CAPABILITIES IN CONTEXT - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN A MICRO PERSPECTIVE

"Cases of labour market transitions: from resources to capabilities"

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Making Capabilities Work (2009-2012)

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Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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This report presents the case study findings of Work Package 4 of the EU Collaborative Project "WorkAble: Making Capabilities Work" (2009-2012). The nine case studies (Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Sweden) put the Capability Approach in context by examining the transitions of (disadvantaged) young people from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment, as well as looking at examples of the education and employability programmes that may support them in these transitions.

1.WorkAble: Making Capabilities Work

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 knowledge societies, the aim of the "WorkAble: Making Capabilities Work" project is 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" uses a comparative perspective to analyse employment and educational policies at the local, regional, national and European level to achieve three key objectives:

(1) Extend young people's capabilities to act as fully participating citizens in emerging European knowledge societies;
(2) Promote skills and competencies in young people that are conducive to improving the economic productivity and competitiveness of Europe;
(3) 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 the knowledge society to which they, and, above all, the more disadvantaged are exposed.

See http://www.workable-eu.org/about-workable/objectives for more information about the project's objectives.

2. Work Package 4: Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective

WorkAble has six work packages covering management; designing a theoretical framework and methodology of capability acquisition; identifying the educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe; studying educational programmes in a micro perspective; understanding the effects on transitional trajectories of young people; and dissemination of research results (see http://www.workable-eu.org/about-workable/work-packages for more information).

The aim of "WorkAble" Work Package 4 is 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 the transition towards employment by empowering their capabilities for voice, work and education. In order to do this the nine teams involved in the work package have conducted case studies of new and/or innovative programmes that support (disadvantaged) young people in their transitions: from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment. The initiatives explored are provided by organisations across the public, private and third sectors, and they use a range of techniques in supporting young people. Different groups of young people are also considered (although it must be noted that these groups overlap): 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.

Table 1: Groups of young people examined in the case studies

Topic	Country
Early school leavers	France; Switzerland; Italy
Unemployed	Denmark; UK
No upper secondary education qualifications	Austria; Germany
Those in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills	Poland
Higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job	Sweden

Specifically this final report seeks, through the nine case studies, to:

(1) Describe local education, vocational education and training programmes/agencies that use new or innovative approaches to support young people who encounter difficulties, or who fail, in the 'standard' routes of education and the transition towards employment; or examine the transitions of young people with less good labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme.

(2) Analyse these case studies by applying the Capability Approach in particular focusing upon the capability for voice, work and education.

3. The case study methodology

As previously outlined, the aim of the "WorkAble" Work Package 4 case studies is to enhance understanding of successful initiatives for supporting young people who fail in the standard routes of education and the transition towards employment by empowering their capabilities for voice, work and education. The overall analysis for all the case studies is based on a common Capability Approach methodology, drawing on a set of common questions developed by the Employment Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University team (UK). The common questions addressed four factors core to the capability perspective:

- **Resources**: what resources are available for the initiatives and beneficiaries.
- **Empowerment**: are beneficiaries empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the initiatives.
- **Individual conversion factors**: whether individuals have the necessary conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities.
- **External conversion factors**: the role of external social and structural factors in the conversion of resources into capabilities/functionings.

The common research questions were addressed primarily with research interviews (group and individual) with young people and other stakeholders in the case studies (e.g. managers, staff) to gauge a wide variety of individual insights and perceptions, and gain understandings of complex relationships. Partners also used other methods (as set out in each of the following case studies) to add depth and other insights to their case studies: participant observation; and documentary analysis as well as statistical analysis. In terms of data analysis, a thematic content/coding analysis of the data was most commonly used.

Central to the operationalisation of the Capability Approach in the case studies was drawing out the perspectives of the young people (beneficiaries) in order to take their own perspectives and their choice of pathways into account. While focusing on individual accounts and perspectives the aim of the case studies was to consider how these perspectives, preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or enabled not only by economic, social and cultural environments but also, and in particular, by institutional factors which translate central policy into local practices. Therefore an aim of the case studies was to take a bottom-up perspective of the development of capabilities at different levels:

- Micro level: the subjective, professional and interactive level
- Meso level: the interactive, institutional and conceptual level
- Macro level: the political and societal level

4. Case study key themes

While different groups of young people are considered (see Table 1) all the case studies examine the uncertainty about which skills are needed for young people to be able to flourish and become capable citizens who are able to choose work that they have reason to value.

Key themes and questions emerging from the case studies include:

- Questions are raised about the voice of young people: young people's voice can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live (such as local community or networks of family and friends); the lack of voice and choice given to disadvantaged young people in the education system; the extent to which young people are able to have voice in the design and delivery of the initiatives; the extent to which young people can exercise their voice in the institutional and structural contexts in which they live; the need for young people to meet the expectations of employers and the labour market in terms of skills; young people's awareness of their rights to a voice in the workplace (as well as their responsibilities).

- The important role of those delivering the initiatives on the ground to their success: the skills of the staff, young people trusting and respecting the staff, staff acting as role models for the young people.

- The role of institutional and structural factors (such as funding), as well as the external context of local labour markets, in constraining the extent to which initiatives can take a Capability Approach.

- The findings identify that young people can face particular risks at key transition periods such as early selection in the education system, or the transition to upper secondary education. It was identified that inequalities were often established early on highlighting the need for early intervention.

- The findings provide useful insights into what work young people find reason to value: that sometimes young people value any job because of the constraints of the labour market; aspirations for valuable work may not be developed because of a lack of education or a lack of knowledge about working life due the family backgrounds and social networks in which the young person operates in; the importance of a supportive work environment in helping young people sustain their work placement and educate them about the world of work; how the type of work that young people value is not static and preferences change over time.

- There may be adaptations of preferences due to: a lack of self-confidence; the job opportunities open to the young people because of local labour market conditions; and the young people's skills and experiences (e.g. young people may discount certain job opportunities if they feel that they are beyond their reach).

- 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 norms or project workers/organisations.

- That young people require access to different levels of resources to achieve the same goal. Therefore if the resources offered to young people are the same then inequalities can be reproduced and reinforced.

- In addressing the issues facing young people in making successful transitions it is often necessary to have inputs from across a number of agencies and for these agencies to work effectively together. Those programmes that were most 'successful' tended to be those that were holistic, multidimensional and integrated in their approach to addressing youth disadvantage.

CHAPTER 2: THE GERMAN CASE STUDY. WORKABLE WP 4

Jan Düker & Thomas Ley

Abstract

This case study will focus on the institutional and normative frame of the German transition system and its programmes, organisational forms and logics of action and the inter-organisational networks they are embedded into within the local context they operate in. Main questions will address their identification of problems and problem groups of young people and what they offer for young people in terms of capabilities for work, education and voice.

The case study begins with a short framing of the resources, commodities and social policy agenda of the German transition sector (chapter 1). Basic research questions are outlined and the research methods are described (chapter 2 & 3). The modeling of the object of research is divided into an illustration of the pedagogical programmes and an analytical embedding into the current social policy agenda (chapter 4). The empirical findings are highlighted and condensed into four aspects: Beginning with the questions of which pedagogical space is constituted and how caseness is established[1], maintained and transformed, the aspects of identity work and institutional selves within these programmes are pointed out. The handling and negotiation of "realistic perspectives" is a crucial point within this work and a link between an institutional and a subject-oriented level. The findings are finalised with a perspective on what the young people find valuable and which conflicts and dilemmas they face. The three capabilities for work, education and voice are the basis for an analytical review of the case study (chapter 6). The report concludes with a short résumé concerning policy recommendations and tasks for further research (chapter 7).

1. Setting the Scene

We want to start with a short framing of the current situation in the vocational training sector and the educational system, which are the main drivers determining the position of and conditions for vulnerable youth in the transition from school to work (cf. for details see WP 3, relevant aspects will be highlighted in WP4 as well). From the perspective of the Capability Approach, these structural contexts are most important in terms of the real opportunities they provide or withhold.

We contend that the current situation is characterised by three main problems:

1) The basis of the German transitional system is the general four-tier school system, made up of Hauptschule (lower secondary school), Förderschule (school for special needs, not exceeding lower secondary school), Realschule (secondary school) and

[1] 'Establishing caseness' refers to a concept (mainly derived from conversation analysis) that in social work interactions availabe 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 (White 1999).

Gymnasium (grammar school).[2] The early selection for secondary schools after grade 4 of primary school has been repeatedly criticised – also based on the results of the PISA study – because of its selectivity and the resulting lack of equal opportunities. Furthermore, inequalities are not compensated but reinforced in educational and vocational settings (cf. for example Otto/Rauschenbach 2008).

2) 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 2009, the ratio has been 89.9 apprenticeship training positions to 100 job seekers (cf. BMBF 2010). Insofar we can state a lack of 200.000 training positions in Germany (*Solga 2011a*). Furthermore, according to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court from the year 1980, the *legal free choice of occupation* is only guaranteed as of a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants (cf. BVerfGE 55, 274). We argue that this constitutes a blatant injustice, the causes of which are to be found in the structure of the transitional system. This injustice severely limits the possible effects of institutional and pedagogical efforts.
3) Furthermore, disadvantaged youths in particular are facing an increased risk of unemployment and poverty in later life (Solga 2011b). This is why Heike Solga proclaims a „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, p. 415).

These three aspects – inequality in the school system, insufficient training positions in the apprenticeship market and the aspect of "certificate poverty" – are not only predominant for the situation (and the expansion) of the transitional system, it is relevant to all efforts within this system. The question arises if the established system reproduces inequalities rather than reducing them.

To gain a comprehensive overview of the multi-layered and problematic 'transition realities' of youths, this report is especially devoted to the target group of those who have not gained an upper secondary school leavers' certificate, thus drastically reducing their chances for realising their concerns in the transition from school to work. The target group of the German case study refers not only to young people not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education, but with no (consecutive) following vocational training (apprenticeship) in the regular 'dual system'. The German ‚dual system' combines on the job training with state-led vocational schools. Hence, the term 'apprenticeship' in the following refers to this specifically German way of vocational education and training (VET). The dual system is still an influential and powerful institution[3]; it is regarded as the 'silver bullet' for

[2] In addition, about 7.5% of youths (64,918 in Germany) do not manage to get any lower secondary school certificate ("early school leavers"), 54.5.% (35,451) of those come from schools for special needs. This is also one of the reasons why Radtke and Gomolla talk about a four-tier system and highlight the "institutional discrimination of this type of school" (2007).

[3] Walter and Walther summarize five advantages of the dual system: (a) By involving companies, it is guaranteed that the training content has relevance for the labour market; (b) the high contribution margin results in relatively low youth unemployment by international standards; (c) the youth involved receive a training allowance and are covered by social insurance; (d) the high level of standardisation of the training

the transition from school to work. An exception to this is the growing number of school-based training courses, especially for occupations in the social, educational and health sectors. Nevertheless, the high share of young people in this dual training system has decreased markedly in the last decades. While in the past, dual training could absorb 80% of the total applicants, this has now gone down to 65%. Hence, this long-lasting and powerful institution is not the 'safe haven' for young people's transition anymore, but is becoming fragile and is increasingly being questioned.

The target group in the overall WorkAble project has been designated as being 'vulnerable' in terms of a lack of capabilities. For the German transition system, this has been specified in the following way: The German Youth Institute (DJI) examined in a longitudinal study the educational and vocational training paths of lower secondary school leavers on a national level at three different points in time (June 2004; November 2004 and 2006). The study shows that in the first year, 35% of young people continued in school education (although lower secondary schools should provide a general qualification for training positions). The number of those that started a training scheme after the end of the last compulsory school year or changed into measures to prepare for a vocational training is at this time equivalent to 26%. 9% of lower secondary school leavers had no follow-up measure and were therefore jobless. According to the DJI transitional panel, lower secondary school leavers still take their lead from the traditional path of biographies: compulsory school attendance – vocational training (Reißig et al. 2008). It is however only a minority that can realise this goal. Moreover, vocational preparation, according to the DJI transitional panel, is in general associated with the young people's hope to improve their chances of vocational training. But in reality, the effectiveness of vocational preparation measures is doubtful (cf. Beicht 2009). The share of those that go into vocational training after a vocational preparation measure (35%) and those that enter a second vocational preparation loop (29%) are nearly the same (ibid.).[4] Thus, traditional pathways from school to work became fragile with the effect of vulnerable transition processes for these young people (see for details: institutional mapping – WP3).

On the *local level of the case study (see below), official statistical data* seem to speak the same language: In a middle-sized Western German town in which the research is located, in 2009, 30.5% of the 1366 school leavers from schools providing general education (with the exception of Realschule), attended a further secondary school or commercial college (cut-off date of survey: 30 September 2009). The share of youths who transferred to in-company and in-school training is comparatively smaller at 21.6%, which means that 52.1% of the school leavers entered a further education programme at school or in-company and in-school training. For the majority of the other half, placements had to be found in various measures

courses and curricula adds recognition and validity to the acquired skills beyond the training facility; (e) the dual system is seen as prerequisite for the high productivity of German companies (cf. Walter/Walther 2007: 69).

[4] In addition to the qualitative approach, a local quantitative study of pupils in the transition from school to work is arranged in cooperation with the centre for Social Service Studies at the Faculty for Educational Science (Bielefeld University). The questionnaire is delivered in form of a longitudinal study (three different points of time: February 2011, February 2012, December 2012). This method allows drawing conclusions regarding to temporary alterations of (job related) desires, self-beliefs, self-efficacy, aims and needs of the young people. Insofar the qualitative case study aims retrospective at the transitional experiences of the young people retrospectively and the pedagogical practice in situ, whereas the longitudinal study has a prospective perspective on capabilities and values of youths in the course of time.

of the transition system. While only a small part remained completely without a placement, most of the applicants (250) went for a Berufsgrundschuljahr (basic vocational training year), followed by those (130) who chose the vocational preparation schemes offered by the employment agency (Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen: BvB). 86 young persons attended the KSoB ("Courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract") - one of the objects of research - while 48 of the 1366 remained without any placement.

In summary, a huge share of young people have no opportunity to comply to the normative demand for a smooth transitional trajectory (school – apprenticeship – labour market) which is still the model for the institutions in the system as well as for the young people themselves.[5] Following the relational perspective of the Capability Approach, vulnerable young people in this case study are regarded as disadvantaged in terms of their opportunities to live a life they have reason to value. These relations not only determine their position in the social order, but are the context in which aspirations, life plans and the ideas of what constitutes a 'good life' in general are formed. This perspective contrasts with the notion of social exclusion, in which young people are seen as being outside of the normative order and simply have to be realigned with societal demands. Rather, our approach starts from the assumption that people are always already implicated in societal relations, hence the aim is to "evaluat[e] processes of learning and acquisition as being embedded in broader social, cultural, economic and policy arrangements, while taking individual aspirations into account rather than dictating social benchmarks" (Otto/ Ziegler 2006, p. 274). This perspective makes the findings of the case study viable for the aim of capability enhancement.

The apparent and ongoing (structural) problems - beginning and ending with a clear lack of training positions and educational perspectives - called for various activities in social, educational and labour market policies in the last two decades leading to a 'jungle' of measures, where it is difficult to keep track for young people, adults (i.e. parents) and even professionals. The difficulty of rationally navigating this 'jungle' aggravates a situation where the realisation of young people's reasoned valuations (in most cases: finding a decent job/ apprenticeship) is restricted or rendered virtually impossible by local labour markets. This problematisation of the transitional system is widely acknowledged (i.e. Walther 2000: 26ff., Baethge 2008, Solga 2011b) and has sparked several policy answers, one being the attempt to set up vantage points for the 'jungle' by creating local transition management institutions.

Local transition management – a new social policy agenda?

On the national level, the problem of young people without apprenticeship or employment has resulted in increased efforts to create structured local transition management (cf. Braun 2007, Müller/Braun 2007). On the local level of the case study, the town council decided to build up a 'Local Transition Management Institution' (LTMI) in order to establish one institution where all measures are monitored. The LTMI serves as a single point of contact ('one-stop-shop') for young people with difficulties in the transition from school to work with the goal of structuring the landscape of funding bodies, clarifying the transitional

[5] Based on European comparative studies related to young people's transitions to work, Walther distinguished different 'transition regimes' and classified the German system as an employment-centred transition regime (2006).

pathways and improving the vocational perspectives of adolescents and young adults. Insofar, this local transition management pursues two basic aims: *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 this respect, the LTMI delivers individualised programmes which aim at agreeing with each young adult on his or her own personal (regularly updated) support plan. The ideal of the LTMI aims at providing a constant transition counsellor until the young adult's integration into the labour market.

The LTMI is situated in a strategic network with the various local groups of

- labour market actors (Employment Agency),
- the employers' pressure groups (Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Crafts, Employers' Federation)
- all local schools that offer general education or vocational training
- as well as all social work organisations which carry out measures in the transition from school to work.

