the knowledge society have increased the importance of education on the labour market. Whereas young people in general are the most affected by the effects of the persisting economic stagnation, it is clear that some young people are more vulnerable than others to social exclusion in the form of early school leaving, unemployment, or precarious employment (Walther et al. 2005). In the last decade, under the auspices of the Open Method of Coordination, governments started to restructure youth transitions from school to work and to develop policies aimed at ensuring the successful transition of the so-called disadvantaged youth. The definition of ‘disadvantage’ is a controversial matter in both the policy and the research domains. This is because it is based on different historical, social and political backgrounds; Member States may have very differing definitions of (youth) disadvantage as well as, more in general, differing

¹ EC Com (2013) 801 final report: Draft joint employment accompanying the communication from the Commission on Annual Growth Survey 2014, page 3

scopes for their youth policies. Let alone that already the definition of youth with the prevalence of its positive, youth as a resource, or negative image, youth as a problem, can clearly lead to the emerging of completely different political concepts and priorities.

At the EU level, a common agreement has been reached among Member States on the definition of 'Young People with Fewer Opportunities'. The definition was provided by the European Commission in 2007 within its inclusion strategy, elaborated and adopted in the framework of the 2007–2013 'Youth in Action Programme' for the support and recognition of nonformal learning activities (European Commission 2007).

Young People with fewer opportunities are defined as young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because (...) of one or more of the listed situations and obstacles (...). These situations/obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non-formal education, trans-national mobility and from participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large.

Obstacles identified can be social obstacles,² economic obstacles,³ disability and educational difficulties, cultural differences,⁴ chronic health problem and geographical obstacles⁵ (European Commission 2007).

This is the commonly accepted general definition for vulnerable or disadvantaged youth within the EU policies dealing with Youth and Education at large. The EU policymakers as well as research and academia in the very last few years have focused strongly on a more specific group of young people who are not in employment or in any form of education or training (NEET). The NEETs are young people disengaged from both work and education and therefore most likely at high risk of labour-market and social exclusion. The main NEET indicator covers the age group 15–24. The indicator is further broken down by sex and by different age groups. Breakdowns by labour-market status (unemployed, inactive) and education level (no higher than lower secondary attainment/at least upper-secondary attainment) are also available (with breakdowns by educational attainment to be used from age 18) (European Commission 2011a).

NEETs have thus caught the attention of policymakers in the EU as a useful indicator for monitoring the labour-market and social situation of youth in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and

²For example, discrimination (because of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), possession of limited social skills or antisocial or risky sexual behaviours as well as belonging to groups in a precarious situation, (ex-) offenders, (ex-) drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans, young people from broken families

³For example, low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, long-term unemployment, homelessness, poverty and young people in debt or with financial problems

⁴For example, young immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority and young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems

⁵Linked to the place of living: rural areas, small islands or peripheral regions, urban problem zones and less serviced areas

against the background of the persisting economic crises and volatility of labour market. In this way, the performance of the NEETs indicator becomes the key factor in relation to the evidence-based policies developed and implemented by the EU and the Member States, aimed at achieving the employment and education headline targets set within Europe 2020.

It must also be highlighted how the NEET indicator as commonly used term does not fully mirror the highly inhomogeneous nature of the group of young people that it represents and their multifaceted living conditions. The 15–24-year-old group includes youngsters with very different reasons for not being at work or in education: some of them do not have control over their NEET situation due to deprivation or other severe disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, youngsters can be NEET for short periods just during the transition from school to work or in between two jobs. Further on, some NEETs have a full control of their situation and have chosen to be in such a position: people who are voluntarily not seeking a place in education or work because they do not have a constraint of doing so or others who are engaged in voluntary work, art or travelling.

In time of budgetary constraints and financial cuts of provisions for welfare systems, the relevance of NEETs for governments and societies does not lay in the cost that must be borne by the society and by the state in terms of both potential loss of opportunities by young people and of resources to be spent to tackle long-term effects of their exclusion from labour market. In a recent research conducted by Eurofound's Employment and Competitiveness Unit, it is pointed out how the NEET status and the growing extend of the phenomenon carries along a relevant social dimension. Marginalization and exclusion from education and labour market often turn into more general disengagement and disaffection towards society as a whole. The effects may be a loss in trust in institutions among young generations that can undermine the legitimacy of the democratic system in societies. Therefore, active political participation of youth could decline and involvements in politically extreme movements could rise. A similar trend may be registered as far as participation in other forms of social life is concerned, such as associations, voluntary organizations, professional associations, etc. (Eurofound 2011, 2012).

In this paper, we concentrate our attention on vulnerable young people who left school or training with low or no qualifications. This is the group facing the biggest difficulties in getting their transition from school to adult life back on track, either to the formal education system or to a career path with valuable professional perspectives. Early school leavers also are the group at highest risk to social exclusion and poverty. Some of the main European strategies related to youth are presented in the following sections and are examined in order to point out whether they present Capability Approach – friendly elements in relation to their target group. What we want to see is if they allow new education and employment opportunities and if they foster the development of the capabilities young people need in order to be able to cope with the challenges linked with the transition to work in a modern, knowledge-based, globalized society.

12.3 Using the Capability Approach in Policy Analysis and Programme Evaluation

12.3.1 *Mainstream EU Approach in Education and Employment Policies: The Human Capital Approach*

The European Union with its policies and initiatives attributes a high value to education in view of the realization of its aims, among others the promotion of a balanced economic and social development so as to ensure prosperity, peace and stability for its people. The human capital approach is the dominant paradigm mainly influencing and encompassing the design and implementation of the education and employment policies promoted by the European Union. Whereas in the course of time it has been recognized that an interdependent knowledge-based society generates new needs in terms of social cohesion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment to which education and training can make a significant contribution (Council of the European Union 2004), the latter are mostly seen as a mean, an investment, aiming at enhancing the productivity of the individuals and their capacity to adapt to the needs of the labour market. No real space or recognition is given to the capability of individuals and to the value of education in terms of pupils' capabilities (skills and choices) for voice, for education and for work.