In fact, the issue of (educationally disadvantaged) young people with problems of accessing vocational training and labour markets is addressed by several social institutions and actors at the same time; namely: schools and school politicians, the Employment Agency and local businesses, as well as local youth and social policy actors. Hence, the main objective of the LTMI is to create uniform structures of steering, communication and coordination.
Besides the LTMI's prevention activities with pupils at different schools providing general education, its pedagogical work, on the level of case management, aims to compensate for social disadvantages and individual restrictions, orienting itself towards the "promotion of scholastic, vocational and social integration of youths". The LTMI staff is comprised of 23 social workers – so called transition counsellors - who support young people in different settings in their transition from school to work.

These efforts notwithstanding, the question must be raised whether these diverse actors with their respective vested interests are able to reach an agreement on common goals in the first place, or remain locked in a "cooperation without consensus" (Strübing 2005). The latter is suggested by the divergent assessments of the 'apprenticeship entry maturity' of the young adults by the respective representatives. However, the common goal of a 'successful' transition into the labour market seems to be sufficient to make different actors cooperate even without a consensus on causes, means and a shared definition of what exactly 'success' means. It remains to be seen if this conceptual indeterminacy opens a space for individualised support or rather restricts the possibilities for carrying out coherent measures.

2. Main research questions

To be able to draw assumptions about the realisation and transformation of current social policy goals through pedagogical practices, two contrasting measures within the LTMI were chosen to represent the spectrum of interventions available there (see 4.1 for a detailed description of these programmes):

a) Kompetenzagentur („Competence Agency"): The Competence Agencies are an EU-funded, national wide programme in over 180 towns; but they are locally adapted to the situation in every municipality.
b) KSoB: Klassen für Schüler ohne Berufsausbildungsvertrag ("Courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract"): The KSoB are regionally funded and located at the public vocational school but they are as well adapted to the local transition sector and integrated into the local transition management institution.

Focusing on these two institutions, several (basic) research questions can be specified:

1. How is the current policy context translated into institutional settings? What kind of social policy space is created for and through these institutions? (see 4.)
2. Which pedagogical space is constituted in these programmes? What can be said, what is (not) problematised? How is caseness established, maintained and transformed? (see 5.1, 5.2)
3. How are counselling settings arranged and intentions, aims and goals (i.e. integration in the labour market) of counselling (institutionally) processed and (interactively) negotiated? (see 5.2, 5.3)
4. How do young people reason about what they find valuable? How do young people experience, interpret and value the transition and the current measure? How does this connect to what professionals deem valuable for young people? (see 5.4)
5. According to the perspectives of the different actors, how can capabilities for work, education and voice be formulated as an evaluative framework and as goals for interventions in the transitional system? (see 6)

3. Research methods

Case studies are often carried out, but at least in the German-language research landscape they are rarely the object of methodological reflection. Pflueger et al. (2010) have set up a fourfold classification of case studies in the sociology of organisation according to the type of claim they make: the first is labelled "formation" and refers to case studies that are oriented towards intervention; the second is called "elaboration" to reflect its use of examples in order to provide a deeper understanding; the third goes by the name of "plurality" and uses a comparative approach for its diagnosis; and the fourth, termed "generalisation", consists of case studies that aim at a generalisation of their findings (cf. Pflueger et al. 2010). It is this fourth type that the present case study takes as its model: in this kind of case study research, the aim is to provide an analysis of more general developments in work and life stages, in our case youth, and relevant institutions with a focus on their impact on social change.

This type of case study already encapsulates the relationship between an individual's life course and his/her biography, which is of constant relevance in social theory. The concept of 'life course' refers to the institutional structuring of an individual's life through for example the educational system, the labour market and the welfare state. 'Biography' on the other hand focuses on the subjective appropriation of a life (course) by an individual. "Social work is a 'co-ruler in the life course regime' of the work-centred society in as much as its role is to

orient youths to the restricted and limiting demands and opportunities of vocational training and gainful employment. Social work's self-image, on the other hand, leads it to start with and acknowledge the subjective experiences, work orientations and life plans of youths and young adults" (cf. Walther/Stauber 2011: 1703).

Case studies can investigate the actions of individuals as well as those of collective actors. If 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 particularly the sequences of actions of numerous actors (groups and organisations) are in the centre of investigation, and the range of possibilities in which this 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, and for the explanation of action structures (for example 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; on the other hand, opportunity structures and institutional restrictions are analysed with the help of an institutional mapping at the local level and through the expert interviews providing an in-depth account of the pedagogical conception of the institutions. Therefore, the different perspectives applied here are useful to approximate the three capabilities that are central for WorkAble (capability for voice, work and education; cf. chapter 6). Capabilities are regarded as a relational concept, that is a concept that has to be explored 'between structure and agency'. 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. Thus, the research was designed to capture a subjective account on the formation of aspirations (interviews with young people) and an account on what kind of (capability-friendly?) space was provided by social work professionals through expert interviews. Expert interviews see the interviewees as representing a specific field of knowledge and are thus the 'hinge' connecting policy and practice.

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. Further research would also have to look at the interactions through which institutions themselves work on the aspirations of young people and on the grounds for valuing doings and beings. Interactions arguably are also the level on which the conceptual space that is opened up by the setup of institutions is enacted, reproduced and transformed.

The Case study aims to investigate the actions and experiences of individuals as well as those of collective actors. Therefore, the Grounded Theory methodology was applied.[6] The study tends to:

- an analysis of the institution(s) and their programmes,
- an analytical description of conflicts and dilemmas within different transitional pathways and divergent transition experiences and
- an issue-focused (conceptual) analysis within the broad field of practice (especially concerning the capabilities for work, voice and education).

Below, information about the methods of data collection and details about the sample can be found. Document analysis was applied in order to provide contextual knowledge. Expert interviews were carried out in order to explore patterns of interpretation about the measures and everyday practices. Problem-centred interviews (cf. Witzel 2000) with young people were conducted in order to enable a recipient perspective on the transitional measures and counselling processes.

Empirical method	Perspective	Sample
Documentary Analysis	*Contextual knowledge* about the measures, their aims and ends, the target groups etc.	Written concept of the measure, official statistics on the target group, diagnostical tools and manuals
Expert interviews with case managers	*Patterns of interpretation* about interventions, every day practices, profiles and images of the clients	2 social workers (KSoB) & 3 social workers (Competence Agency)
Problem centred interviews with young people	How do young people experience, interpret and value the transition and the current measure?	6 young people (KSoB), 6 young people (Competence Agency)

4. Modeling and embedding the object of research

By choosing the institutions 'Competence Agency' and KSoB and situating them within a socio-political context derived from theoretical analysis, one constructs a case in a specific way (rather than 'finding' it as a readymade entity). This process of case construction is especially important in our study as it aims to say something about current social policy that influences and is reproduced through pedagogical practices. This form of 'generalising' case

[6] The analysis was based on the assumptions of grounded theory (Strauss 1998; Strauss/Corbin 1990). We alternated between a sequential analysis (word by word, line by line) and a broader case- and field-oriented perspective, following the "coding paradigm" of conditions, context, strategies (action/interaction) and consequences of different empirical phenomena. The Capability Approach was used as a permanent evaluative background: It offers terms and concepts with which to understand and classify what people valued and how they legitimised this. Thus, the main task was trying to translate emerging empirical issues into the 'capability language'. However, this happened at a late stage in the process of interpretation, as grounded theory demands to first accurately describe the data as closely as possible to the original phrasing and to develop theory based on the data instead of forcing this into predefined categories.

study (in the sense of Pflüger et al. 2010 outlined above) demands a theoretical clarification of the relation between context and case. We contend that the two programmes represent two main strands of policy answers to youth unemployment and are in this respect characteristic for the German transition regime.

4.1 Description and differentiation of the pedagogical programmes

KSoB (Courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract) are meant for young people who left compulsory school (or aborted other trainings) and have no access to a vocational qualification contract or continuative measures. School attendance is still compulsory for them, therefore this programme is located at the public vocational school. Within this programme, young people have school lessons for two days a week (general and vocational education). On the other three days, they have the possibility to apply for or make work experiences. They have no possibility to secure a formalised educational degree in this scheme. The programme is accompanied by two social workers and teaching staff. According to the concept, young people are meant to stay for one year, but the programme has a very high fluctuation of participants. Hence, KSoB adhere to the 'classic' template of schooling young people that it is to impart knowledge through traditional, teacher-centric methods while hesitantly incorporating individualised counselling. The latter is meant primarily to fulfil compulsory school attendance and as a measure to prevent young people from dropping out of the formal system. Insofar, access to the programme is secured through compulsory schooling laws enforced by the threat to cut child allowances to the family (which in most cases form an integral part of the family budget). This also forms the motivational basis for taking part in the programme.

In our local context there are two classes for boys and one class for girls (n=83; w=29, m=54) which have different focuses (metal/electric; trade; health/care). The target group is widespread: 41% did not graduate from school; 26% graduated in secondary education and 33% passed the vocational A-levels. Migrational background is higher-than-average at 61% (based on statistical data provided by the institution; cut off date: 28.01.2011).

In contrast, **Competence Agencies** are not school oriented, but clearly oriented towards the rationale behind child and youth 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. The concept is based on voluntariness and cooperation with no direct means of sanctioning and an explicit exit option, thus distancing itself from the type of case management as carried out by the 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' (the state-led 'Employment Agency'). It is meant to serve as a 'guide' through the complex web of measures in the transitional system, thus networking with virtually all actors, and at the same time assess the local transition landscape (in a 'care management' vein) and suggest or implement missing measures, thus having a more social change and innovation profile than the KSoB.

Until now, the local Competence Agency reached 173 young people (from 15-24 years): 65% are male, 35% female. 58% don't have any school graduation; 25% graduated in lower secondary education. Migrational background is higher-than-average at 65%. At 41%, male

migrants are the prevalent target group (based on statistical data provided by the institution; cut off date: 15.11.2011).

Both programmes have in common however that formal qualifications cannot be obtained through taking part, although they are regarded to be most important for young people's advancement by all actors (the issue of 'certificate poverty', see chapter 1). 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 transitional system. Regarding these target groups and statistics, the reproduction of social inequality (especially concerning gender, migrational background and ability) within the educational system becomes obvious.

In summary, the two chosen measures offer an exemplary as well as contrasting insight into the practice of the local transitional system and the individual counselling processes. The Kompetenzagentur as well as the KSoB-Courses can be distinguished in several aspects, i.e. in relation to:

The general aims and ends of the intervention: Whereas the KSoB aims primarily to satisfy the legal demand for completion of compulsory schooling and 'attaches' a socio-pedagogical approach through combining classes with the possibility of counselling, the Competence Agency aims directly at pedagogically intervening into young peoples' lives through case management and counselling. The usual cycle of KsoB (and common interventions in the German transitional system) is one year, Competence Agencies can go over this limit and sometimes work with their clients for three or more years.

The pedagogical settings (case orientated vs. group oriented)
Whereas the Competence Agency is explicitly geared towards individualised counselling and placement, the KSoB takes place in a more traditional schooling setting with a teacher and a class that is taught. Here, the focus is on the acquisition of general knowledge and labour market orientation is a diffuse goal that stays in the background during classes. Thus, whereas young people in the KSoB are not ascribed a specific problem that needs to be overcome, the problems worked on in the Competence Agency are highly specific and worked on using 'tailor-made', individualised knowledge produced specifically for the pedagogical goals of the intervention (such as competence testing, biographical information, information obtained from other agencies such as the Employment Agency etc.)

The situations and resources of the target group, their age and experiences according to previous interventions: The clients of the KSoB are still very close to school and have been placed there for highly heterogeneous reasons. They are mostly below the maturity age of 18 and often have no previous experiences in the transitional system. In contrast, young people in the Competence Agency are mostly over 18 years of age and have a history of mostly negative experiences in the educational and transitional system. They are further away from school and have to be ascribed at least three 'placement handicaps'[7]

[7] According to the Competence Agency's own statistics, the placement handicaps indicated most frequently are 'domestic circumstances', 'social-emotional problems' and 'development of academic achievement'. As can already be seen here, these definitions are quite broad and can be used rather freely. In this respect, an analysis of the social construction of classifications could be useful to find out if these constructions are

("Vermittlungshemmnisse") as a precondition to be accepted into the programme. As a result from the conceptual closeness to the child and youth welfare system (rather than to compulsory schooling as is the case in the KSoB), voluntary cooperation as a principle is at the heart of the concept of the Competence Agency.

In the research process, we focused on the Competence Agency, whereas the KSoB is mainly used for contrasting insights. This was decided as it turned out that the Competence Agency promised to be much closer to being a 'best practice' example in terms of individual capability enhancement: KSoB are very formal and school oriented without serious means of tailoring the intervention to the individual situations and life-worlds of their clients. Even if it could be argued that KSoB secure the right to education for young people, this specific variant of compulsory schooling as it turned out could hardly be turned into an asset for the young people to realise their concerns.

4.2 No youth left behind? – Embedding 'Competence Agencies' (Kompetenzagenturen) into the social policy agenda

To be able to answer the research questions, it is necessary to situate the scrutinised institutions and programmes in a wider political context and justify their selection as representing current policy answers to the problem of youth unemployment. This was accomplished through a closer scrutiny of the concept of this particular programme derived from documentary analysis and interviews with professionals.

'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 they are supposedly neutral actors within the transitional system. This is important because they are meant to be a 'guide' through the transitional system (with its many commercial, half-commercial and non-commercial actors) for young people.[8]

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 youth 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 street social work and networking processes to gain access to young people with providing long-term support and counselling on the youths' work

problematic in the sense of culturalistic labelling or if it is merely a basis of institutionally legitimising access to the Competence Agency.

[8] The German transitional system is a web of interventions that supposedly supports young people who are not participants in the regular 'dual system' or have other difficulties in making the transition from school to work. The transition system is very complex and entails many different interventions, but almost all of them are oriented towards straight trajectories into the labour market as an ideal biographical path.

orientation and transition into work. They act as guides through competence testing, case management, organising 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 to 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, it 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." (ibid.)*

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"). It is on the one hand 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). On the other hand, the idea (and sometimes myth) of a pedagogical feasibility to solve these (structural) problems on the individual level is purported.

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 and improve the structural demand on a municipal level, quite similar to the idea of creating a 'continuum of care' in the healthcare system which provided the blueprint for the adaptation of this method to social work practice (cf. Wendt 1997). 'Getting lost' can thus be seen as a complex and demanding problematisation social work has to react to. On the one hand, this constitutes a risk for the young people themselves. On the other hand, it is framed as an economic risk in policies and concepts. In this vein, the responsible state secretary justifies the funding of the programme until 2013: "We simply cannot afford potentials to lie idle or waste away early" (BMFSFJ 2011, transl.)[9]. However, this merely seems to be programmatic rhetoric as this kind of problematisation is not at all taken up in the expert interviews. Rather, it seems to be important for politically legitimising the continuation of the funding for the programme. The professional social workers in contrast emphasise the *individual* risks associated with 'getting lost'. To counteract this risk, pedagogical means are to be utilised, which are described in more detail below.

[9] Quote taken from the website of "Strengthening Youth" (Jugend Stärken) which is the framework programme in which the Competence Agencies are embedded (BMFSFJ 2011).

As also stated in the concept, this programme wants to "empower young people for an independent conduct of life" and 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 are advocated. Nevertheless, within 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 "multiple placement handicaps" are based on ascriptions, 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.

5. Empirical Findings

The empirical findings are categorised and condensed into four aspects: Beginning with the questions of which pedagogical space is constituted and how caseness is established, maintained and transformed (5.1), the issues of identity work and institutional selves within these programmes are pointed out (5.2). The handling and negotiation of "realistic perspectives" is a crucial point within this work and a link between the institutional and individual levels (5.3). The findings are framed by a perspective on what the young people find valuable and which conflicts and dilemmas they are facing (5.4).

5.1 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 organization and mediate their placement in various external units" (Hasenfeld, 1983: 256). In the case of people sustaining technologies, it is attempted 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 process of the Competence Agency is the idea of 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.

In the following we want to distinguish this process of people processing within the Competence Agency into the aspects of establishing, transforming and maintaining the case. Pedagogical aims are embedded into these processes to varying degrees such that Hasenfelds aforementioned 'technology' of people processing is not only a bureaucratic treatment, but inherently includes pedagogical spaces. Due to the constitutive reference to young adults aspirations, desires and preferences, people processing is not a technology in the sense of a predetermined programme, but part of a negotiated order.