Under the common framework established at the Union level, education and labour-market regimes vary widely within the EU according to the specific socio-economic and political background and the individual priorities set by governments of Member States. The policies implemented therefore differ a lot from country to country in function of the different educational and labour-market models. Nevertheless, policies tend to conform to the classic human capital approach adopted by the European Union.

It is possible to observe this by having a look at the continuity of principles laid down in the policy development undertaken in the last decade by the Union: from its first attempt to tackle the weaknesses of Europe in the face of globalization (adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000) to the launch of the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart sustainable and inclusive growth. Along these strategic policy developments, the EU education policy framework followed a similar path.

At the beginning of the 2000s, responding to the persisting economic stagnation and to the new competitiveness challenge put out by globalization, the EU launched the ambitious Lisbon Strategy with the strategic goal of making Europe by 2010 the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (European Council 2000). In line with the dominant approach, the strategy stressed the need to invest in human capital and, therefore, to define and provide new basic skills and to accompany them with active labour-market measures so as to maximize the employability and adaptability of workers.

Later on, also in view of the failure in achieving the targets set by the Council in 2000, a renewed Strategy was launched in the framework of the 2005 midterm review. The Council, upon proposal of the European Commission, highlighted the essential need ‘of re-launching the Lisbon Strategy without delay and re-focus priorities on growth and employment. Europe must renew the basis of its competitiveness, increase its growth potential and its productivity and strengthen social cohesion, placing the main emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimisation of human capital’ (Council of the European Union 2005). Whereas equal opportunities, active employment measures, active ageing strategies and social integration are mentioned as priorities, the focus is again on employability and adaptability: ‘Human capital is Europe’s most important asset’; therefore, the quality of education and educational systems in Europe must be improved.

In 2009, the Council, in its attempt to boost and improve cooperation among Member States in the education sector, drew up the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’), building upon achievements of a previous policy initiative (Education and Training 2010 work programme). In ET 2020, lifelong learning is regarded as a fundamental principle underpinning the entire framework and is designed to cover learning in all contexts – whether formal, nonformal or informal – and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning.

Since then, the economic and political context has changed, creating new uncertainties and constraints. Thus, the European Union has taken further action to tackle the worst financial and economic crisis in its history and, in response, has agreed on a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: Europe 2020. In doing so, the EU has refocused its policy actions and is now streamlining its strategic priorities, also concentrating its efforts to achieve its headline targets by 2020. This applies to the employment, education and social inclusion policies, where the aim is to reach 75 % of population aged 20–64 employed, a share of less than 10 % of early school leavers, at least 40 % of young people attaining tertiary education and 20 million less people at risk of poverty.

12.3.2 Workable Analysis: The Capability Approach

The Workable research project focused on public policies and initiatives that allow young people to transit from school to work taking into account and strengthening their individual resources/capabilities for education in order to achieve a ‘good job’ and to live the life they have reasons to value.

At this point, it is interesting to look at the education and youth policies designed by the European Union through the perspective of the Capability Approach as initiated and developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum 30 years ago in the field of development economy. The most relevant question is whether this approach

helps not only enlightening additional aspects or dimensions of the trajectories of young people with low qualifications from education to adult and work life but also in developing criteria or tools for the design of innovative and more appropriate measures to support these disadvantaged youngsters in successfully going through this process. The theoretical framework as re-elaborated by the researchers involved in the Workable project is based on key concepts such as ‘choice, freedom, collective goods and services, political accountability and knowledge based social policies’ (Workable 2010).

In recent times, the CA has been introduced in empirical studies in the fields of employment, education and training with the idea that education ‘goes beyond investment and employability but it also highlights the significance of developing critical reflection and strengthening democratic participation in society, in particular the ability to debate, public reasoning and the inclusion of traditionally excluded voices’ (Workable 2010). The CA as re-elaborated by the Workable research team aims to be a tool to enlarge the concept of human capital and to extend the focus to elements other than only the employability of young people as described in the sections above.

Public policy and public institutions according to the CA are ‘social conversion factors’ which may allow people to convert their potentials/capabilities into valuable functions, thus enabling their participation in society taking into account their real freedoms and their realm of autonomy. Institutions and professionals in the field of education, training and work are instrumental both in stimulating and limiting ‘peoples’ life chances and opportunities for well-being and agency’ (Workable 2010). In this perspective, collective responsibility (the so-called ‘institutional capabilities’) is linked to individual capabilities (of the young people). The combinations of social, political, legal, institutional and cultural aspects established in a society develop or constrain resources and conversion factors of the individuals and in doing so have an impact on the development of individual capabilities and his or her freedom of choice. In this sense, the CA tries to combine both the aims of individual development and of societal changes. Each person has the right to live a ‘good life’ and is entitled to define himself/herself what for him/her constitutes a ‘good life’.

While the CA does not focus only on disadvantaged groups, in the framework of the Workable project, the group targeted by the research is defined as vulnerable young people lacking capabilities.⁶ With the aim of assessing EU education and employment policies and strategies targeting this group from a CA perspective, three key concepts have been defined by the research team and are to be used to examine EU-led programmes and institutions:

1. Capability for Education
2. Capability for Work
3. Capability for Voice

⁶See above (paragraph 2) the commonly accepted definition of ‘young people with fewer opportunities’.

The first dimension in the framework of the CA is the Capability for Education. The Workable research team defines this as ‘the real freedom to choose a training program or a curriculum one has reason to value. This entails all individuals (without any discrimination) being adequately empowered to make such a choice, as well as being free to choose the path of short or long duration curricula or even of non-education (i.e. education and the type of education is not a ‘must’ but always a choice)’ (Bonvin 2012). As a consequence, when looking at a specific policy targeting disadvantaged youth (young people with lower qualifications), the following elements may be considered and matter in order to assess whether it is or not capability friendly and eventually to which extent:

- (a) The attention devoted to flexibility of educational pathways, in the sense of their ability to integrate or reintegrate everyone at any stage of a curriculum or educational system
- (b) The ability attributed to the young people targeted by the measure or policy to
 - (1) make their own educational choices (and not to have adaptive aspirations)
 - (2) without being inflicted unbearable penalties for that (e.g. becoming a working poor, being non-recognized or discriminated, etc.)

The second dimension to be considered according to the CA is the Capability for Work. As it applies for the Capability for Education, the Capability for Work is defined as the real freedom of making the choice to undertake the job or activity one has reason to value. This principle goes along with the necessity of ‘entitling and empowering young people so that such a choice is possible through making available adequate skills, sufficient valuable job opportunities as well as avoiding discriminative practices with regard to the access to such opportunities’ (Bonvin 2012). Moreover, particularly relevant to the freedom of choice is the absence of penalizations as a consequence of the choice itself (the concept of ‘valuable job’ should be broadened so as to include any kind of activity, even the choice not to be active should be recognized without unbearable costs). Looking at specific education and/or employment policies or initiatives, the following elements may be considered in order to assess whether or not they align to the Capability Approach:

- The quality of training programs, meaning in general the inclusion of measures tailored specifically to the needs of our target group (with the aim of providing missing competencies and skills, be they technical, social, personal, etc.) as well as the quality of available opportunities in terms of jobs and activities, the provision of entitlements linked to job loss and inactivity and their conditionality.
- The way the notion of ‘valuable work’ is actually constructed (who decides what counts as a valuable job that is recognized by the society and paid as such).

The third dimension to consider is the Capability for Voice. This is defined as ‘the real freedom to express one’s wishes, expectations, desires, etc. and make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made. Three factors influence the degree of Capability for Voice of an individual: his or her cognitive ability to express his or her view point; social conversion factors, mainly the space and the value given by a society to the right of young people to express their point of view

(and the political recognition and reception of this point of view); the freedom of expressing a choice in one direction (and even the choice not to express it) without incurring in severe penalties (Bonvin 2012). In the field of the Workable research, in order to assess whether policies are oriented towards the CA, the following elements shall be taken into consideration as far as Capability for Voice is concerned:

- (a) To which extent youth have the necessary skills and political influence to push through their viewpoints
- (b) To which extent they are entitled to do this and to be listened to when they do it (since their interlocutors ought to be pushed by legislative or other regulative provisions in this direction)
- (c) Whether young people are free not to participate in the democratic debate if they choose so, without any substantial loss in terms of rights and entitlements.

With the help of this framework, we would like to analyse what (if any) Capability Approach's elements are retained in three relevant EU policies in the field of education, training and youth. In particular, we look for elements of Capability for Education in the early school leaving strategy, of Capability for Work in the Youth Opportunity Initiative and of Capability for Voice in the EU 'Youth in Action Programme' and the underlying EU strategy for the recognition of informal learning.

12.3.3 EU Policies and Capability for Education: The EU Strategy to Reduce Early School Leaving

In order to facilitate and coordinate the joint efforts of Member States and the European Commission to reach the actual target set by the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Council issued a recommendation in June 2011 designing a common framework for the implementation of more effective and comprehensive policies targeting the reduction of early school leaving.

The rationale behind this is that policies tackling ESL in Member States should be part of a comprehensive strategy allowing the identification of reasons for ESL at national, regional and local levels, entailing constant monitoring of implemented measures and policies and thereby enabling their impact assessment through systematic and harmonized data collection. Measures should also foresee structured cross-sectoral coordination of policies and target in particular groups at increased risk of early school leaving (children and youth with socio-economical disadvantaged backgrounds).

The model fostered by the Council shall make use of a policy mix of prevention, intervention and compensation measures (European Commission 2011b). Prevention focuses on early childhood education and care in order to avoid conditions resulting in early school failure. Intervention focuses on measures at education institutions in order to prevent school dropout at any educational level and can address the whole school/training institution or support individual pupils at risk. Compensation measures

aim to give new opportunities to re-engage in education for those who dropped out of school. Comprehensive support is to be provided for young people wishing to re-enter mainstream education and training, focusing on guidance as well as recognition and validation of prior learning (both formal and informal).

Policies in most Member States lack evidence, impact assessment and coordination; this means that initiatives are not sufficiently connected and impacts stay limited. The main intention of the EC is to foster a shift from individual measures to comprehensive policies against the early school leaving. All policies should follow a holistic approach and embed all affected stakeholders across sectors and Member States.

Initiatives on ESL indicated by Member States in their National Reform Programs are specifically assessed by the European Commission within the European Semester exercise set up in view of the progress monitoring towards the reaching of Europe 2020 headline targets. This assessment is further taken into consideration by the Council when issuing specific country recommendations during its annual June meeting, which are further translated by Member States in their renewed National reform Programmes for the next year. In addition to that, other comprehensive cross-reference data are included in Member States Reports drafted within the strategic framework for cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) and the related annual Progress Reports prepared by the Commission.