People processing starts with securing access to hard-to-reach young people:

> *„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)*[10]

After reaching them, they are offered long-term support (up to three or even more years) and counselling. A support plan is set up that regulates rights and responsibilities of all parties. 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 that is weekly contact. This leads to the following characterisation of the daily work by the professionals:

> *„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] (so to say) yesyes (yes) (Björn, 1356-1368)*

Here, a demarcation is jointly drawn by interviewee (and interviewer), distancing themselves 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 social work way of constructing cases: „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, p. 232). As stated before, for the social workers, this translation and flexibilisation is a central characteristic of their work:

> *„I: So, this was also my impression that you are really pedagogically-minded, in a positive sense of course (laughing), so to speak…*
> *E: 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)*

[10] The interview partners are anonymised and the text is translated into English by the authors; interviewers' interjections are shown in brackets.

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' 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 the 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 including failures and breakdowns within the transition process is reconstructed.

> *„in the second counselling session of course something like, to say we must continue with our anamnesis, to find out what happened, what has been done and then we try to find out through different enquiry sheets such as self-assessment sheets and sheets for assessment by others (mh) that the the person should evaluate himself and this stuff, there are different sheets and so to say to get the whole informational basis right in the first place and to get the picture. (mhm) And then of course, you try to it depends on the period in which it starts and when somebody starts and then you try to fix a first support plan" (Peter, 808-817).*

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.

> *„you really have to look individually and ehm it is not possible in another way and of course to take into account the wishes of the adolescents" (Marie, 1175-1177)*

In contrast to the processing of caseness (see below), the constitution of caseness is at first based on pedagogical principles such as voluntariness and the focus on the desires and wishes of the young adult. In parallel to discourses in youth welfare, it is emphasised that there is no 'typical case', but cases differ in their problem settings as well as in terms of the perspectives of the different actors on these 'problems' (if they are seen as such) which have to be taken into account. In this sense, the constitution of problems of individual life conduct should not (only) result in societal demands of normalisation and the fulfilment of youth specific developmental tasks, but relies on the valuations, relevances and aspirations of the young people themselves.

> *„There is a sheet for the first counselling session somehow kept relatively open, but where these things are inquired, of course a lot has to do with occupational orientation stuff, what they have done, what they can imagine, what they want, what maybe hinders them, why it didn't work out before and so forth, where can we work" (Björn, 1019-1024)*

Here, an orientation towards the individual becomes apparent, while they also have to undoubtedly align themselves to the demands of the working world, as this guides institutional reflexion: The wider social work aim of supporting people whose life conduct has been labelled as problematic becomes the aim of framing these problems as obstacles for the transition into the labour market and in turn removing these obstacles. To again quote Dollinger: „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, p. 232).[11] The "superordinate institutions" in this case are the diffuse 'working world' which is repeatedly brought into play, and the public Employment Agency. The translation and flexibilisation offers a framework for processing the case, which is oriented more towards the placement aspect of case management and aims at a fit between the young person and an intervention:

> *So if you impose on them this and that and that field, that often doesn't work, (hm) you know it will work for a few days and, then you hear is not there anymore or didn't show up and so on (mhm), that admittedly does still happen, there are still setbacks, where you would have the feeling that would be something or he understood this and this and he wants to do this, still the tendency to flee pops up again (mhm) (…) yes ehm it is always a permanent back and forth like that" (Peter, 834-840).*

In this citation, the permanent see-saw changes within the case work become apparent. Leaving the support system and hence discontinuing the working alliance is a permanent phenomenon and is pointed out as one of the major risks in the case management process by the professionals. The working alliance itself is fragile and has to be negotiated all the time. In this respect, the counselling work can be understood as a participative aspect of processing the case. Furthermore, „stabilisation" within other measures 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).*

Apart from stabilising their clients in the long run, a working alliance has to be established to further the process of becoming self-sufficient. The working alliance has limits however, the primary limit being 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 legitimation 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*

[11] This ‚entrenchment of legitimacy' which shows in the interviews with the young people cannot be explicated here. However, it can be said that this does not take the form of a seamless subjectivation in the sense of simply 'implanting' hegemonic and affirmative ideas. Rather, these processes are transformed through daily life conduct in multifaceted ways, but are still powerful in that they lead to an adaptation to and coping with the given social order.

> *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, the relevance, insight and understanding of the need for help are a necessary condition. "Troubled selves" (Gubrium/Holstein 2000) have to be (and sometimes are already) constructed. Processible problems have to be identified and "untroubled selves" have to be constructed as an ideal type (for details on the concept of "institutional selves" see 5.2).
Young people, as has become a very popular reading of modernity (for a scientific account of this argument see for example 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. This is the most important aspect of being an 'untroubled self' and seems to be consensus in the Competence Agency:

> *„needless to say we can only reach those who really want it, I have to say again this is voluntary counselling" (I.2Marie, 887-888)*

Regarding the decision for an intervention the same professional states:

> *„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" (I.2Marie, 989-932)*

Voluntariness is a central principle for the professionals. 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 demands their cooperation and compliance, otherwise it "doesn't work" – at least young people should have the *feeling* that they are making their own decision.

In this regard, the topic of 'motivation' for going to school, to work or completing an intervention again plays a central role:

> *„well first of all it is important to find something he thinks is fun and where he gets recognition, so it's always this resource oriented approach and this is the decisive thing, to find something where he says himself, 'yea, this is fun, this is worthwhile to really get up in the morning and go there'" (Björn, 750-754)*

Here, a capability perspective seems to be at work: Individual dispositions and structural opportunities have to be aligned in a way that fits the volitions of the subjects: It is not about disciplining youngsters by bundling them out of bed, but about creating a fit and thus setting an impulse for young people to do what is right of their own volition. As stated before, placement in wage labour, an intervention etc. is not a goal in itself, but occupational opportunities and the labour market form the cause for motivational work as a successful life conduct without wage labour does not seem to be an option for young people themselves:

> *„And they want to, most of them want to do something, at least they say so. They want to do something but just can't realise it, that is (laughs) the problem" (Marie, 560-562)*

The suitable offer matched to young people's goals points to the indeterminacy of and impossibility of standardising pedagogical processes. All the professionals we interviewed rejected the questions for a typical processing of a case, typical personal characteristics of their clients, the ideal client etc. Rather, they highlighted that pedagogical knowledge has to be produced on a case by case basis. This is the role of counselling as the central method of the Competence Agency.

Counselling with its principles of voluntariness and respect for the autonomy of the consulter works on the knowledge the 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 cannot be 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[12]. 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)*

Testing is only necessary if „it" is „afloat", that is if everything is unsure and young people's ideas 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: As Stefanie Duttweiler (2007: 269) has pointed out with regard to the ideal of counselling, it would be irrational to not align ones actions to knowledge that has been produced in a voluntary and open-ended discourse.

Wage labour as the goal remains untouched however. It is the only perspective that one has reason to value, thus making possible social-pedagogical action as normative action. Social work professionals are endowed with limited leeway for action to adapt the life-worlds of their clients to this normative model. This adaptation needs time and room for manoeuvre:

> *„This is the thing that bothers me a bit, people say that the youngsters go into 'waiting loops' and it would be like I just randomly put them into something, just do something. That's exactly what it is not meant to be, this is our counselling competence, for every youngster a suitable offer" (Björn, 781-789)*

Young people need to take their time and some space endowed with limited freedom (albeit not without pressure). This room is not solely geared towards placement and can thus not be discarded as merely a 'waiting loop'. Rather, the space constituted here is a pedagogical space as it is at the same time geared towards educationally regulating conduct (especially regarding minor virtues such as punctuality, reliability, discipline) and towards providing a possibility for processes of orientation and education in the broad sense of cultural self-formation (Bildung). Accordingly, the professionals always talk about young people/ adolescents (Jugendliche), never about clients, customers, addressees etc. This ascribes them a status as 'not yet finished/ not yet arrived' which is a status worth protecting from

[12] The ‚Geva-test' is a standardised instrument for testing vocational aspirations and skills.

the demands of adulthood – albeit with the aim of preparing them for adult status, for which an occupation is constitutive.

As could be shown in this chapter, 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.

5.2 Institutional Selves – Who is addressed in which manner?

Institutions of social work are designed to offer a framework in which young adults can orient themselves 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 are seen as a starting point for pedagocial interventions (cf. e.g. Alheit 1995 for a theoretical grounding, Schneider/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/Holstein 2001, Koch 2010). It is defined as an interactionistic concept of identity work. Institutional selves are therefore alternative identity 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, on the other hand a – positive and socially accepted - untroubled self has to be juxtaposed (i.e. gainful occupation and/or a job seeker 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. According to Manhart/Rustemeyer (2004), 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.

Two further aspects should be mentioned here: On the one hand, there is an underlying mechanism of activation, which presumes a passiveness on the part of the clients, individualises social problems and blames them for their troubled identity (Koch 2010, S. 436). On the other hand, addressing a young adult as a troubled self becomes problematic

from an institutional perspective if overreaching aims and aspirations have to be "cooled out". This is done by outlining an untroubled self which commits to "realistic perspectives" (see below).

Here, a reference to the concept of 'cooling out' is useful (cf. Goffman 1952, concerning the transition from school to work: Scherr 1997: 164ff; Walther/Walter/Pohl 2007). Within a "process of redefining the self" (Goffman 1952: 5), this 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).

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".

> *„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, (yesyes) that it needs a certain period of time to get there" (Peter, 840-847).*

This idea of a "certain period" points to a relevant aspect of enabling personal development, which is opposed to the idea of employability where individual dispositions are simply to be adapted to the demands of the labour market. 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.

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 are indispensable for social work to legitimise interventions into the life conduct of individuals, but it is an institutional and professional task to reflect on these processes.

5.3 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 - in our point of view - reflected in the topic of „realistic perspectives". Within the interviews, experts (and stakeholders as well) 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 and (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, as it is not the social worker who morally demands a change of attitudes and behaviour, but reality itself which can hardly be argued with. They are also multi-faceted as they have to be aligned to the self-concept and to the demands of the apprenticeship and labour market. Career aspirations have to be presented and if needed revised or sharpened and then converted into a promising plan.

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 - 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 adaption to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of "adaptive preferences". As Otto/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 internalized and then transformed into individual aspirations or expectations; these are then in turn externalized 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).
As adaptation of one's preferences to prevailing circumstances is inevitable (unless 'pure', inborn aspirations, desires and preferences are presupposed), they might legitimate inequalities and suffering (i.e. "but it was their choice") and potentially provoke passive suffering and a further curtailment of the capacity to act.

In this sense, from the perspective of social workers it can be conducive to damp down and cool out aspirations in terms of developing realistic life perspectives.

> *„to them, temporary employment agencies are of course totally evil anyway, but they don't find other jobs, so I say, I will accompany you to the temporary employment agency. The first thing they hear is, okay, no drivers licence, no certificate of lower secondary education, no real professional work experience, we will include you in our dataset and contact you if we have something. Of course (hm) they almost never have something but that is also an experience they just have to go through" (Björn 909-915).*

The young people and their ideas of 'good work' are left to 'bounce off' the existing social order by taking them for a trip into the 'real' world which contrasts with the 'shelter' that the Competence Agency offers. This is to lead to pedagogically effective experiences which are to be understood as self-chosen. In this way, these experiences can be integrated in the self-conception of young people.

In contrast to the professional emphasis on 'realistic perspectives', the young people often described their situation as "I had no other choice" and could not connect what the institution had to offer to their own aspirations, while not being able to aspire to something concrete beyond the institutionally given possibilities. Without playing the experts off against the young people, there seems to be a gap within their working alliance: If valuable options and choices are effectively missing, the processual dimension of freedom within public action turns out to be a chimera. Hence, social workers cannot fulfil their obligations that form an integral part of the working alliance.

However, "realistic perspectives" are not inherently a bad thing - indeed they are inescapable - but if the adaptation leads to a massive displacement from a person's original inherent concerns, adolescents 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 (and sometimes even wishes and desires) has to be coped with institutionally.

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 1999: 59): "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). This IBJJ is in large part negotiated in counselling processes.

"The capability approach also emphasizes the notion of 'informational basis of judgement in justice' (IBJJ), i.e. 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).

Considering the aforementioned analysis, it becomes obvious that the aspirations of the young adults are preformed and adapted to the specific institutional context. Thus, an understanding of young adults' desires, needs and their reasons about what they find valuable is needed to be able to analytically describe the relationship between individual and institutional concerns which is crucial for capability enhancement through social work.

5.4 "I want to have my life course!" – How do young people reason about what they find valuable?

We began our interviews with the young adults with a broad and open question, stimulating them to tell their 'life story' from their point of view. This was intended to generate a long narrative and thus get access to young people's set of relevancies (i.e. what they value). Nonetheless, several young adults had difficulties with this open beginning. Rather, they presented their (well-known) institutional career focussing on their school experiences. Contact to the young adults was made through the institutions which could be a reason why the researchers were possibly identified as institutional agents as well. Hence, the interviewees anticipated what they had already learned to be important in the transitional sector: the institutional career and especially focusing on formal educational achievements. Furthermore, instead of telling their life story, they asked if their "problem story" is interesting for the researchers. The interviewers were in fact addressed as 'institutional representatives' as evidenced by young people's self-styling as 'institutional selves' which are processable by institutions. Through this self-styling, young people retain the possibility of defining 'the problems' themselves and choose what should be pedagogically worked on and how this should be understood. This posed difficulties in terms of getting through to what is important to young people apart from having a job and how they understand this, as very often they seem to have acquired 'social work language' which they know is understood by professionals in the course of their (in all cases) quite extensive 'career' in the transitional system and/ or other social work interventions (mainly child and youth welfare services).

Beneath and beyond the subjective experience of having no choice (see above), one of the main themes which came up within the interviews[13] with clients was the question of agency under dilemmatic conditions. The problem of how to secure and orient young people's capacity to act can be illustrated by several concrete dilemmas and conflicts they face in terms of how to approach institutions, evaluate the role of family and peers in the process of becoming an 'independent' adult as well as in terms of how to best go about clarifying and realising one's concerns.

Disposition towards institutions

- The young people we interviewed have had bad schooling experiences and do not want to go further in school education ("bockt nicht", roughly translates as "I can't be bothered"), on the other hand staying in school seems to them quite easy and familiar ("Irgendwie chillig", roughly translates as "feels somehow relaxed") and they know that it is reasonable and promising to achieve higher educational qualifications (the "paradox of qualification", see below).

[13] For the most part, interview statements by young people are not translated but paraphrased, as the connotations of German youth language are not adequately transferable into the English language as is the case with professionals who use a much more technical language.

- On the one hand, the interviewees declare that they are "just sitting out the measure" ("Ich sitze hier nur meine Maßnahme ab"), as they know this is not the 'real deal' but always an 'as if' situation for young people that are regarded as being too incompetent for a regular apprenticeship or job. On the other hand, they are evaluating this measure as one of their last opportunities, as the moral pressure of showing one's volition seems to be very present. This dilemma results in young people mostly approaching demands and tasks tactically, showing their volition, but showing their disaffection as well.
- Most of the interviewees had only rough (and often incorrect) ideas about institutional pathways and professional responsibilities. Often they were not able to distinguish between the employment agency and social work institutions ("they are all from the administration"). Moreover, they all came to the KSoB or Competence Agency upon the recommendation of teachers, social workers or the staff of the Employment Agency.
- Furthermore, most of the professional decisions remained unclear as to why the young people should 'choose' one option over the other ("they thought I need something easier"; "they said that's not possible"). In addition, it was hard for them to explain on which basis they were placed in the current measure and especially how it could help them with their supposed shortcomings.
- Nevertheless, they felt the pressure 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, time for reflecting one's conception of the good in the light of available options etc.).

Social context and affiliations

- Parents serve as a moral point of reference both in a negative and in a positive way: Some of them try to distance their lives from the lives' of their parents while at the same time showing affection and bringing up similarities in behavioural patterns, values etc. In contrast, some of the young people try to please their parent's (sometimes implicit) wishes and desires and take their parents as a role model for their job prospects while also expressing a desire to be self-sufficient and realise one's 'own' concerns. In the view of the experts, parents are also often regarded as problem and solution at the same time: they always try to „get them on board" although they state that it is often hard to reach them.
- Some of them assess their peers as a bad company; on the other hand peers are seen as a resource. This resource however can only be activated in terms of support in informal settings such as recreational activities, cultural self-actualisation though artistic expression etc. They are not 'useful' for getting ahead in the transitional system (which is virtually impossible anyway due to the lack of formal qualifications that can be secured there). This points to a frequent dilemma of child and youth welfare services in general: The social context (mostly the family) is both seen as generating the problem(s) and as the primary resource to ameliorate the situation (see point 11 above).

Life plans and aspirations

- Although young people express a lot of job dreams (up to 10 in one interview); they have a vague and diffuse conception and image of these job opportunities. There are

many contexts in which they can imagine themselves and futures they are able to project themselves into; at the same time they report very specific short-term goals (which are often quite restricted in terms of pay, autonomy in the workplace etc.).

- Young people's self-efficacy and self-belief constantly alternate (and sometimes in a diffuse manner) in respect to different situations: They are feeling as victims of social inequality, but as capable makers of their future as well. They are still expecting to be 'socially included' and be able to live a good life according to what they perceive as social standards (family, car, own home), although they all felt and experienced misrecognition (due to racism, ability etc.).
- Especially, hostility towards welfare recipients became apparent in several interviews. Despite a longstanding, public discourse about the laziness of recipients of social benefits, there seems to be a new quality to this form of group-focused enmity which shows in contempt towards the "economically week" (cf. Heitmeyer 2011) and can be read as a reaction to the widespread fear of social decline in the middle classes and an attempt to stabilise class barriers through cultural distinction. This, as has often been observed, leads to feelings of shame as well as to a need to distance oneself from the 'truly undeserving poor'.
- Thus, the young persons negate the need for help and emphasise their status of autonomy. In contrast however, they also have a clear notion of a 'working alliance' and the aims the social workers should stick to, thus recognising a need for assistance and the fragility of autonomy.
- The construction of freedom of the young people can mainly be described as materialistic and middle-class oriented: In the long run, they want and expect to have their own apartment, a reputable job, a car, (and sometimes) family. Insofar, the basic concern is living a conventional and 'normal' life that is regarded as the basis for recognition and is furnished with the comfort and goodies of a middle class life. This is in stark contrast to their current situation and also their future prospects given their low formal educational attainment and professional qualifications. This discrepancy is expressed in young people's very modest (job) aspirations concerning the near future, through which they will not be able to secure they lifestyle they aspire to.

The question of agency under dilemmatic conditions came up in the interpretation of the different issues within the interviews (concerning: job, school, family, future prospects etc.) On the one hand, facing these kinds of dilemmas is quite natural for young people and it is even favoured and generally accepted as part of the adolescence and youth moratorium[14]. On the other hand, these young disadvantaged people are (institutionally) forced to make long-term decisions concerning their "right" pathway into the labour market and thus their positioning in and towards society at the beginning or middle stages of the phase discursively designated as the youth moratorium.

This tension is concisely described by the statement of one young person: "I want to have my life course" ("Ich will meinen Lebenslauf haben!"). In the German language this

[14] The idea of a youth moratorium originates from Erik H. Eriksons developmental psychology:*"This period can be viewed as a (…) moratorium during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him"* (Erikson, 1968, p. 156).

statement has a double notion. Firstly (and mainly) "Lebenslauf" stands for the formal CV, secondly it means the idea of an individual life course in terms of the institutions and occupations one passes through (in contrast to the biography, which points at the individual perceptions and attempts to make sense of one's life course). Insofar, the young people are grappling with social demands and institutions and are looking for ways to retain and widen their scope of autonomy, their concerns and the 'good life' without rejecting demands and institutions.

6. Reframing the case study through the three relevant capabilities

According to the perspectives of the different actors and the empirical findings, the question here is how capabilities for work, education and voice can be formulated as an evaluative framework and as goals for interventions in the transitional system.

To sum up or rather briefly recap the empirical findings: As already stated, case studies can investigate the actions of individuals as well as those of collective actors. These two perspectives are taken account of in as much as biographical processes and addressees' interpretations (as well of their coping with the transition processes) are explored, and, on the other hand, opportunity structures and institutional restrictions are analysed with the help of an institutional mapping at the local level and through the expert interviews providing an in-depth account of the pedagogical conception of the institutions. Therefore, the different perspectives are useful to approximate the capabilities for work, education and voice.

Capabilities are regarded as a relational concept, that is a concept that has to be explored 'between structure and agency'. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in. However, before valued beings and doings can be realised, aspirations are formed and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where such realisation might occur. Thus, the research was designed to capture a subjective account on the formation of aspirations (interviews with young people) and an account on what kind of (capability-friendly?) space was provided by social work professionals through expert interviews. Expert interviews see the interviewees as representing a specific field of knowledge and are thus the 'hinge' connecting policy (cf. institutional mapping WP 3) and practice. We took a retrospective (ex-post) perspective so that decisions in action could not be grasped.

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".

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 and realising the possibility for social mobility which is at the heart of the capability approach. Major reasons for this could be found in the almost exclusive institutional focus – contrary to their conceptual underpinning – on the functioning for work

(in terms of the labour market). Voice did not play a major role, neither in terms of a functioning ("What do you want now"[15]), nor in terms of a capability ("How do we secure the individual and social conditions of making your voice count"). Likewise, education was conceived of mainly in 'narrow' functionalistic terms, by the professionals as well as by the young people themselves: Whereas social workers focused on what young people need to be placed in one specific working context, young people where primarily interested in the formal qualifications they could (or rather: could not) secure through the different measures. This might partly be an effect of the methods selected, as in interviews the conceptual underpinnings come to the fore, which are always geared towards the labour market in this field as this is the 'social problem' which forms the basis for legitimising the institutions in the first place.

But 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.

6.1 Capability for work

A broad definition of the Capability for work

If we follow Martha Nussbaum's argumentation, 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 2011: 33-34; Nussbaum 1999: 235). In this sense, work becomes a means for other ends than just earning money. Furthermore, the freedom aspect of the capability approach saves space for situations where you in fact 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: 237-238). In a similar way, Amartya Sen (1999: 113) states: "The loss of freedom in the absence of employment choice and in the tyrannical form of work can itself be a major deprivation". Related to the distinction between functionings and capabilities, only measuring peoples' actual state - their doings and beings - will not really address their real opportunities to choose a work that is truly human, including recognition and meaningful relationships to others. As the Capability Approach reminds us, "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 three points have to be emphasized when looking at the dimension of work:

1. **The dilemma of orientation within the employment-centred transition system**
2. **The question of social mobility vs. the system of class-based allocation to status positions through pedagogical means**

[15] Young people were often asked about their aspirations in terms of paid work. These aspirations did indeed form a basis for the work of the professionals. Voice was constrained to this sphere however.

3. The unanswered question of what "good" work means on all levels

1. The flexibilisation and erosion of traditional employment structures is 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 (ibid.). 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.

2. A fundamental question has to be raised: Is the (German) transition system 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 of a good life?

3. 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. It shows that placement is the overriding concern and ideas of and aspirations for valuable work are not developed.

6.2 Capability for education

A broad definition of the Capability for education

Even though the emphasis on education as an end in itself has been stated many times by both Nussbaum and Sen, a sharp definition of the capability for education is hard to find. Of course, there is a conceptually important difference between capabilities and functionings, 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) Similarly, Sen finds that "educational expansion has a variety of roles that have to be carefully distinguished:

- First, more education can help productivity.

- Secondly, wide sharing of educational advancement can contribute to a better distribution of the aggregate national income among different people.
- Thirdly, being better educated can help in the conversion of incomes and resources into various functionings and ways of living.
- Last (and by no means the least), education also helps in the intelligent choice between different types of lives that a person can lead.

All these distinct influences can have important bearings on the development of valuable capabilities and thus on the process of human development." (ibid.).
Therefore, with 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, p. 913).[16]

In our view three points have to be emphasized when looking at the dimension of education:

1. **The inequality of the educational system and the aspect of "certificate poverty"**
2. **The paradox of qualification**
3. **Practical reasoning and biographical reflexivity**

1. 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 chapter 1). Here the question of "certificate poverty" was raised and in addition the measures did not strengthen and compensate the lack of certifications either. 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 Walker's (2010) terms "a just education"?

2. Analytically, we find a paradox of qualification: on the one hand, young people are advised to invest as much time and effort as possible into gaining qualifications in order to complete their transition to the labour market "successfully" - but with a narrow understanding of success as only getting a job, not taking into account the demand for meaningful relations etc. as Nussbaum points out. On the other hand, formal qualifications are simply not available in exchange for their efforts. This "paradox of qualification" refers to the fact that qualifications, although demanded by the employment system and provided by the education system are either not available or not sufficient. The question arising here is whether and to what extent educational efforts can contribute to solving vocational training and employment problems. The paradox of qualification as explanatory principle illustrates

[16] If we turn our focus to Nussbaum, she brings in education as a mean for another end, namely "Senses, Imagination & Thought" which covers the ability to use ones senses and reason in a "truly human" way. This is to be "informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training." (Nussbaum 2001: 41f). As can be seen this is tangled in with the capability for work - it becomes an end in itself and at the same time means for the capability for work.

again the de-standardisation of educational and biographical histories. Decisions, although in accordance with the norms of society and taken with the best of intentions in the here and now, can by no means guarantee the future of the individual but rather compound the problems of orientation of youths. This again shows that youth as phase for experimentation largely free from the demands of adulthood is dissolving and that the individualisation and pluralisation of life situations serve to privatise risks associated with the lack of valuable work.

3. The third notion is the aspect of capability for education as "Bildung". A precondition for processes of Bildung (as cultural self-formation) 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 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.[17]

6.3 Capability for voice

A broad definition of 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 public policy process on the one hand and social work practice on the other hand (cf. Bonvin 2009, 2012).

According to Hirschman (1970), the achievement of this processual dimension of freedom within public and social work action requires the equal availability of three alternatives for each and every beneficiary within social work practice.

"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) 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 "to form a conception of the good" (Nussbaum 2000, 79). It is also a basic precondition for process of generating informed and considered decisions that matter to plan and shape one's life." (2006)
Martha Nussbaum identifies practical reason and affiliation as the two central capabilities rendering the pursuit of all other valued doings and beings truly human (cf. Nussbaum 1993:

[17] 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.

266; Nussbaum 1997: 288 und Nussbaum 1999: 59). The research perspective of this case study and the focus on a relational perspective suggest the analysis of the 'external', non-psychological aspects of these capabilities. Affiliation has been analysed in regard to the interviews with the young people (peers, family etc.), practical reason is defined in this study as the capability for voice, thus focusing on the agency aspect of reasoning.

In our view three points have to be emphasized when looking at the dimension of voice:

1. **Participation in the helping process**
2. **Sense of entitlement**
3. **Capacity to aspire**

1. Participation is a longstanding issue in social work, which is often related to the (broad and often proclaimed) concepts of citizenship and the democratisation of social work practice (cf. 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 the client can choose between exit, voice and loyalty.

The question is whether the pupils and young adults have the capability for voice in these arrangements. 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 transitional system. The providers contend that the young people often are in need to learn to have a more "realistic" view on their future choice of employment. In this sense, the young person's individual plan is influenced or even manipulated in a way not necessarily conducive to the beings and doings they have reason to value, as toning down ones concerns to fit into (mostly disadvantaged) social positions is not the same as "choose[ing] between valuable alternatives or opportunities." This paramount goal of capability enhancing policies - following Bonvin - "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 their social environment." (Bonvin 2009: 3)

2. Furthermore, 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.

3. The capacity to aspire (cf. Appadurai 2004) refers to the idea of powerful contribution of aspirations and the exercising of voice concerning societal 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" (Appadurai 2004: 66). Sometimes even a „capacity to desire" is lacking, when job-related desires and a conception of a good life are submerged.

7. Conclusions

As the trends in unemployment and transitional regimes reveal, we are in urgent need of a justice based analysis of the transition from school to work in a comparative European perspective, such as strategies for strengthening the capabilities of young people to actively shape their personal and working lives in societies and become capable of tackling the economic, cultural, demographic and technological challenges of today.

To sum up briefly, one can say that the young people in question are chiefly faced with two risks: Firstly, in the transitional phase between school and work, institutions designed to bring them closer to the labour market and thus prevent 'social exclusion' often have the opposite effect as they get stuck in a context deepening stigmatisation without offering any formal qualifications. Secondly, the transitional system is fraught with risk since it is far from offering a guarantee of vocational training placement. This is confirmed by ever longer waiting loops and low chances of success albeit in different proportions. Insofar the transition system is not only an answer to social inequality, it is also part of its reproduction. We want to conclude with brief policy recommendations and tasks for further research:

Brief policy recommendations from the case study:

1. Managerialism and excessive assessment and documentation systems conflict with the idea of giving young people a voice in the support process. Hence, a capacity to aspire and a sense of entitlement needs to be established not only on an interactive, but as well on an institutional level.
2. On all levels of the transitional system (management, front line social work, clients) a conception of "good and meaningful work" is lacking. A normative orientation - and the institutional adaption to what good work should and could be - has to be implemented on all levels. New forms of democratic participation could form a new 'Informational Basis of Judgements of Justice' (IBJJ). For example, open space events can bring people together discussing conditions and requirement for what can reasonably be understood as 'good work'.
3. Young people's chances for success in the transitional system are not only curtailed by educational inequality and a constant lack of training positions, but also by poverty. The transition process should be seen as part of the youth moratorium, where opportunities and social mobility have to be enhanced instead of diminished. Even more important, through living in material poverty, young people are effectively denied their right to realise their concerns in the here and now and thus having the opportunity to a good life in the present.

Tasks for further research from the case study:

1. Within a qualitative approach, a conversation analysis of counselling processes would be useful. In doing so, one could focus on the question how aims, needs and responsibilities are negotiated and how the underlying perspectives (i.e. the perception of problems) of the clients and professionals are actualised (and transformed) in the social practice of counselling. More specifically: In which manner are the (job-related) desires, resources and competences of the target group on the one hand and the general aims and ends of an active labour market policy (ALMP) and its activating measures on the other hand reframed and negotiated in counselling processes? In this respect, the concepts of the informational basis of judgement in justice (IBJJ) and "exit, voice and loyalty" within the counselling processes could be emphasised.
2. Here, too, a more ethnographic approach beyond problem-centred and expert interviews respectively could shed light on how questions apart from labour market integration are negotiated and valued against the overarching goal of labour market integration. Further research would also have to look at the *interactions* through which institutions themselves work on the aspirations of young people and on the grounds for valuing doings and beings. Interactions arguably are also the level on which the conceptual space that is opened up by the setup of institutions is enacted, reproduced and transformed. In this sense, an 'institutional ethnography' could explore the social relations that structure people's everyday lives. For the institutional ethnographer, ordinary daily activity becomes the site for an investigation of social organisation and also focuses on the social organisation of knowledge and its consequences.
3. Furthermore, (local) longitudinal studies of pupils in the transition from school to work could be arranged. This method would allow drawing conclusions regarding to temporary alterations of their (job related) desires, self-beliefs, self-efficacy, aims and needs. Insofar, the qualitative approaches aim retrospectively at the transitional experiences of the young people and the pedagogical practices in situ, whereas longitudinal studies have a prospective perspective on capabilities and values of youths over the course of time. Moreover, these studies could evaluate the effectiveness of transitional measures and provide evidence for an adequate support of young people in this crucial stage.

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CHAPTER 3: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPABILITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LOW SKILLS. THE CASE STUDY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN POLAND.

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Introduction

This case study of educational initiative for young people gives us an insight into structural problems faced by employers and education providers in Poland resulting from a decreasing popularity of vocational education and legal regulations at the intersection of educational, economic and political fields. The programme "We empower you to learn" was created in response to these constraints by a big international company, that operates in a sector of power industry in cooperation with upper secondary vocational schools. It addressed young people in vocational education and aimed at improvement of their educational and professional prospects. Compared to other training and educational initiatives in Poland, it might be considered innovative, because of a preventive character, a broad range of good quality and long-term services and involvement of different types of organisations.

By applying Amartya's Sen approach (Sen, 1992), we analyse what are decisive factors that facilitate or impede development of freedom of young people in vulnerable situation. This theoretical framework distinguishes itself from other approaches by taking into account the individuals' perspective on what "doings" and "beings" (Sen calls it functionings) they treat as valuable. Adopting this normative standpoint, public action is evaluated in terms of supporting or hindering the development of individuals' "capabilities" i.e. their effective freedom to achieve these valuable functionings. The capability approach (CA) gives us analytical instruments to distinguish factors, which make the educational process relatively successful and contribute to the opening of real opportunities for its participants. However, in order to grasp negative factors crucial for limiting freedom to choose life, work and education one has reason to value, we propose to use Pierre Bourdieu' s theoretical concepts, that are useful for the analysis of education as a process of social reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

The paper is organised in six parts. First of all, we will present origins of the programme by providing background information on recent changes in educational field in Poland with a particular attention to the interests the company and vocational school had in creating and implementing this initiative. It will enable us – in a second step – to understand the specificity of this educational endeavour and to identify potential sources of success and failure in terms of capabilities' development. Third and fourth parts are devoted to the

discussion of the theoretical background and methodological aspects of the research. Fifth part presents findings of the case study on what features of the programme revealed to be capacitating or incapacitating for vulnerable youth. Finally, by summarising results we draw some conclusions on an added value of research of education inspired by capability approach.