12.3.4 Early School Leaving and Elements of Capability for Education

As pointed out in its Europe 2020 strategy, the EU in order to keep up its competitiveness in the globalized market has to face the challenge represented by the growing need for highly qualified and skilled workers. Due to the progressive ageing of the society and the consequent decrease in economically active population, the EU shall particularly focus on the improvement of the quality of its education and vocational training system as well as on tackling the problems associated with the growing number of young people excluded not only from the labour market but from the integration into the society at large. In this perspective, from the EU's point of view, it is particularly important to take comprehensive actions for reducing early school leaving, facilitating the re-integration into education and thereby giving a positive employment perspective to those youth that, having dropped out of school, have low education and qualifications and therefore are equipped with 'inadequate skills for later life' (European Commission 2011b).⁷

In its analyses accompanying the proposal for an EU strategy to reduce ESL, the Commission says that 'there is a clear relationship between socio-economic status

⁷A detailed tool kit of analyses, policy measures and good practices in the Member States to combat ESL is provided in the European Commission staff working paper that accompanies the EU recommendation to reduce ESL in the EU.

and the risk of ESL, but the mechanisms linking various kinds of disadvantages to ESL are not clearly recognized. ESL is seen as a result of the interaction between home/family/community based factors, school-based and systemic factors' (European Commission 2011b).

Therefore, the EC invites the MS to develop a comprehensive framework with different strategies for prevention, intervention and compensation to combat ESL: to avoid ESL (prevention), before or at the moment of dropout (intervention) and after ESL (compensation). The EC concludes that 'different measures need to be implemented in parallel' (European Commission 2011b) at each stage in order to take into account the highly individual and different needs, backgrounds and problems of young people to reduce the different risk factors leading to ESL.

The human capital approach shapes the EU strategic approach underlined in Europe 2020. This applies also to the educational headline targets as well as to the related policy initiatives and the priority areas of intervention (including the policy recommendations issued yearly by the Council in the framework of the European semester).

Nevertheless, a certain number of elements within the EU strategy to tackle ESL can be considered in line with the principle stated above as of the Capability for Education. In particular, the priority that Member States' measures should give to groups at increased risk of early school leaving, such as children with a socioeconomically disadvantaged, migrant or Roma background or with special educational needs (Recommendation No 3) (Council of the European Union 2011), goes towards the necessity to develop and make available more training opportunities for the target group, increasing equal access to education in the long and short term and allowing the possibility of reintegration into the education and training system for those who had left it.

Also the policy framework recommended for action is getting closer to the principles of the CA. The Council recommends MS to develop a policy mix across different sectors (education, social policy addressing early childhood and youth, employment, etc.) by defining a strategy, as we have seen above, integrating different measures that address prevention, intervention and compensation in a coordinated way.

12.3.5 Prevention

In order to remove systematic obstacles, development of good quality early childhood education and care is meant to be one of the priorities suggested to MS. According to several empirical studies, 'the provision of the universally available, full-time, play-based education programme closes the gaps in social development, numeracy and literacy achievement between children from socially advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds' (European Commission 2011b). This is in line with the CA aiming to overcome unequal access to education due to limited availability of places, financial obstacles and a better transition to primary education.

This general policy principle could be then concretized in a Capability friendly measure or policy, for instance, if criteria for quality for early childhood education and care are defined, for example:

- Adequate funding
- Appropriate design for the transition to formal education (qualification of staff, quality control by inspection)
- Adapted content and organization of preschool education (social competence development, language learning programmes)⁸

It must be noted that the EC in its staff working paper accompanying the adoption of the ESL strategy focuses only on quantitative development of child care provision. No mention is made of qualitative criteria (such as content of service, qualifications of staff, supervision, cooperation with families, etc.). As a consequence, the priority given to the improvement and extension of child care and early school provision is mainly motivated by the will to increase the rate of female participation to the labour market rather than to enlarge the spectrum of capabilities of the pupils (content of service, inclusive programmes).

Another common characteristic in the structure of education and training systems is the absence or lack of flexibility in educational pathways, i.e. of bridges allowing mobility of pupils from one (type or level of) training to another. This often results in a concrete limitation of the possibility to choose and access the education young people value. Limited possibilities and perspectives have an impact on personal motivation. Research outlines the necessity for flexible education and training systems with a variety of recognized learning pathways and combined with individual and school-level support in order to reduce ESL.

To this regard, again getting closer to the principles of the CA, the EC in its staff working paper accompanying the ESL strategy provides examples of possible implementation measures that should aim to develop:

- A high degree of permeability of educational pathways which avoids educational tracks leading into dead ends
- Flexible approaches to combine general education, vocational training and first practical working experience
- A degree of flexibility and variety in vocational training
- Limiting the repetition of school years and to replace it with flexible individual support

The implementation of such measures would be a step in the direction of the CA approach aiming to overcome segregation of professional sectors and formal borders allowing a better professional orientation as well as improving access and choices of all young people. Flexible programmes can more easily react to and cope

⁸The EC indicates as example of good practice Sweden, where children from disadvantaged background experience a better start in compulsory education. Adequate funding, appropriate design for the transition to formal schooling as well as adapted content and organisation for preschool education (social competence development) have been successfully set up.

with the individual situation of the young person. A closer cooperation among formal and nonformal education and training sectors could develop new perspectives especially for young vulnerable people.

This applies particularly to the technical and vocational education and training system (VET). Whereas specific measures would vary from country to country according to their different situations, regional and structural disparities, MS are called to review their VET systems in order to reduce dropouts and develop the labour-market relevance of education and training. Notably, for most of the MS, the lack of employability of young people coming out from education and VET (especially disadvantaged youth) is lamented. An exception is Germany, where the improvement in educational performance of disadvantaged youths is linked to the strong effort undertaken to ensure equal opportunities in education and training.

12.3.6 Intervention

With regard to intervention measures, two types are proposed in the EC working paper. They focus either on the improvement of the situation in the learning environment (in the schools) or on the tailored support which should be provided to young people at risk.

The creation of a more supportive learning environment through the removal of financial obstacles and the strengthened cooperation with families or other actors outside of schools are Capability friendly. Such interventions may change the situation of pupils at risk, as they imply a more holistic and multi-professional implementation, going beyond the lack of their school competences. With regard to school-wide strategies, measures with a focus on the well-being of all students (physical and mental) or developing different learning styles (teamwork, drama, use of new technologies) can increase the motivation of young people at risk. The proposal of practicing school democracy in daily decisions of the school as such is promising if the voice of pupils is more actively requested and the implementation practised in a serious manner. Again, criteria for quality development and supervision of these measures at this stage of action are not mentioned and defined.