1. Origins of the programme "We empower you to learn" for youth in vocational education

The origins of the programme "We empower you to learn" are closely connected – on the one hand – to structural problems and challenges faced by companies and vocational schools resulting from the recent history of the educational field in Poland; and – on the other – to the specific positions of organisations implementing the programme in the fields they are operating in: the ENERGET company and the secondary vocational school, subsequently called TECHNIQUE[18].

1.1 Historical changes in educational field in Poland

Restructuring of centrally planned economy and the dismantling of communist political system in the 1990s produced important consequences for educational field (for an overall account in English, see Mertaugh and Hanushek, 2005). First of all, it has undergone deep changes, mainly as a result of new financial and governance rules introduced in the 1990s. According to them, the central government transfers to local territorial units (pl. *gmina* and *powiat*) an amount of money that might (but does not have to) be spent on education. Local governments were appointed the role of managers responsible for balancing costs and benefits of primary and secondary education. The main criterion – on which the granted amount depends – is the number of pupils in primary and secondary education in a territorial unit. It triggered the process of shutting down educational facilities which generated high expenses, with little regard to other functions they fulfilled. In addition to this, local governments and secondary schools started to compete for candidates in their administrative units. Schools found themselves in a position requiring strategic thinking in marketing categories in order to attract maximum number of students and avoid being closed: They started to organise meetings with potential candidates, advertise their educational offer and change their specialisations according to trends of popularity. These changes of financial and governance rules together with increasing popularity of general education among young people hit particularly hard vocational schooling.

Second of all, vocational education has been separated from employers when companies gave up the educational functions typical for the communist system and closed their vocational schools. This was a result of cost-cutting plans forced by privatisation of state-owned enterprises (for details, see Kozarzewski, 2007): they had to rearrange their strategies and reduce costs in order to survive the competition in globalised world. In result, enterprises lost their influence on the content of minimum curricula and external technical exams, since the list of vocations taught in schools has remained defined by central government institutions and resistant to modifications (Sztanderska *et al.*, 2007, p. 31). The

[18] Pseudonyms are used in order to guarantee anonymity of our interviewees.

whole process of separation has had afar-reaching consequences, among others, coexistence of high youth unemployment rate with persistent shortages of workers in some sectors of economy.

As one of the experts summarised it: Polish vocational schools nowadays are forced to deal with a sort of 'diarchy' <expert>. On the one hand, they have to teach vocations and keep the educational standards which are defined centrally. On the other hand, they have to provide services for the sum of money they receive from the local governments. This system made vocational schools more vulnerable than general secondary educational facilities, since their infrastructure generates more costs and – for many years – the number of candidates was decreasing. In order to avoid it, headmasters tend to introduce rapid "re-skilling". This means, for instance, that teachers of vocations – which are not popular enough and too expensive – are asked to change their specialisation into more attractive to students at that time and not generating such high spending. This resulted in the declining quality of vocational schooling. Moreover, since in many cases the decisions about opening specialisation are based on criteria other than labour market demand (e.g. popularity among youth), those schools are likely to produce people with not only outdated but also redundant skills. As our interviewee summarised it: *Schools compete against one another for having a sufficient number of candidates eager to educate there. Because if they have not enough candidates to learn, local government can say we are closing this school. So this is why school initiate changes of profiles of education they teach, but the problem is that they change the programme with the same staff, with the same property they have had at their disposal, so you can doubt about the quality* <expert>.

1.2 Specific position of organisations implementing the programme

Before the collapse of centrally planned economy, industries used to be state-owned. Liberalisation processes in the energy sector in Poland were linked to the project of market economy and their pace accelerated after the accession of Poland to European Union in 2004 (Kozek, 2011). However, till today the power industry remains under a significant control of the state (ibidem). ENERGET was one of the most important foreign investors involved in the privatisation process in this highly unionised sector. The collective bargaining during privatisation led to the signature of so-called 'social pacts', according to which layoffs of power engineers were relatively difficult to be executed, in opposite to massive dismissals resulting from privatisation in many other segments of the economy. ENERGET was forced to either support – what is called by labour economists – 'the excess levels of employment' and wait until employees reach retirement age or negotiate dismissals by mutual agreement of parties with high redundancy payments. In consequence of negotiated restructuring in this sector, there was no demand for new power engineers for many years.

Hence, vocational schools in the whole country closed educational path of 'power engineering technician'. It was also eliminated from the list of vocational specialisations, which – as mentioned above – is centrally defined. In the middle of 2000s, ENERGET found itself in disadvantageous situation. The moment of retirement of important part of staff was approaching, whereas potential candidates with specific competences and skills were lacking and there was no educational facility providing training in this domain. Shortages concerned in particular lower and middle rank technicians, since higher rank employees were easier to be recruited among graduates of technological universities or by promoting current

ENERGET employees. As one of the employees of the company described it: *"(...) we have overproduction of power engineers but there are no technicians. A gap has been created here."* <employee 1>[19]. In order to deal with the problem, the company took steps to secure its interests (see also, Emerling *et al.*, 2010).

With the support of the Polish Confederation of Private Employers and Polish Human Resources Management Association ENERGET mobilised different circles – academics, teachers of vocation, local authorities – to lobby for restoring the specialisation of 'power engineering technician' to the centrally defined lists of vocations and to work on updating curriculum. It was a long-term undertaking, since – as scholars put it – the mechanisms of changing minimum curricula and the list of specialisations are quite rigid (Sztanderska *et al.*, 2007, p. 31). In 2010, ENERGET finally succeeded to restore the specialisation, when the Minister of National Education signed the amendment of the directive regulating this issue (Minister Edukacji Narodowej, 2010). The success in this matter would probably have not been possible without a strong position of the company and various capitals at its disposal (i.e. financial resources, competences and know-how of its staff, but also social capital and good reputation), since the preparation of curricula was not particularly supported by central authorities. As one of the experts recalls: [Representatives of ENERGET – KS, MZ] *have basically written the curriculum, because there was no educational institution showing interest in establishing such specialisation in the system of public education. And this is a gigantic barrier, because the structure is rigid and creating new vocational specialisation requires huge engagement from some groups of employers (…). So, in consequence the burden rests on the shoulders of the employers* <expert>.

ENERGET also initiated the programme "We empower you to learn", that preceded the re-introduction of "power-engineering technician" specialty to the list of vocations. The programme was addressed to pupils in vocational schools eager to learn some elements of power engineering as an extracurricular activity. For this purpose, the company established close relations with two educational facilities teaching similar specialisations: a reputable complex of vocational school in a middle size industrial city and a complex of schools, situated in Warsaw near one of the ENERGET power plants and having difficulties to survive in a highly competitive educational field in the capital city. From the very beginning, the programme was meant to evolve into opening of classes with specialisation of "power engineering technician", which eventually took place in the school year 2010/2011 in the case of the first school and was followed by the complex of vocational schools in Warsaw in 2011/2012[20]. The Warsaw school was selected for in-depth research in 2010, because of its weak position in the educational field and negative selection of pupils. It revealed to be an interesting case of implementation of vocational education and training programme among young participants in a vulnerable situation in terms of low and unequal initial skills. The class for power engineering technician was opened there after the end of empirical investigation and for this reason could not be included in the research.

The history of the selected school illustrates well turbulent changes of educational field in Poland. It used to function as a complex of basic and upper-secondary vocational schools (pl.

[19] All interviews were transcribed and coded in order to preserve anonymity.

[20] The recruitment to upper-secondary schools in Warsaw begins sooner than in other cities therefore TECHNIQUE did not have enough time to organise the class with this specialisation in year 2010/2011 (the amendment to the list of vocation was signed in 8 April 2010).

zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa, *technikum*). However, on the wave of mass interest in general education after 1989 and the introduction of the new rules of financing in order to survive, it was forced to – on the one hand – open general upper secondary school – and on the other – retrench vocational education. In 2008, the trend has reversed. The general high school had to be closed, because it lost in a competition for new candidates with a large number of Warsaw general educational facilities. TECHNIQUE i.e. the upper secondary vocational school was enlarged to help the complex of schools to survive. Such changes required providing at least basic equipment, therefore, cooperation with a big employer was a good opportunity to get financial and educational support. In addition to that, TECHNIQUE needed to find a way to attract candidates and the cooperation with a big, international company was considered good opportunity to achieve this aim.

2. Forms of support in the programme "We empower you to learn"

Cooperation between ENERGET company and TECHNIQUE vocational school took several forms. First of all, in 2009 ENERGET assumed patronage of the school. Every school year TECHNIQUE opened one class under auspices of ENERGET. During the study there were already three classes in this school: with first-, second- and third-year students. All of them were taught in the vocation called "technician-mechanic with the specialisation in construction of power machines", which at that time was the closest to demands of ENERGET among vocations enlisted centrally. ENERGET provided the vocational school with financial, material and educational support, quite unusual for companies in Poland in terms of range, duration and comprehensiveness of action (for a detailed list of activities, see table 1). The programme "We empower you to learn" included non-mandatory and mandatory activities for young students in these classes that were implemented successively during their four-year educational cycle. It consisted of vocational and soft-skill workshops, excursions to power plants, apprenticeship. Furthermore, best students in every class were granted scholarships paid by the company. Apart from that, selected pupils were invited to participate in so-called "ambassador programme" and play a role of representative of the company at school by transferring information, organising meetings, etc.

ENERGET employees (called "mentors") responsible for the programme implemented it on the voluntary basis without extra-remuneration. In the school year 2010/2011 alone, 21 employees volunteered to teach students beyond their regular job, mainly in the frame of workshops and apprenticeship. Their personal commitment seems to exceed narrow interest of organisation to pre-select students to work in their company, to invest in skills of their potential future staff and to promote the company. According to all interviewees, they were dedicated to their tasks, eager to modify their teaching methods in order to attract attention of their public and adapt to level of skills of young people and their experience. As one of "mentors" describes changes in a way of teaching: *we bought some study aids. Piotr* [ENERGET employee – K.S., M.Z.] *uses it in a cool way, because they perform experiments and it arouses interest, because these are very interesting experiments. At first, there was less of it, there was more oral-projector theory* [e.g. power point presentations – K.S., M.Z.], *but now we have been introducing, yeah since a few months, these experiments, the easiest ones, such as making electric current to flow from a potato, something like that* (...) *It arouses interest, as well as small electric engines – everybody is visually more attracted if something is happening that this slides' wittering, so to speak. So we started introducing and it caused some interest* < employee 2>. The low level of knowledge in science and technical

skills surprised "mentors" at first, so they tried to start every subject with basic information, like what are the units of measurement of electric current. Interviewees also mentioned that some of ENERGET employees succeeded to establish close relations with students going beyond a transfer of knowledge and skills.

Table 1: List of main activities in the programme "We empower you to learn" in TECHNIQUE

Type of activity	Target group	Aim
Educational support		
Excursions to power plants	All students in the classes under auspices of ENERGET	Getting to know specificity of work in power engineering sector. Motivate students to learn more.
Vocational workshops called "Circle of power industry workers": extra-curricular 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, job interview)
Apprenticeships (3 weeks)	All third grade students in the class under auspices of ENERGET	Getting to know the specificity of work in power engineering sector and in the all departments of the particular power plant.
"Mentoring programme" in ENERGET: company workers were encouraged to teach students in the frame of voluntary programme	All students in all 3 classes under auspices of ENERGET	Initiating process of sharing knowledge and interaction between different generations.
"Ambassador programme": choosing students that will officially represent ENERGET in the school and inform about the company	Selected students in all 3 classes under auspices of ENERGET	Motivate students to involve in extra-curricular activities. Creating bond with the company. Promotion of the company ("employer branding").
Creating class with the specialisation of power engineering technician (1-st grade starting with a school year 2011/2012)		Adapting programme to the needs of the power-engineering sector in general and ENERGET in specific
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 level of teaching and adapting its content.
Funding scholarships for best students	3 students with the best results in every class	Motivate students to learn more.

Source: ENERGET (2011) and interviews.

Moreover, the school benefited from the material and symbolic support of the company that was used to construct a new image. Marketing became a new domain of school activity and ENERGET's brand with the support of promotional materials provided by the company were used in a campaign to win over new candidates. As one of our interviewee stated: *we learn marketing because now the school... It is not anymore a student who asks to come to school, but the school asks him to come. The cooperation with* [ENERGET – K.S., M.Z.] *is used in this recruitment action* <teacher 1>. Many of teachers thought about the cooperation not only as an opportunity to change the school image and to improve employment prospects of school graduates, but also to simply attract better candidates in future, and by doing so to weaken negative effects of educational reforms for teachers in vocational schools. Even though, the programme wasn't planned as one aiming at disadvantaged group, teachers as well as mentors had to deal in their everyday work with behavioural problems of their students and also – what they emphasised in interviews – with a lower and highly unequal level of their initial knowledge. Similarly to ENERGET employees, they tried to adapt reflexively by creating free of charge catch-up courses after mandatory lessons instead of leaving students and their parents to pay privately for tutoring as it usually happens in Poland. The school also hired psychologist who prepare various integrative workshops for students and all teachers were asked to fix their permanence hours for individual consultation.

To summarise, clear organisation goals, both of TECHNIQUE and ENERGET, and personal involvement of their employees was the key to the relative success of the programme. Teachers from the upper secondary vocational school as well as ENERGET employees shared common interest to develop it with particular care for quality and attention to details, which 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 frame of active labour market policies) (Sztandar-Sztanderska, 2009). It is not an overstatement to say that opportunities offered for students to learn and to experience themselves in various situations have undoubtedly improved in comparison to what was proposed before the cooperation with ENERGET started. However, what still had to be investigated was, first of all, how teachers and "mentors" were coping with highly unequal level of skills and knowledge of students entering the school; and, second of all, to what extent the programme together with school activities broaden capabilities of those students who were not necessarily interested in work or further education in power-engineering industry. Amartya Sen's concepts oriented our analysis in this respect.

3. Methodological issues

The following study was based on two types of methods: 1) documentary and statistical data analysis; and 2) 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs). The first methods were used principally for the case selection: we analysed the influence of recent changes in the educational field on the problems encountered by vocational schools and employers seeking for workers with specific skills in order to select a relevant case of educational initiative (Sztandar-Sztanderska and Zieleńska, 2012). The analysis of documentary and statistical data proved also very useful in planning further research, supplementing and controlling information gathered during interviews and interpretation of results.

The idea was to choose a programme for youth that is innovative in a sense that it attempts to deal with these identified structural problems (negative selection of students to

vocational schools, under-funding of vocational schools, out-dated and inadequate curricula, a lack of cooperation between employers and educational institutions) instead of providing short-term training or internship for young unemployed after the end of their regular education (as it is the case of labour market policies). The case study includes curricular (obligatory) lessons provided by the TECHNIQUE school as well as the extracurricular courses offered by ENERGET. It was impossible to separate them, because there were strongly interdependent: what students learnt at school could influence their performance during workshops or apprenticeships and *vice versa*; grades which students received from particular classes determined whether they qualified for scholarships, etc.

Qualitative methods were required to analyse education as an interactive process that takes place in a concrete setting between concrete individuals and which is mediated through their interpretations instead of being a de-contextualised transfer of knowledge with standardised effects. IDIs were at the core of the case study methodology[21]. We interviewed 20 people. Their selection reflects the effort to meet requirements of data triangulation(Denzin, 1970). We included individuals representing various organisations (e.g. school, company, local authorities) representing different interests among these implementing the programme. Among students, we decided to conduct interviews only with those from a second and a third grade, because they had already a chance to form opinions about the programme. A diverse group has been chosen for the study, consisting of students with the best, average and weak school results, involved (ambassadors of the programme) and not involved in closer cooperation with ENERGET (for details see table 2). An interview was realised also with one of only two female students from those classes.

[21] Use of participant observation was not possible due to problems of access to the field and budgetary constraints.

Table 2: List of interviewees

Official function	Specifics	Number of interviews
Local authorities and administration	1. Vice-president of the city responsible for education 2. Employee of city education bureau	2
Teachers	1. Headmaster 2. Class tutor, English teacher 3. Class tutor, teacher of Physics and vocational subjects 4. Psychologist	4
Employees of ENERGET	1. HR department (2 people) 2. 2 employees responsible for apprenticeship in 2 power plants	4
Students	6 third grade students (more advanced in the programme) representing different groups: 1. awarded for very good results & officially involved in extra-school cooperation with ENERGET (2 students) 2. not awarded for very good results, but officially involved in extra-school cooperation with ENERGET (2 students) 3. neither awarded for very good results, nor engaged officially in cooperation with ENERGET (2 students, among them 1 female) 2 second grade students (less advanced in the programme) awarded for very good results	8
Employee of association cooperating with ENERGET	Responsible for organisation of programme and contacts with school and students	1
Economist, senior lecturer in University of Warsaw	Academic with expertise concerning relationships between labour market and education	1

Finally, two stipulations have to be made. First of all, we were denied the access to important information on social and material situation of students (for example which students get support from social services) and their school performance (data about results on entry exams). The school authorities were worried that is would contravene students' right to privacy. The teachers were also very reluctant to touch this subject during interviews. Second of all, the study had finished before any of the students took general and vocational exams (they will approach it in May 2012). Therefore, we do not know if the skills and knowledge they gained in the programme will be sufficient to pass them and get official

diplomas, which will enlarge or limit their freedom in future as far as educational and vocational choices are concerned (at least till they manage to acquire it).

4. Theoretical background and research questions

All forms of support for young people provided together by ENERGET and TECHNIQUE will be regarded as what Sen in his theory of capabilities calls "commodities". This term refers to different goods and services, in this particular case: equipment for school labs and workshops, scholarships for the best performers, excursions to power plants, apprenticeships in the company, extra-curricular vocational and soft skills workshops, catch-up classes. As Sen emphasises, how they will be used – i.e. what characteristics they will acquire – depends on various individual and non-individual features, called "conversion factors" – someone's skills and knowledge, traits of character, social norms and legal framework of the society he or she lives, but also financial situation and other resources a particular person has access to, etc. He often explains it by referring to simple examples, like the one of a bike. The meaning a bike will have for individuals and their freedom to use it will be different in case of someone, who has the ability to ride it than for someone who does not; in the city where there are bicycle lanes and where there are not; or in the country where it is necessary to have a licence to be allowed to ride a bike than in the country where it is not.

This relation between commodities and conversion factors has great relevance as far as the analysis of the programme is concerned: although all the participants are presented with theoretically the same access to goods and services in its framework, their ability to use it depends on interaction between various individual and non-individual conversion factors. Taking CA normative standpoint, our focus is therefore on empirically distinguishing what makes it easier or more difficult (and sometimes even impossible) to use these commodities to realise goals these particular young people treat as valuable.

As long as we want to apply this approach to simple phenomena like riding a bike, it will suffice. However, it revealed to be difficult to adopt Sen's general economic model for the purpose of empirical analysis of dynamics between different capacitating and constraining factors. We decided to supplement it with concepts that help us understand the reproduction of inequalities through educational institutions. Therefore in our analysis we will also refer to mechanisms described by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean- Claude Passeron (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Bourdieu, 1979).

For the purpose of empirical analysis, our general research question on capacitating and constraining factors was divided into three more detailed problems. Their formulation was simultaneously inspired by the abovementioned theoretical backgrounds and preliminary research findings.

First of all, people's freedom to act may be restricted even if their access to commodities seems to be fairly open. One of our first assumptions, confirmed by statements of teachers, "mentors" and students themselves, was that pupils entering the school have generally low level of skills and knowledge and that there are significant inequalities between them. Therefore, we decided to explore this issue by verifying whether their previous (formal and informal) education equipped them with skills that enable them to use these commodities or

if it is not the case, whether this programme contributes to the development of these skills and, by doing so, equalising chances between individuals. To give some simple examples: are they able to understand the content of lectures and exercises or they lack some basic knowledge to do so; are they able to set their own goals and find the way to achieve them, are they able to discern rules of the game and play along with them (for instance, to understand what are actual criteria for recruitment to ENERGET, what are criteria they have to fulfil to pass external final exams, etc.). Our inspiration here was Bourdieu's classical study on reproduction in which he observes that school often demands from pupils abilities it does not teach and it symbolically distinguishes and rewards pupils that acquired them through socialisation in families with high cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). We decided to investigate further if similar processes take place in the selected programme.

Second of all, both Sen and Bourdieu pay attention to the process of adaptation of preferences and show that people rarely aspire for something that is rather improbable to achieve (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970), because of constraining institutions, such as for example norms concerning male- and female-types of education and occupation. This mechanism of self-limitation – according to Bourdieu – is usually not a matter of informed choices made by individuals in a way suggested by rational actor model, but it bases on previous experiences and involves excluding options that – as he calls it – are often "unthinkable" (Bourdieu, 1980). It means that we might exclude something as "not for us" not because we don't want it or we don't value it, but because it did not cross our mind that it is a possibility. By a Latin expression "amor fati" Bourdieu emphasises that a taste is formed by the experience of constraints and that people in a disadvantaged situation learn to like and to choose what is easier and possible for them to achieve (Bourdieu, 1979; Sztandar-Sztanderska, 2010, p. 43-45). In the case study, we will pay attention to dynamics of constraining norms used by teachers and "mentors" and adaptive preferences of students. Whereas Bourdieu is useful in providing us with tools to analyse reproduction (what we call in this text constraining factors), Sen's theory is better suited for analytically enumerating conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to create freedom to achieve valuable functionings. This question is developed in, among others, in an article by Bonvin and Farvaque, in which they insist on importance of institutions that create space for the beneficiaries' normative judgments on the life they have reason to value, which is called "capability for voice" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005). They argue, along with Sen (1990), that development of freedom demands effective possibility to co-define criteria of assessment used during implementation of public policy (so called "informational basis of judgment") in order to voice without restraint individual preferences about one's life, to reject unfair judgement and to participate as equal member of public process. In line with these authors, we would pay attention to the way the voice of young people is framed in the programme "We empower you to learn" and to point at factors that contribute or limit it. According to our empirical evidence, many of these young people are at the point at defining for the first time, their life-plans concerning further educational and professional career. This is extremely important since at this point of life these processes of limiting and widening of freedom have significant consequences, sometimes life-long effects.

Finally, taking as a normative point of view a right of young people to decide what life, education and work they treat as valuable and to change these judgments during their life course, we found it important to analyse whether the educational path outlined by the programme does not limit their future freedom by being too specific (for distinction

between economies based on general and specific skills, see Hall and Soskice). This concern becomes even more significant due to the fact that ENERGET has clear interest in preparing pupils for work in the company. For this reason, we decided to analyse to what extent the programme focused on creation of skills specific for this industry, company or even one particular power plant or skills that might be useful in other educational and work paths. We can paraphrase it in Bourdieu's terms: whether cultural capital they acquire in embodied (skills, dispositions) or institutionalised form (diplomas) would be useful in other fields than this school and this company or economy sector (Bourdieu, 1986).

5. Conversion factors versus constraining factors

In this part we will focus on the capacitating and incapacitating elements of the analysed programme. We will describe them by referring to the three detail problems discussed above: 1) generality versus specificity of skills and knowledge taught during the courses; 2) ability to use provided commodities; 3) adaptation of preferences versus capability for voice.

5.1. Producing good ENERGET employees or increasing capabilities

The analysis of the empirical data has shown, that although the studied programme is designed to answer a very specific problem of a power industry company, most of its aspects seem to work in favour of creating more general capabilities for work and education, not "formatting" people to become good ENERGET employees. By referring to Bourdieu's terminology, we could say the programme gives the participants opportunities to acquire dispositions (assets) that may become embodied capitals in different vocational and educational fields.

First of all, courses provided by ENERGET employees were of high quality, compared to their previous and present experience with school. All the interviewees – regardless to their grades, level of knowledge and plans for the future – positively evaluated the extracurricular activities. The apprenticeships were assessed the highest, but also workshops and lectures were considered generally more interesting than regular classes. They emphasised mostly the fact, that mentors from ENERGET were able to present theory by using examples and references to everyday experiences. As one of the students, who does not wish to work in power engineering in the future, puts it:

> *"We have a lot of theory dictated from books in vocational subjects. Whereas here, in this circle of power engineers, we had slides and they gave us materials to those presentations. They described step by step the construction and functioning of boiler. (...). There was no pure theory, they used to bring some things, did experiments – generally it was more interesting than lessons".* <student 1>

Courses conducted by ENERGET employees were also helpful in understanding subjects discussed during compulsory lessons. One of the mentors recalls a student coming to him and saying that he has learnt more during the lecture than at school:

> *"There was this Kuba, he came after one of the lectures about electricity – very basic one, only fundamentals. And he said: 'You know what? I learnt more during those two hours, than for the past six months at school'. We were speechless, really."* <employee 2>

The mentors emphasised that their main aim was to show students various ways of applying theory to practice, not to prepare them to work at the company. The latter would be impossible anyway, because two week apprenticeship is a far too short period to do this.

Although the programme was focused on providing participants with knowledge and skills from a specific area, there was also a part, which addressed other needs called soft skills workshops. They were twofold: provided by school psychologist and by the company. Students had the opportunity to learn how to present themselves, prepare presentations, communicate effectively, write CVs and prepare to job interviews. There were also some elements aiming at increasing the integration of classes. The school authorities seemed to value the most the aspect of self-presentation, which was considered an essential skill in the contemporary labour market. Also students perceive learning it as something important and valuable. Some of them emphasised in the interviews that the fact they were pushed to present different things and topics publically would help them in the future – not only to pass the oral final exams, but also be competitive when looking for employment.

Another aspect of the programme, which worked in favour of building more general skills were the "catch-up" classes. Teachers organised tutoring in science after compulsory lessons, to give students with some difficulties the chances to improve. This seems the more important provided that in Poland the most common way to deal with such differences is to shift the responsibility on parents expecting them to pay for private tutoring, regardless to the fact, that they may have problems with affording that.

Although the programme provides the students with additional courses, which work in favour of creating capabilities, their future depends to a large extent on fulfilling the requirements of obligatory education. This is what Bourdieu calls institutionalised capital. If they want to continue education, they have to pass a general final exam, which entitles them to continue education at tertiary level. Whereas, if they want to work in their vocational field, they also have to pass the vocational exam (e.g. no matter how well evaluated by ENERGET employees they are, they will not get the job in the company without both of them). No one has taken them so far, because the exams will be held after fourth grade. However, the fact that great many of them complain about level of obligatory vocational courses and have very poor results, suggests constraining factor. They explain that the problem is caused by the fact that these courses are conducted by a particular teacher and she threatens them to fail. It seems that the teacher has difficulties to establish relationship with students and transfer knowledge. What is striking no actions are taken by the school to solve this situation.

5.2 Ability to use commodities

Students came to school with different knowledge, skills, expectations and plans, their life situations varied. In the CA language, we may say that they entered the programme having diverse conversion factors and what comes with it unequal ability to use commodities provided in the programme. Classes under auspices of ENERGET soon divided into small "elite" of best performers – to use teachers' wording – and a rest. Best performers tend to combine various roles, positively evaluated by adults: being a scholarship holder with being an ambassador of the programme and sometimes with other official functions (e.g. participating in student's government).

Members of the first group seem more eager to set goals and more aware of the means needed to achieve them. Even though some them not necessarily wish to become company's employees or even work in the area of power engineering, they discern that engagement in the programme may help them gain additional experience and qualities needed to realise their future plans. They are able to use the programme to realise the aims they consciously set for themselves. This is the skill that many other students lack – on the contrary they have difficulties to critically interpret the marketing message used to promote the school, saying that well-paid employment in ENERGET is guaranteed after graduation. They seem to be not aware of the fact that other factors play a role here: for instance, their school results, economic situation and changes of ownership of the company that are currently taking place[22]. Moreover, many of them do not see any link between their future and current actions (like, for instance, a decision which subjects to choose for their final general exam).

This division into "the elite" and "the rest" tends to be permanent – the cases of people improving their position are rare. As one of the scholarship holders puts 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 programme itself had influence on the fact that there was nearly no flow of people between the two mentioned groups. One of the reasons for it was the timing of extra-curricular courses which limited the chances of some students to take advantage from them. First of all, the catch-up classes were organised after the lessons in the afternoon – and it was difficult for many of the students who lived in considerable distance from school (mostly outside of the city) to attend them, because of long and late journey home. However, this could be also related to low motivation to stay and make additional effort – it was just easier for those who lived closer. Second of all, the lectures in the framework of circle of power engineers took place during obligatory classes. It caused a twofold effect: On the one hand, some of those who had problems with various subjects were excluded from it, because absence on those lessons could worsen their performance:

> *"Interviewer: Tell me, are you attending to the circle of power engineers?*
>
> *Student: No I don't.*
>
> *Interviewer: You don't have time or you're not interested in it?*
>
> *Student: It's that I had to get to work, earn more… and there was a time when it was during the lessons. It was for example in the past semester that they organised it during math – and I'm weak at math, I didn't want to skip it, get into bad books."* < student 3>

[22] What is interesting, all ENERGET employees – we talked to – were displeased with this message used during school promotional campaigns and repeated continuously during interviews that: 1) employment is by no means guaranteed; 2) if there is a vacancy, a formal requirement is to get positive grades in both general final exam and vocational exams and to win an official recruitment procedure; 3) salaries are diversified and depend on a position and a job tenure, therefore students are mistaken to judge upon a salary of the head of the company or upper rank workers.

On the other hand, some of the students with learning difficulties were eager to come to the circle and skip problematic classes regardless of potential negative consequences. This could result in worsening of their grades from those subjects.

We might treat the abovementioned examples as symptoms of reproduction of inequalities. This mechanism is typical for school as an organisation and comes down to setting rules which make it more difficult for people who do not belong to the elite, to become members of this group (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). It requires from them exceptional effort and only few are able to do that.

Finally, there are some inequalities between students in terms of family support. Some of them have parents working in ENERGET, who can provide them with better understanding of the specificities of the vocation or issues that are taught in the programme. One of the mentors confirms it:

> *"Well, let's start with the broader context. This is a inter-generational company. There was a time – no, not so often these days – that a father, two sons and wives of this sons worked here. (...) And there is this Marek in my group and his father works in the other power plant [where apprenticeships are conducted – KS, MZ] – 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 – KS, MZ] have it easier. They are more motivated – he knows how much money his father earns, what he can afford, that he is satisfied."* <employee 2>

In other words, they know more about the specificity of the job, understand better the professional language. Moreover, they can expect warm welcome from co-workers as children of the employees, since there is still some attachment to the idea of inter-generational company.

This seems a classic example of the phenomenon that school does not teach what it requires and rewards, described by Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). In other words, some skills and knowledge that help people to be good performers are a part of the cultural capital they come to school with – in most cases acquired in the family. It is much more difficult for those who do not already have it, to develop it in the educational process.

5.3. Adaptation of preferences versus capability for voice

For most of the young people participating in the programme failure is a foregone conclusion, therefore they do not even make attempts to learn more or engage in extracurricular activities. Instead, they present themselves as "not capable", "not interested", "not suited for".

Even though some of the participants have quickly realised that they are better prepared to face up to school's requirements than others it not necessarily worked in favour of their self-esteem. As one of the programme's participants acknowledges, he has never been a good performer in general lower secondary school, but here – in the upper secondary vocational school – he quickly became one of the best. In spite of acquiring scholarship almost immediately after joining the school, he still thinks low of himself and 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, besides I had friends here. Majority of them [friends from lower secondary school – KS, MZ] 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>.

It is striking, that even one of the best performers tends to picture himself as worse than majority or not good enough. All the workshops which were aimed at transferring skills such as self-presentation and teaching self-confidence did not manage to make up for that.

Majority of students react to challenges with self-exclusion – they do not even try to improve their positions, i.e. they adapt preferences to their own definition of situation in which they are not capable of reaching some goals and fear to fail. This mechanism is reinforced by the attitude of school authorities. On the one hand, the best results are rewarded with the scholarship, while there are no rewards for improvement of results. On the other hand, best performers are symbolically distinguished from the rest – they are the ones asked to represent school during official events and presentations. This way the division is reproduced. One of the teachers sums it up:

> *„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>

An extreme case of reproduction concerns female students in the programme, who are regarded by teachers and mentors as not suited for this specialisation on the account of their gender. It leads to their adaptation of preferences and stereotypical behaviours. Power engineering technician is perceived as masculine vocation by the school as well as by the company, mostly because this job is represented as too demanding physically. Two girls that are in the classes under auspices of ENERGET are not treated seriously and expectations towards them are lower:

> Interviewer: *The girls will not come [to the company – KS, MZ] because… they don't want to?*
>
> Mentor: *No, we have such work specific. We have just 6 women in production. And those are chemists, lab technicians. They work here but those are specific types of jobs: most of the times with university degree, environmental protection… we have two, one in accounting and in controlling – that's all."* <employee 2>

The girls find themselves in a difficult position. They are not particularly good performers and no one expects much from them. Their reaction is self-exclusion – they present themselves at not interested just in case. This is a derivative of the mechanism of male domination described, among others, by Bourdieu: the fact that some vocations are male is perceived as objective, because it is a matter of "nature" – women are obviously physically

weaker than men, therefore should not perform it. Because it is "naturally" so it is very difficult to deny it (Bourdieu, 1998). The females at school react by subordinating to it, because they do not even see it as unjust or wrong.

However, there was one factor that in some cases lessen adaptation of preferences and which was a result of increased plurality of informational basis of judgment. The fact that students interacted with people from outside of the school, made them think differently about their assets and – in some cases – contributed to improvement of their self-assessment.