12.3.7 Compensation

After having dropped out of school or education, the EC recommends to the Member States to develop a range of tailor-made education and training opportunities with a compensatory character for the respective young people. The aim is to ‘create opportunities’ (European Commission 2011b) in offering qualifications at a later stage. As the barriers to continue learning are high and are linked to previous negative experiences in school, the programmes focus on alternative and individualized

settings (different learning environment, small groups, more teachers, innovative teaching, more practical elements) and aim to develop trust, self-esteem and motivation for learning. This approach is closer to CA in the sense that it enables young people to develop their abilities. The second chance school programmes ‘have to be relevant for the students, have to be able to provide sufficient incentives to maintain learning and need to be flexible to student needs’ (European Commission 2011b). These programmes should at the same time provide qualifications that are recognized on the labour market and represent a bridge to the mainstream education and training systems.

Such programmes have a more holistic character and intervention goes beyond development of cognitive and personal skills (empowerment, self-esteem). The life situation is tackled in individual support or advice settings.

Another strategy to develop new opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities consists in the recognition and validation of prior learning experiences by using national qualification catalogues, as is being done in Portugal. These measures look first of all to recognize experiences⁹ and competences of young people achieved in settings other than formal education and training in order to develop new pathways towards professional qualifications. In several Member States, national qualification systems emerge without sufficient attention to experiences of this specific target group. Another possibility is represented by informal or nonformal learning outcomes (European Commission 2011b). These programmes provide learning experiences in a different setting outside of school (tailor-made orientation and advice looking at the individual situation and personality, friendly atmosphere). They do not aim for the acquisition of skills, but they rather intend to reinforce young peoples’ self-esteem through practical, manual or artistic project work, relying strongly on active participation of young people. Enhancement of motivation through active participation, development and expression of own ideas and wishes through individual and group learning are CA elements with regard to voice. The programmes try to identify the potentials of young people through creation of strong relationships and exploration of (different) practical experiences in order to develop new abilities that will help later on to overcome challenges and difficulties once back on track in school or training.¹⁰

⁹Work experience outside formal working contracts, caring for family members, volunteering, participation in youth work activities or transnational exchange programmes

¹⁰In the strand of compensation, several capability elements in programmes like Youth reach in Ireland are present because of:

Holistic approach, looking at the multifaceted situation of young people (family, health, money, education)

Looking at potentials and strengths

Offer of additional education and training opportunities in a different setting

Participation on a voluntary basis, person can step out without penalties, wish and motivation of the young people are the red line for setting up the relationship/partnership, for guiding (?)

CA elements can be identified at the stages of prevention and compensation, less as far as intervention is concerned. While these steps go in the right direction, the overall strategy is not going far enough. Necessary changes like a development of flexible pathways in education and training or the urgent establishment of bridges between formal and nonformal education are not sufficiently outlined in order to develop innovative opportunities for vulnerable young people.

12.4 EU Policies and Capability for Work: The ‘Youth Opportunities Initiative’

In order to tackle the challenges represented by the rise of youth unemployment and the risks and costs of social exclusion associated with the growing number of NEETs, the European Commission proposed in December 2011 the adoption of a Youth Opportunities Initiative. The initiative ultimately aims at helping unemployed young people who left school or training before finishing upper-secondary level to get back to school or into a vocational training course that can give them the skills they need to get a job. Moreover, it also aims at giving the opportunity to gain a first work experience to young people who have a diploma, but cannot find a first proper occupation.

The Youth Opportunities Initiative pulls different existing programmes and funds together in order to boost new opportunities for young people. It calls on Member States especially to work on:

- Preventing early school leaving
- Helping young people to develop skills relevant to the labour market
- Ensuring a first work experience and on the job training
- Helping young people to find a (first) job

Beside the reinforced review of national policies and performances as part of the Europe 2020 governance procedure, the EU also retains a specific role following its commitment to implement concrete steps for fully mobilizing all financial support available as well as for streamlining the objectives of the YOI among its work programmes.

As for the commitment of financial support, this applies mainly to a greater and better use of the European Social Fund for the implementation of youth employment measures in line with and in support of the priorities identified by the YOI.

Despite the main actors who can take actions against youth unemployment are the Member States, the European Union has fairly precisely identified the type of measures that should be designed and implemented by the policy makers in Member States. Very concretely, the EU looks especially for innovative approaches that support among others the transition from school to work through a facilitated participation in apprenticeship/traineeship programmes, the set-up of Youth Guarantees schemes, the increase of intercountry mobility (both in formal and nonformal education), the promotion of youth entrepreneurship and the establishment of humanitarian aid corps.

12.4.1 Youth Opportunities Initiative in the Light of Capabilities for Work

In the socioeconomic analysis of the current weaknesses of European labour market and in the consequent policy development exercise carried out to tackle the crisis,¹¹ the EC focuses strongly on the need to improve employability (in particular of young people) and on the development of skills relevant for the labour market, for a better matching of labour demand and offer. Major problems recalled in several MS are (a) the mismatch between the skills provided by (vocational) education and the real needs in many sectors and (b) the lack of an efficient dual system which enables and facilitates the transition from education to working life. Therefore, the EC pushes strongly Member States to urgently develop measures aiming to increase the offer of apprenticeships and on-the-job training as well as to facilitate the first employment of those trainees who have successfully accomplished their dual experience of alternated training and work. The reference and key initiative developed by the European Commission in this regard is Youth Opportunities Initiative, the set of measures launched by the EC in December 2011.

From a Capability perspective, paying special attention to the Capability for Work, the effort undertaken by the EC (both directly and by leading Member States) to implement more and better internship schemes or to foster the guarantee of a first work experience to young people, may be beneficial especially to disadvantaged or marginalized young people, as this represents in itself an extension of the range of professional opportunities, perspectives and choices for them.

However, it must be noted that, even though reality varies pretty much from Member State to Member State, young people (with lower qualifications) often have to compete with a growing number of well-educated new graduates having attained a university degree who also encounter severe difficulties in accessing the labour market and getting a first employment.

Moreover, several Member States, like France, report significant difficulties in the implementation of (additional) apprenticeship schemes because companies are reluctant to hire staff through such schemes (aversion to long-term investment in human capital in economic crisis, preference for skilled workers, no sufficient incentives, no resources available to develop vocational training).

Equal access of marginalized young people to the available places is therefore not guaranteed and needs to be strongly addressed. As outlined in the previous section, policy mixes are needed in order to reform educational systems and provide the necessary flexibility of training pathways and their permeability, so that (re-)integration into education of those disadvantaged is possible. On the other hand, the design, the nature and the quality of the activation policies in the Member States may determine in what way, if any, the planned initiatives align to the CA approach as far as facilitation of the access of disadvantaged youth to appropriate qualification and training is concerned.

¹¹Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives; employment package including the Communication ‘Towards a Job-rich recovery’ and the accompanying staff working papers released in April 2012

Among all the measures mentioned in the YOI, of particular relevance for the Capability Approach is the forecasted establishment of the European quality framework of traineeships which shall be defined through a Council recommendation to be adopted in the first half of 2014.¹² The EC is aware of the need of quality norms for traineeships in order to establish a framework regulating this kind of employment so that its learning character is guaranteed (acquisition of more relevant skills) as well as to protect regular workers from the possibility of being replaced by lower-paid young people. Nevertheless, it must be noted how the quality of traineeships is very heterogenic in the different Member States. A European definition of minimum requirements for quality traineeships seems to be a relevant tool and could be used by young people as a reference.

The set-up of quality framework for traineeships represents one important part for the successful implementation of the Council Recommendation on youth guarantee recently approved upon proposal of the EC on 22nd April 2013. The EC seems particularly concerned with pushing this sort of activation measures, whereas youth guarantees are mostly not yet in place to a satisfactory extent. The idea is that all young people should receive ‘a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship’ (European Commission 2012) within a few months after leaving school. Nonetheless, the meaning of good quality employment, as well as of good quality advice and guidance services (with the focus on the real needs and individual situation of the young beneficiary), is yet to be specified and defined.

Also, in the EC analysis of the reasons that determine the success or failure of Active Labour Market measures, scarce or no relevance is attributed to personal motivation and satisfaction of individuals in respect to quality or appropriateness of the given activation framework.

Last but not least, the special value of European nonformal education programmes in alternative and innovative settings should be remarked. Such programmes integrate several CA elements (see above) and can concretely contribute to increase the employability of young people. As pointed out in the European Youth in Action interim evaluation report (Mc Coshan et al. 2011), additional support measures are available in order to involve young people with fewer opportunities. The employability aspect could be further strengthened in a follow-up initiative (Mc Coshan et al. 2011), and the enhancement of bridges between formal and non-formal education should be addressed. The new European education, training and youth programme ‘Erasmus +,’ whose implementation started on January 1, 2014, for the first time allocates funding for the setting up of strategic transnational partnerships from stakeholders belonging to different sectors. This can be seen as an important change in the development of innovative support measures for vulnerable people reserving appropriate space and setting opportunities for them in the field of education and training.

¹²The European Commission proposed the Council recommendation on a quality framework for traineeships on 4th of December 2013 (Com (2013) 857 final 2013/0431).

12.5 EU Policy and the Capability for Voice: Nonformal Learning and the ‘Youth in Action Program’

Today’s debate and focus on youth is part of a broader context as described in various chapters. It follows informational bases and normative references of European strategies and sees Youth as future human resources and human capital. In that context, marginalized youth is often constructed and perceived as a social problem requiring a specific treatment.

The actual EU youth strategy takes a slightly different stance. Empowerment and making the best of their potential shows a positive youth approach, which combines early investment with putting in place greater resources to develop policy areas that affect young people in their daily lives and improve their well-being, promoting their autonomy as well as the potential of young people to contribute to a sustainable development of society and to European values and goals.

The overall objectives of European cooperation in the youth field (EU Youth Strategy) reflect the positive youth view seeking to:

- Create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market.
- Promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

Reaching out to all young people is the new element of the EU Youth policy which implies a new modern way of setting an agenda for a no longer homogenous youth phase, consisting of a multiplicity of lifestyles and perspectives, as well as biographical, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Reaching out to all young people requires global as well as specific policy strategies in order to increase the social recognition of young people and at the same time develop the individual potential of all youngsters.

The ‘social inclusion’ field of action reflects the specific contribution of a policy seeking to address marginalized youth. It aims to prevent this phenomenon and its transmission of such problems between generations and to strengthen mutual solidarity between society and young people. Equal opportunities for all should be promoted and all forms of discrimination combated.

European Youth Policy cooperation as agreed on by all Member States attempts as a guiding principle to take into account the differences in the living conditions, needs, aspirations, interests and attitudes of young people, paying particular attention to those who, for different reasons, may have fewer opportunities and recognizing that all young people are a resource to our societies.

12.5.1 European Youth Policies and Capabilities for Voice

The ‘voice’ of young people is not recognized as the key dimension in the specific European policies mentioned in the previous sections: ESL strategy with reference to education and YOI with reference to youth employment. In fact, within the

initiatives, measures and programmes set in the frame of these two policies, there is no formal place reserved for the expression of young people's point of view either individually or through (elected) representatives. Furthermore, no young people's 'voice' is explicitly foreseen in the evaluation and further development of the programmes. Only once are active involvement of targeted actors and respect of culture towards children and young people mentioned¹³ as best practice example of key factors for the successful approach involving directly the Roma community and the parents (Mc Coshan et al. 2011).