It also made them ask themselves questions about their future, educational and professional career. What is important is that ENERGET employees represent professional milieu, which makes them – in eyes of students – more convincing role models than teachers. They made impression on students, because of their knowledge, expertise in the area they are working in (which was presented by them as difficult and acquiring practice and skills and also stable professional career and relatively high earnings[23]. All those elements may have influence on how students think about themselves and their future, what they consider important.

ENERGET employees apply different criteria to the assessment of students and have different attitude towards them than teachers, who themselves are part of the "school game". Thanks to this, the set of choices that students consider possible could expand. As far as the assessment is concerned, all of the mentors emphasise that they are looking for reliable and diligent people and not necessarily the best achievers ("*ants*" not "*eagles*"). One of them gave an example of a student who had to provide for his family and therefore resigned from the function of programme's ambassador. He was also very tired during practices in ENERGET, because of the night work. He was not reproved or reprimanded for it – on the contrary he could count on some kind of conciliation and encouragement:

> *"For example Dawid... he has family problems. He supports a sister, a brother and a disable father. And he often used to come to apprenticeships and say:' I'm so tired, I worked all night'. He has to earn the living. And you can see that he is honest and sincere – he is not a skiver, he just can't make it physically. And he kept saying: 'I would like to go to work here'. He is working somewhere for three month already and he received payment only for one month. And a said: 'I have been working here for 30 years and my salary was never late. This is a certain source of income'. And I said(...): '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 huge, huge chances."* <employee 2>

What mattered for the mentor was not that he is not performing the best during apprenticeships, but that he is honest and therefore trustworthy. He also appreciated the fact that he is determined and ready to work hard. In other words, he fits the profile of the company perfectly, even though he is not what school authorities and teachers would call an exemplary student.

Also the different attitude of mentors towards students may help to increase students' self-esteem: they were treated as reliable adults and not as children, which succeeded in creating bonds and in performing better than usual. There is an example of a student who was known for disturbing others and during apprenticeship one of the employees decided to

[23] What is interesting many from the interviewed students emphasised the last element as very important in thinking about the future and as the mentors recall, they often asked them about that.

talk to him privately and ask him for a gentlemen's agreement that they will treat each other as grown-ups and he will change his attitude:

> *"Adam, Adam must have had ADHD. He is tall, taller than everyone else. And he has some kind of troubles – he works in some removals, he is tired all the time. He can sit for an hour, but then he starts fidgeting, he is up to something, he starts playing with his phone, pinching, pushing others.(...) And Jan [one of the mentors – KS, MZ] says that he had to have a conversation with him. And at the end he told me that Adam kept his word and he was acting normally"* <employee 2>.

The mentor decided to thank him for that officially in front of the whole group. Because he could not come for the last day of apprenticeships, he wrote a letter and asked his colleague to read it aloud. This story illustrates a situation in which someone has been motivated to go beyond the role performed in the group (school form). He was pushed by the mentor to try to step up to the expectation and he managed to do this.

Adaptation of preferences is too a certain extent a result of limited space to voice one's opinions, make normative judgments in school. The programme is implemented in the traditional school context where the game between students and teachers is played by specific rules and the roles are fairly fixed: it has 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 (for example, raising hands before asking question). In other words, there is little field were students would be encouraged to step beyond those hierarchical relations, they are expected to be active in these frames, show their competence and are evaluated according to this activity and competence. When asked about scope of participation of students in the programme, teachers and mentors respond that they are invited to propose topics for discussion or to ask questions if they do not understand something or want to get additional information. Students as well as parents are not invited to discuss criteria of assessment according to which young people are evaluated, even if there are problematical situations – like in a case of one vocational teacher that threatens the majority of class to fail. These limitations are not problematised by teachers, they remain – what sociologists call – "unthinkable", "self-evident", "taken for granted".

Finally, the adaptation of preferences of students and lowering their expectations when confronted with employers might be reinforced by a focus of soft-skills workshops on how to sell oneself by effective presentation techniques, without teaching students about their rights defined by labour law. Students' transformation during school cycle is described as "growing up", "maturing", "learning how the real word functions" and adopting to these external rules of the game. The ideological conception behind is similar to what Gazier (1999) calls ''initiative employability''. They have to be active, motivated, self-reliant. In contrast with, ''interactive" or ''embedded employability" which assumes that adaptation is a two-way process: individuals have to adapt to labour market by acquiring crucial skills, but labour market also have to adapt to individuals and their rights should be respected.

6. Conclusion

The programme "We empower you to learn" is implemented in the situation of growing separation between private sector and vocational education. Another important contextual aspect is the crisis of vocational education resulting from, among other things, permanent underfunding of schools, their out-dated equipment and teacher's lack of know-how as well

as rigid mechanisms of changing minimum curricula and the list of specialisations that are being taught.

The fact that this programme responds to immediate and shared interest of the company ENERGET and the vocational school TECHNIQUE revealed to be a key of its relative success. Employees of ENERGET and teachers were more willing to pay attention to quality, invest their time and effort and reflexively adapt their actions to problems encountered during implementation. However, the selected programme stands out from other educational initiatives for two more reasons. First of all, a strong position of ENERGET and many capitals at company's disposal made such a long-term and multi-dimensional initiative possible. Second of all, cooperation with a school seems to be a better way to implement this kind of initiative than doing it in the frame of labour market policies. Mainly because it offers the possibility to work repeatedly with young people over a period of their three- or four-year educational cycle instead of short-term training that are provided by Public Employment Services in Poland (Liwiński and Sztanderska, 2006; Budzewski *et al.*, 2011).

Despite our concerns that the power industry company would focus only on pre-selecting candidates for future employees and investing in the development of specific skills necessary for the job, the programme came out to be much more than just a vocational preparation. It offered students the opportunities to learn general skills and to experience themselves in various situations, which was a significant improvement in comparison to what had been proposed before this initiative started. In other words it worked in favour of expanding their chances for choosing the life they have reason to value, and not only formatting them to be good ENERGET employees.

Nevertheless, as our case study clearly shows this improvement in access to infrastructure and to well-prepared courses and workshops is only the first step. The problem of highly unequal initial skills was never fully overcome and many of the students remained ill-equipped to make use of what was offered. Following Sen, we could say that although the commodities offered in the programme were the same for everyone, the conversion factors remained highly differentiated. Generally speaking, the division between "good" and "bad" students was reproduced and symbolically reinforced by some of the school activities, among others, by rewarding the best students called "elite" instead of those that might be improving. The extreme case of this process of reproduction was gender discrimination.

We observed many symptoms of the process, which we called after Sen adaptation of preferences. Many of the students who were not in the group of the best performers tended to self-limit and self-exclude from trying to reach for something (become an ambassador of the programme, improve grades), because they envisage it as not for them. It was strongly connected to low self-esteem and negative definitions of what they are capable of, which generally have not changed during the programme. However, the possibility to interact with employees of ENERGET, who represented various professional and social backgrounds, increased the chance to find someone who would see their potential or even be a role model and help them overcome negative thinking.

The application of CA supplemented by selected theoretical concepts of Pierre Bourdieu accentuated several important aspects concerning the study of educational programmes and initiatives that might not have been noticed otherwise. First of all, the education process is

not a simple transfer of knowledge – what counts immensely is the ability to establish close and personal relationships with students, based on trust and knowledge of their life situation and individual approach to their needs and skills. It is not enough to give people commodities such as lessons and expect them to make the best use of it, because their ability to do this varies for different reasons and not necessarily their talent, but also their cultural capital. This is an important conclusion as far as macro analyses and popular benchmarking of education are concerned – they concentrate on measuring selected effects: for example how many people pass final general and vocational exams or how many people attain higher education or find employment. What is lost here are the reasons for which people fail according to those measures of effects. Yet, this can be understood when focusing on the process of building capabilities, i.e. widening or closing access to valuable functionings that takes places in the educational process.

Second of all, CA helped us to discover some limitations of school as an institution promoting capabilities. There is no place for negotiating criteria of assessment (or in other words "informational bases of judgment") – every action is subordinated to exams and preparation to it. A good student is therefore someone who follows this rule. In result, school does not really encourage people to choose the life they have reason to value, but the life which is valued according to external norms on which they have no influence. In this sense it is connected to Bourdieu's assessment, that its role is to reproduce social order and legitimise this reproduction.

7. Policy implications

The analysis of the programme and of the broader institutional and economic context in which it is implemented inclines us to point out various weaknesses of the current educational policy. They refer 1) to the functioning of educational system and as well as 2) to the preparation of educational programmes directed to the youth.

As discussed in the previous sections, "We encourage you to learn" has been established to bridge certain systemic gaps. They emerged as a result of various errors. First of all, there is not sufficient connection between educational system and the labour market: specialisations – not only in vocational education – are created *ad hoc* according to popularity rather than demand for work or remain unchanged even though labour market structure evolves. Moreover, there is not enough ability for planning ahead on the systemic level, i.e. predicting what kind of vocations will be needed in the future (which is connected to diagnostic abilities as well as policy coordination between fields of education, labour market, economic development, etc.).

Second of all, the level of reflexivity of the education system is not satisfying, mainly because of the types of indicators, according to which information is gathered. They are based on quantitative data – for instance, results of the external exams, distribution of students between schools, etc. Whereas there are no qualitative indicators, which could shed light on the educational process: Why are the results of various exams not satisfying? Why do students in particular types of schools achieve lower scores? Only this type of knowledge would allow to take preventive actions instead of simply react to the problem which has already occurred. Furthermore, the quantitative data are not exhaustive, there is no information available for example on the labour market situation of the university and

school graduates[24], which would be a good source of knowledge about the level of teaching as well as labour market demand.

Third of all, what is strongly connected to the previous point, systemic arrangements set on early prevention of inequalities (begging with popularisation of nursery schools especially on the rural areas) and reduction of the importance of parents' education to children's educational career are of the essence. Only such broad and holistic approach could work in favour of equalising opportunities and avoiding negative selection (which takes place in the case of vocational schools).

Finally, also creating the systemic support for teachers is crucial: in their work with students from less favourable backgrounds, receiving less assistance from the family, as well as in their vocational development – i.e. updating theoretical and practical knowledge about specialities they are teaching. Currently teachers have to depend mainly on themselves – their private contacts, creativity and initiative to improve in that matters – and on the good will of the employers.

Findings of the case study lead us also to some conclusions referring to the design of programmes in the area of education, addressed to young people. What distinguishes "We empower you to learn" from most of such programmes (especially those financed from the EU resources) are its long-term perspective and the fact that it was developed as a result of well diagnosed need. The previous is important because it guarantees stability, which is rare in the case of such programmes as most of them are based on short-term training. The latter secures the commonality of basic interests among actors responsible for implementation, what works in favour of programme's quality. Moreover, the programme shows us not only the importance of accurate definition of a problem, but also the value of bottom-up approach: the problem has been recognised by local government and a private company, who had interest in finding a solution to it. Therefore, it seems essential for the system of education to be open to such initiatives – for example at the stage of planning the curricula.

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[24] There is no standardised way to gather this information, which is to a large extent the result of withdrawal of the state from diagnostic responsibilities and burdening tertiary educational facilities with this task, since the last amendment of the act on higher education: firstly, they often do not have enough resources and abilities to do it properly; secondly, it is not necessarily in their interest to perform this obligation, since the results may not be advantageous to them; finally the results are not comparable.

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CHAPTER 4: CAPABILITIES WITHOUT RIGHTS? THE TRESPASSING PROJECT IN NAPLES

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Introduction

In this research report we present and discuss the experience of the Trespassing Project. It is an innovative and experimental project aimed at young NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) living in Naples, the capital city of the Campania region in the south of Italy, one of the poorest regions in Western Europe, and included in the EU's Objective Convergence, the EU cohesion policy aiming at supporting European regions with slow development. This is a city affected by both social and economic problems: the condition of young people is critical, school truant and early leaving are commonplace, the unemployment rate is very high and black market labour is widespread. At the same time, since the end of the '80s, Naples has been an important test bed for experimental projects aimed at contrasting training shortcomings and addressing problems in the school-work transition process, and The Trespassing Project picks up where they left off, developing new means and strategies for intervention, which through on-the-job placement projects, works on the recovery and development of a wide range of basic skills, familiarising young adults with the labour market.

The work starts out from a general research question: how is it possible to promote capabilities in a context of lack of resources and rights? The analysis focuses on the institutional, social and individual factors that hamper or promote the conversion of resources into capabilities for work, voice and education, and tries to understand what the outcomes are for beneficiaries.

In the wake of almost two years of analysis of the project practices, the research highlights the level of the organisational processes and those of interaction, paying particular attention to the specificities of the socio-economic context in which the project operates and is based, as well as the framework and functioning of social, educational and labour policies on a territorial level. Little by little, the analysis circumscribes the field of observation: from the regional context to the city, to the neighbourhood in which the project operates, attempting to investigate whether and how an institutional framework which combines autonomy and fragmentation opens up opportunities for change, and if so, with what perspectives.

The research results try to keep the three capabilities separate, and at the same time work on several different levels for each one of them: from the micro level, mainly concerned with the project practices, to the meso and macro levels of institutions and policies, the analysis examines the factors that permit or hinder the conversion of resources and formal rights into capabilities, highlighting on one hand the critical elements, and on the other the creation of innovative itineraries designed to promote such capabilities.

In the conclusion, we discuss what lessons and indications may be drawn in terms of policies, as well as the theoretical and analytical implications for the capability approach.

2. Research questions and tools for analysis

The work starts out from a general research question: how is it possible to promote capabilities in a context of lack of resources and rights? This question is then broken down into more specific research questions concerning the issue of the conversion of formal rights and resources in effective freedom to choose a life worth living, with reference to the capabilities for voice, work and education. The research activity was thus guided by a number of questions:

- Which institutional, social and individual factors impede or promote the development of beneficiaries' capabilities? And how?
- What is the role of local stakeholders in the implementation of programmes (in terms of influence, roles in decision-making processes, constraints and administrative rules)?
- How does the project affect the personalised careers of young school dropouts?
- Do individuals have the necessary conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities? And what is the role of beneficiaries? Are they able to choose what to achieve, to refuse to engage, to choose? What factors influence the beneficiaries' decision to participate in the programme? Can the beneficiaries affect the structure and contents of the programme?

In order to deal with the research questions, we used an analytical grid based on the theoretical works of Martha Nussbaum, Arjun Appadurai, and of Michael Storper and Robert Salais. First of all, through the concept of combined capabilities, Nussbaum (2000; 2003) highlights the interdependence between the individual and the social dimension. From this perspective, there is a combination of capabilities (and their promotion) from the moment in which the inner capacities, those belonging to the person, may be combined appropriately with the external capacities, those which derive from organisations, institutions and social contexts. In this regard, Nussbaum highlights the fact that the individual capacities cannot take place or take effect if not within a given context, in an environment which allows for this kind of promotion. The social framework therefore becomes relevant when it actively operates towards the person being placed in such a condition as to be able to exercise his/her own freedom, rights and choices, bearing in mind that these elements are closely bound up in one another.

The second reflection concerns the concept of the capacity to aspire, as formulated by Appadurai. This concept makes it possible to move a few steps forward from that relationship between capacities, values and collective contexts of discussion and choices which may already be found widely in Sen's reasoning. The capacities to aspire concern "how human beings engage their own futures" and the normative frameworks from which desire and imagination of the future take form. They 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).

As in Sen's work, Appadurai's aim is to understand how opportunities in marginal settings and ones of poverty may be increased, and by so doing, his approach clearly underlines the collective and pragmatic aspects of the development of the capacity to aspire. The capacity to aspire, in fact, "thrives and survives on practices, repetition, exploration, conjecture and refutation" (p. 66). Put differently, by means of voice, which is precisely "the capacity to debate, contest, inquire, and participate critically" (ibid, 79).

The last passage concerns the concept of the situated State, as elaborated by Storper and Salais (1997). From their perspective, the State is at the same time both akin to and different from other institutions: similar insofar as it is founded on a system of expectations, unspoken shared rules and formal/informal roles; but different because the conventions on which it is based must define the common good for society as a whole (Storper and Salais 1997, 207). Storper and Salais thus propose three ideal-type conventions of the State, in which the interpretations of the common good may be mediated between it and individuals: the absentee State, in which the common good derives from a "structure of opportunities which maximises for every person the chance to pursue his/her own particular interests" (Storper and Salais 1997, 211); the external State, which has the monopoly of the definition of the common good and of that which must be done for the good of every individual; and the situated State, which acts as a facilitator, fostering and supporting the co-ordination between actors in order to facilitate collective actions and define the common good.