The voice of young people is mentioned only with regard to the decision to step out of education and school: 'Some Early School Leavers regard their decision as a "positive choice". They feel undervalued and disrespected at school and under-achieved academically. School education appears to them to be relevant to their lives and they believe that they could achieve more outside formal education and training' (European Commission 2010). There is no further mention or proposal regarding the way the voice of young people within the education and training programmes tackling ESL or the Youth Opportunities Initiative could qualitatively contribute to the further development or improvement of the strategies. This could be achieved through a structured dialogue involving young people in the process as it is the case in the implementation of the European Youth Strategy. However, the challenge remains defining in what way the voices of vulnerable young people can appropriately be represented within this process.

12.5.2 The Value of Empowerment and Participation

The EC is aware that self-confidence and self-esteem of young people are important competences/resources that enable them to cope with their individual needs and with the problems they have to face during their education and training. Therefore, the EC strongly encourages Member States to develop student-focused strategies mainly in the framework of intervention and compensation measures against early school leaving. These programmes should focus on 'resilience building' and allow stronger emphasis on feelings of confidence. In order to support young people in an appropriate way, the EC recognises also the need for the development of personalized learning approaches for young people. New teaching methods should be implemented in education and vocational training programmes. This can also help to increase young people's self-esteem and improve their capacity to cope with further challenges.

Nevertheless, the empowerment of young people as an objective of the process in order to express their voice and to learn to choose consciously for their personal and professional perspectives is not mentioned (European Commission 2011b).

Remarkably, there is a specific area within the education policy of the European Union where the value of voice is strongly reflected. It is the European programme

¹³With regard to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Hungary against ESL

mainly targeting the recognition of nonformal education: the Youth in Action Programme.¹⁴ Projects supported and financed by the programme target actively young people regardless of their level of education, while the specific social inclusion strategy enclosed in it (as we have seen in the above sections) expressly aims at facilitating the participation in the programme of young people with fewer opportunities.¹⁵ This programme fosters the active participation (Mc Coshan et al. 2011) of young people (both individually and in a group) so that they are directly involved in the design and implementation of the project's activities they have reasons to value. Expectations, fears and wishes are taken into account, while participation is on a voluntary basis. The setting allows for a new kind of relationship based on the motivation of young people.

With its complementary character to the programme for education and training, the recognition of qualification aspects is not directly addressed, with the exception of qualifications acquired within nonformal learning activities (and accredited by the Youthpass certificate). A specific certificate to document the personal developments achieved by marginalized or socially disadvantaged young people is still a matter of discussion and further elaboration.¹⁶

Moreover, with a link to the voice dimension, the Youth in Action programme focuses much stronger on active citizenship and civil society development than other policies and strategies. The promotion of equality, social cohesion and active citizenship is a 'backbone principle of the programme' (Mc Coshan et al. 2011). Another feature which can be seen as a CA-friendly element in the nonformal education programme is the inclusion of health and well-being among the main aims of the programme.

12.6 Capability Friendly Policies: Call for a Change of Perspective with Regard to Young People?

The CA approach promotes a shift in policies and programmes to focus on participation, choices and voices of young people when education, training, work as well as personal and social life are concerned.

Young people's participation shall be the key point of all phases in the life cycle of a measure or policy (planning, implementation, evaluation) via:

- Support to empowerment
- Recognition of young people's values and considerations
- Development of equal access to information and participation

¹⁴The programme ended in 2013 and will continue as sub-programme of the new 'Erasmus plus' programme started in January 2014 in the frame of the 2014–2020 programming period.

¹⁵'YiA monitoring data show that overall 26 % of the participants are reported to be a young person with fewer opportunities' (Mc Coshan et al. 2011).

¹⁶Currently, reference materials (manuals, guidelines, booklets etc.) as well as specific training are made available for youth inclusion organisations working with vulnerable people implementing the 'Youthpass for all' under the SALTO Initiative. See www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/.

The CA does not focus only on employability and work integration as policy aims; moreover it does not imply that the target group of education and employment policies are those who have to adapt to the labour-market demands in order to earn a valuable place in the society. On the contrary, the CA considers as equally important the implications of the life context of the target group (and the individuals composing it), for instance, family background, culture and health. These factors have an impact on several aspects of a person's life such as commitment, interest, social networks, self-initiative, in brief on his or her whole personal development and active participation.

As a matter of fact, EU-fostered policies and programmes focusing on the recognition of nonformal education take these factors into account much stronger than EU policies in the field of education and training as well as than the practices showed by Member States.

While the strategies in formal education/training acknowledge the need to develop tailor-made and personal approaches to reintegrate young people with difficulties into the system, their voices (expectations and wishes) are generally perceived by the policymakers as 'unrealistic' or too strongly limited by traditional role images.

The implementation of policies in line with the CA would require school and VET teachers, social workers and employment services to change their professional approach to young people: to stimulate them to realize the lives they wish to live instead of focusing on their problems, their disadvantages, their deficits and their obstacles. At the basis of the approach is the relevance of the empowerment process that young people should (or should be allowed to) undertake in order to become the deciding actor of their own lives and to take over the responsibility of making choices, as far as the determination of which education or professional development path has a real value for themselves is concerned. This is basically the issue of well-being and of the development of self-esteem/self-confidence as preconditions for expressing their voice. Appropriate training would allow the development of skills necessary for future professional and personal perspectives they really wish to value. The CA states that the real perspective for a valuable life will stimulate the sense of responsibility, and the development and discovery of responsible and appreciative attitudes will stimulate peers to do the same.

In its analysis, the EC recognizes that especially 'pupils at risk have often less access to high quality guidance' (European Commission 2011b). The growing variety of education and training possibilities is not accompanied by an adequate provision of orientation and career guidance services by schools or by the public employment services in Member States. Young people may have ideas of professions that are not 'realistic' with regard to envisaged tasks, necessary skills and qualification or available training places. The globalization and the digital revolution of the last decades have sharply increased the risk of long-term unemployment, especially for low-qualified people. In spite the vision of Europe 2020 strategy, young people are increasingly coping with the perspective of waiting for a long time before succeeding in getting a first occupation once entering the labour market. Many training curricula provide qualifications which lack recognition or need in the

labour market, therefore leading young people who attained them to unemployment. In addition to that, young people are confronted with an increasing fragmentation and flexibility and will therefore have to cope with permanent changing working conditions, rotation between diverse work fields and temporary flexible employment. According to (Schneider 2009), coping strategies to handle this context as well as utilization of social resources and strengthening of self-confidence are key abilities needed to handle the development of personal and professional perspective of young people. These coping strategies need to be more strongly addressed not only in education and training systems but also in higher-quality information and orientation guidance services established by the different Member States.

The recognition of nonformal learning experiences as alternative learning pathways (youth Pass) is important to increase the success of young people moving on to first employment or further education, whereas ways to better follow up these experiences providing higher chances of permanent access to employment are still needed. Opportunities of further development need to be set up in order to bridge nonformal (and formal) education and the world of work (for instance, voluntary service activity instead of the frustration that the labour market requires skills through professional diploma). The current work of the EC to propose a Council recommendation on the validation of nonformal and informal learning has to be understood as an important initiative in the right direction. It carries the chance to stronger connect the field of education and training, youth work and voluntary work as well as citizenship building and participation.

Conclusions

As we have seen, through the European Semester, European Union institutions and especially the European Commission are playing a prominent role in stimulating and monitoring the development of coordinated policies in the Member States as far as education and employment are concerned. The process started in 2006 with the Communication of the Commission establishing a new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies in the European Union¹⁷ and further progressed with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the strengthening of the Open Method of Coordination in the employment sector in 2009 and by the launch of the Europe 2020 strategy. While several measures at the European level have been already established, their implementation has been made more and more difficult by the hard hit of the economic and financial crisis

¹⁷ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Working together, working better: A new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies in the European Union, CMO (2005) 706 final

affecting particularly Europe since 2008. The crisis has primarily resulted in short-term cuts of resources available for welfare measures and interventions and in the implementation of austerity plans instead of long-term perspective and investment in better life conditions for young people, especially those in disadvantage (who are affected more severely by the effects of the crisis). Our search for CA elements within the actions backed by the EU showed that some can indeed be found in the strategies implemented by the EC. However, there is clearly no recognition by the policymakers of the need to combine capabilities (ability and choices) for education, work and voice and to change the policy focus when addressing the transition of young people from school to work and adult life. Instead, the focus remains only and persistently on the development of capacities (skills) of young people to facilitate transition into employment.

If we take the example of active labour-market measures, we can notice the lack of definition of quality criteria. Activation policies are stressed to be among the most useful and recommended measures to the Member States to bridge the world of school and the labour market and thus help young people to enter employment. Yet, they are normally not sufficiently developed to focus more strongly on the needs of the (disadvantaged) young people they want to target – with the provision of real opportunities to access relevant qualifications and further on gain real positive professional perspectives. Policymakers shall modify their perspective and develop new content for these measures, where self-motivation of young people in undertaking training and maintaining their own place in the training system takes central stage. It is not sufficient to define only quantitative targets for the measures implemented (X number apprenticeship, X number of on the job trainings to be made available to the target group). They should rather function as real bridges to the next (educational or professional) step in the transition process. In this sense, a wider recognition of the qualifications obtained in the nonformal and informal education could be one way to increase opportunities of successful transitions, especially for disadvantaged youth. Therefore, cooperation and dialogue between formal and nonformal/informal education sectors need to be further stimulated, and the exchange of good practices at European level must be reinforced.

The assessment of policies and measures benefiting young people in situation of disadvantage need to consider whether or not factors giving voice to the target group are foreseen by such measures: they need to take into consideration individual satisfaction of those young people. Motivation or demotivation of young people should not be seen only as a resource or a deficit of an individual. Motivation depends strongly on structural resources and opportunities made available by the society to young people transiting from school to work. Therefore, motivation/demotivation should rather be treated as an indicator of the extent to which

(continued)

young people see space for self-determining their lives and professional path and having chances of success in the social and labour-market integration process.

Disadvantaged young people should get a chance to actively engage in their vocational and adult life. The Capability Approach should be a guiding light for the design and implementation of policy measures and to support young people coping with the difficulties associated with their transition phase. Last but not least, it must be underlined how the financial matter is a key element for the successful implementation of measures in favour and support of disadvantaged young people in transition to the world of work. The availability of adequate funding will determine the success and the impact of such measures. Besides that, in order to set up favourable conditions to seriously increase the opportunity for young people to build positive professional perspectives, the quality aspect of the funded measures is also relevant (both in terms of qualified staff employed for their implementation and of provision of a comprehensive evaluation mechanism able to lead to continued improvement of the measure itself). In many countries, EU programmes and structural funds are important to establish transition policies for disadvantaged young people. European policies can furthermore enhance reflexivity of measures as well as innovation in education, training and participatory youth policies.

Two current instruments of European policies will be particularly important in the next years. The EU Youth Guarantee intends to include the issue of quality in the offers for transitions as well as to young people themselves and their voice in the further instrument development (including through the Structured Dialogue). Secondly, the new programme ‘Erasmus +’ offers an extended space for innovation and experimentation to Member States. The intention is to stimulate better-quality transitions and cooperation between formal and informal opportunities for policy and practice.

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