Nicolas Farvaque and Gilles Raveaud (2004) then went on to systematise Storper and Salais's typology, proposing a distinction between two forms of situated State: in the first they adopt those mechanisms typical of the market, and in this case we might speak of incentivising (or incentive-giving; Dean et al. 2005) State; on the other hand, in the case in which the common good is defined collectively and the action of the State is developed within coordination structures, we may speak of a capacitating State. The concept of situated State, along with the definition put forward by Farvaque and Raveaud, underlines the importance of the public framework, especially its coordination structures and – on a local level – its ability to promote or hinder capacitating contexts and interventions.

	Capacitating setups	**Non-capacitating setups**
Combination of capacities	Combination of internal and external capacities	Inexistence of external capacities or non-combination of internal and external capacities
Capacity to aspire	Present: orientation towards the future	Absent: oriented towards the past
Public Action	Capacitating State	Incentive-giving, external or absent State

Table 1. The institutional dimension of capacities: capacitating and non-capacitating setups

The analytic grid as defined above identifies two types of ideal-type setups: non-capacitating and capacitating ones. As may be seen, in the latter case: (a) individual capacities are

combined with environmental capacities; (b) capacity to aspire is developed and exercised, thus we may count on an orientation aimed at the future and its construction; (c) public action is based around a definition of the common good of a processual nature, which runs within the action through the actors which take part in it. On the contrary, the social and institutional setups may be considered non-capacitating when: (a) they are oriented towards the past; (b) common assets are defined from the outside, without passing through a participatory procedure in which all the actors are placed in a condition to be able to exert their own capacity in terms of making their voices heard; therefore, (c) it is not even possible to activate that synergic circuit arising from the combination of individual and external capacities. These are two ideal-type situations, the practical declinations of which are put together through 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 degree the social and institutional frameworks are structured and take shape according to a capacitating imposition, i.e. whether they lead to the deployment of those factors which allow for 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.

We shall therefore apply this grid to the case in question in order to highlight the relationship between public action frameworks, conversion factors and capabilities.

3. Research methods used

The research process required almost two years of analysis of the project practices in order to understand the level of organisational processes and those of interaction. It foresaw:

- 10 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups with policy makers from the Regional Council of Campania, and project leaders/social workers from the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli;
- 10 semi-structured interviews with company tutors;
- 15 semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries;
- participant observation in various phases of the project activities;
- analysis of project documents, calls, counselling reports, assessment reports.

The methods adopted facilitated the investigation of conversion factors (institutional, social and individual) and their processual implementation. The integration between different research techniques allowed us to compensate for their respective weaknesses. Moreover, they let us focus specifically on the beneficiaries' point of view. The interviews with young NEETs were particularly difficult to carry out, mainly because they were not used to having any voice. The completion of the interviews required a progressive, slow approach towards the young adults in order to allow the researchers to gain credibility and respect.

4. Findings

In order to analyse the Trespassing Project, particular attention must be paid to the specificities of the socio-economic context in which it is rooted and deployed, as well as the structuring and functioning of social, educational and labour policies on a territorial level. Italy is in fact characterised by a high level of institutional fragmentation which translates into weak co-ordination between the various levels of government, in a context of highly sectorial public policies, with precious little integration between labour, development and education policies, and in general measures aimed their activation are few and far between, be they part of the overall system or at the service of policy end-users.

The Campania Region, of which Naples is the capital city, is one of the four Italian Regions in the Convergence Objective project. It displays particularly serious problems, closely bound up with the issues linked to economic and social development, against a national context generally characterised by great territorial differences and inequalities, uncertainty with regard to rights, resources and rules. Within this framework, the local government enjoys a relative degree of autonomy and dynamism, and a number of factors over recent decades have strengthened its powers and areas of competence, opening up to the potential of innovation and policy change (Bifulco 2005). Among these, we should certainly mention the role played by the European Union, the administrative and electoral reforms of the '90s, the law reforming social services in 2000, and lastly the reform of Section V of the Constitution in 2001, which redefined the relationships between the State, regional governments and local authorities.

Therefore, in our analysis we shall proceed by honing down our field of investigation little by little, from the regional context, to the city, to the neighbourhood in which the project operates, trying to investigate whether and how an institutional framework which combines autonomy and fragmentation may lead to opportunities for change, and if so with what perspectives for the future.

4.1. The Campania Region: outlining the social context

Campania is one of the poorest regions in Western Europe, and suffers from a double-edged deficit: both institutional and of *civicness*, which are both long-standing and deep-seated (Bifulco, 2007). In 2008 it recorded the lowest GDP in Italy: €13,500 per capita, compared to €27,500 in Lombardy and an Italian average of €21,400. Campania thus registers a GDP 75% lower than the EU25 average, and it is included in the convergence objective of the EU cohesion policy aimed at supporting European regions with slow development. Two EU funds play their part here: the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and the ESF (European Social Fund). The previous and current ORPs (Operating Regional Plans) – 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 – based on the ERDF, focus on human resources paying special attention to education and paving the way for young people to enter the labour market, through general interventions designed to help young people.[25]

[25] In the 2007-2013 ORP, interventions include multifunctional neighbourhood centres for the young willing to collaborate with schools, universities and youth associations; the creation of centres for the potentially emarginated, socially and economically, also to help them re-enter the labour market; the creation of social, sports, cultural and leisure infrastructures in schools, so as the favour access out of school hours as well as the

With the aim of achieving the targets set by the Lisbon Strategy, Campania has invested in education and training over the last few years. This led to the passing of Regional Law 4/2005[26] guaranteeing the full exercise of the right to study and training, as well as lifelong learning, not only through the provision of economic support but also through projects preventing pupils from dropping out. The region maintains the function of financing, general and specific programming, coordination and experimentation, while the provinces approve intervention plans, drawn up jointly with the local councils, schools, training bodies and cultural institutions on the territory, and manage resources and interventions together with local councils. The general norms for vocational training are found in Regional Law 14/2009,[27] passed by the previous city council towards the end of its mandate. A legislative intervention was instated to create an integrated regional system of services for the use and creation of a work and schools agency, with the role of monitoring and implementing the programming as defined by the region, containing measures to support female, immigrant and disabled employment as well as contrasting general unemployment and social exclusion. The specific target of the T.U. is to bring to light all undisclosed labour, which is about 20% in Campania, as well as to decentralise training roles among the regional and provincial councils.

The regional programming seems to be prepared to respond to the main problems of the Campania Region. Nevertheless, the investments have not produced the desired results. A real model of education and training does not exist, partly because of the political instability of the council and the consequent modifications to competences and departments. Moreover, the level of policy implementation reveals some aspects which are worth discussing and analysing. The resources destined for youth vocational training and adult lifelong learning are often used improperly as sidelines for social welfare in the context of a labour market with ample margins of undisclosed labour and a very high percentages of unemployment. Funds for vocational courses and non-public secondary instruction are used for patronage, as a means for distributing power among political groups revolving around the local and regional councils. Moreover, the European funds which Campania and the south of Italy have used both in these and similar fields (health, social policies etc.) 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.

Despite the fact that regional programming in the field of social policy is currently undergoing a major overhaul, in the wake of the introduction of the above-mentioned 2000 reform law, welfare support continues to be of a residual nature. On a social level, an insufficient and poorly distributed quota of socio-sanitary infrastructures and an increase in poverty and unemployment supply fertile grounds for social unrest and ever-rising criminality.

The indicators on schooling in the region – percentages of primary and secondary school education and diplomas – are not only lower than the national average and the Lisbon

quality and accessibility of educational services and to incentivise use to promote occasions for meetings on the territory (P.O.R FESR 2007-2013).

[26] *'Norme regionali per l'esercizio del diritto all'istruzione e alla formazione'*.

[27] 'Single text for the betterment of work and professional training'.

target, but also below those of other regions in the Convergence area. There are high levels of school dropouts between the ages of six and 14. Campania is in fact one of the Italian regions where many middle-school children are regularly enrolled though often never attend.

The gap found between national averages and other indicators is worrying. One example is given by the figures relating to non-attending students in middle schools. The highest percentage in Italy is to be found in Campania, and this seems to be linked to the unemployment rate and the level of relative poverty. What helps to worsen the situation is the drop-out rate in the first year of secondary school, which in 2007 was at 14%, above the National level (11.4%).

Educational policies are above all scarcely integrated with social and employment policies. The sectorial nature of interventions does not lead to sufficiently structured courses, thus not taking pupils' social background into account. This explains why lower-performing individuals are squeezed out and discriminatory processes are not forestalled.

In general, the level of unemployment is about 14.3%, compared to the national 8.2% (Istat 2011a; 2011b). The gap between working men and women is very wide: male unemployment is about half that of females (11.9% against 20.8% among women), while among 15-24 year-olds it stands at 38.8%, compared to a national average of 24%. Furthermore, 50% of the young workless have been in search of a job for at least 12 months. The data in fact show a labour market with a great deal of structural problems. On one hand there is a gap between supply and demand, partly due to the low demand for personnel and an offer of largely unskilled/semi-skilled workers. On the other hand, there is a high level of illegal labour, which in 2004 stood at 23.4%, well above the national average of 13.4%. Lastly, the low participation of women in the labour market and the higher level of female unemployment indicate an enduring resistance to women entering the labour market.

It must be remembered that in a European context, Italy is a country where a very small number of school-leavers find jobs immediately, while it takes a high percentage well over two years. More than 43% of 15-35 year-olds hold jobs which have nothing whatsoever to do with their training (Istat 2011a).

Furthermore, on a national level the highest concentration of young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)[28] in the province of Naples stands at 37% compared to an average in the Campania Region of 33.5% (Italia Lavoro Spa 2011).

4.2. Naples and the Quartieri Spagnoli

Naples, the capital city of the Campania region, is one of the most densely populated cities in Italy (8,179 inhabitants per square km) surrounded by a vast urban area, developed in a

[28] The NEET population is made up of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 who do not work, do not study and do not attend regional training courses of over six months. In Italy in 2009, the number of NEETs was 2,043,615 (56.5% females, 43.5% males), which in percentage terms is 21.2% of the population in question. The south of Italy gives an average value of around 30%, compared to 14.3% in the northern regions and 16.1% in the central ones (Italia Lavoro Spa 2011).

disorderly and chaotic fashion, and likewise characterised by an extremely high concentration of inhabitants.

In this city, full of contrasts and contradictions as well as opportunities, the critical issues discussed above come to the fore and intertwine: the condition of young adults is problematic, the unemployment rate is very high, as is truanting and the level of school dropouts. The lack of stable occupational opportunities constitutes a structural weakness of the labour market, and black-market labour is commonplace. Many young NEETs who neither study nor work therefore face the risk of undertaking deviant paths (Laino 2001).

The neighbourhood of the Quartieri Spagnoli, on which the Trespassing Project focuses, is made up of a dense network of criss-crossing narrow streets situated on a slope leading onto via Toledo, the main shopping street and centre of the city. In this territorial context, in which almost 4,000 families or about 15,000 inhabitants live, economic, social and housing problems all add to one another. This portion of the city has maintained most of its urban and traditional social characteristics, and has not yet undergone major phenomena of substitution of the population in the wake of gentrification processes, although its privileged central position may in the near future lead to dynamics of property speculation.

While on one hand, poverty and criminality in this area are rife, it should be noted that the Quartieri Spagnoli are characterised by a notable level of economic vitality, with some 250 small crafts workshops, and 360 business activities overall (Laino 2001).

4.3. The Trespassing Project

In order to introduce the Trespassing Project, we need to briefly outline the history of the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli (AQS) which planned it, with the aim of understanding the organisational context in which the intervention takes place, how and why it was developed, and how it interacts through the various activities and actions proposed by the Association itself within the neighbourhood.

The Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli was founded formally around the end of the 1980s on the basis of the social work that a small group of people close to the notion of critical Christianity had undertaken in the area ever since the end of the 1970s. The current president of the AQS, Anna Stanco, after abandoning her work as a teacher, decided to move into a *basso*[29] and together with other volunteers, provided the first interventions offering support and counselling aimed particularly at prostitutes and transsexuals, of whom at the time there were a great number in the area. Anna Stanco's *basso*, in the historic venue in Vico Tre Regine, has operated ever since it opened as a very low threshold service, capable of supplying support and guidance to the most disadvantaged inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

[29] A *basso* is a small dwelling made up of one or two rooms on the ground floor or basement, usually facing onto the street. Historically, they have constituted a relatively accessible housing solution for poor Neapolitans, given the low quality of the constructions and the limited amount of floor space provided. Today, within the Quartieri Spagnoli there are still around 900 *bassi* in use as dwellings, deposits, garages or craft workshops, or as more than one of these (Laino 2001).

Over the years, these interventions became more developed, and the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli effectively became a small local social agency, as well as an important point of reference for the local territory. In the 1990s, Naples City Council recognised the importance of the Association's work, and granted the use of a number of spaces in via Trinità degli Spagnoli, where a youth centre was founded, and where to this day the AQS is based, and still committed to various projects aimed largely at minors, youths and their families, financed both by public bodies (the EU, the Campania Regional Council, Naples City Council) and private subjects (largely banking foundations and private donations), over time building a sort of permanent workshop for the social requalification and development of the community. The actions of the Association are characterised by their strong territorial embedment, by their low entry threshold, by forms of active offerings, from damage limitation policies to support for social entrepreneurship.

Although the AQS has worked as a body entrusted with public services for more than 20 years, it is currently going through a difficult financial period due to delays in payments by the public bodies that finance it which – in actual fact – tend to exploit the outsourcing of social services to private bodies in order to reduce costs or transfer part of them to organisations in the tertiary sector.

4.3.1 The project and the philosophy behind the intervention

Ever since the end of the '80s, Naples has been a major workshop for experimental projects in the effort to make up for shortcomings in education and the school-work transition (Rossi-Doria and Pirozzi 2010; Melazzini 2011), such as 'Chance', with the experience of the so-called *'maestri di strada'* ("street teachers") who also started out working with the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli. The Trespassing Project picks up where they left off, developing new means and strategies for intervention, drawing on the reflections and interventional practices activated against early school leaving, and – more in general – against educational failures, focusing on the issue of accompanying young people in the transition between 'hard school' and 'hard work'.[30]

The Trespassing Project, which was awarded its fourth cycle of financing in 2012, consists of offering work familiarisation placements at small companies collaborating with the Association. The project offers continuity with the pre-training activities for disadvantaged youths which the AQS first adopted in 1993, through a range of project supported by European, national and local financing.

More specifically, the project sets out to involve early school leavers aged between 16 and 18 through on-the-job training programmes, addressing the recovery and development of their basic skills right across the board.

The project is supported by two different financing channels:

[30] Over the years, the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli and the *'Maestri di Strada'* charity, along with the Chance Project have worked in the Quartieri Spagnoli as well as other problematic Neapolitan neighbourhoods to carry out experimental integration projects, bridging the gaps between technical schooling and the professional training system, as well as European projects such as Equal and Leonardo (Rossi-Doria and Pirozzi 2010).

1. public financing from the Education Councillorship of the Campania Regional Council, which imposes strict access criteria through public call, and is aimed at young people (between 16 and 18) who have completed compulsory education, affected by elements of multiple deprivation, not following a school career or vocational training;
2. private financing from a private banking foundation, *'Fondazione per il Sud'*, aimed more broadly at early school-leavers (even those who have not completed compulsory education) affected by elements of multiple deprivation.

The financial support from the Regional Council is not very reliable. Payments may be up to a year late, and the ASQ is thus forced to ask for loans from the bank system in order to try to keep its activities afloat. Furthermore, Naples City Council is not currently providing any support to the project despite the fact that it constitutes a form of help and activation of disadvantaged youths, which to all effects and purposes should fall under the jurisdiction of municipal welfare.

Since its creation, Trespassing has involved around 80 young adults, with a slight prevalence of females, despite there being a number of requests for access far higher than the possibilities of insertion that may be guaranteed by the financing obtained.

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. The project focuses on the attempt to overcome the subjective barriers of 'incompetence' in order to activate young NEETs, for whom there are no possibilities in school or professional training circuits, not being well enough equipped to meet their needs.

In general terms, it must be noted that intercepting these youths is not a simple task, and the project makes use of outreach activities, exploiting its own grassroots integration. The hands-on experience of the Association has shown that the early school leavers category must be further broken down, for it is a heterogeneous phenomenon concerning different population groups, and which must therefore be given specific 'treatment'. In an area where contact with the service users can be difficult – young people from deprived and stigmatised backgrounds, displaying profound differences from others of their age – the Trespassing Project is aimed particularly at young people who "are a bit less badly off" within this range. It is very difficult for projects of this kind which adopt a 'filtering up' process to target the most deprived sectors of all.

4.3.2 The stages of the Trespassing itinerary

In order to explain the functioning of this measure, we shall now describe the various stages of a typical itinerary within the Trespassing Project, with an approach that refers to an intervention protocol structured around well-defined methods, tools and practices.

In most cases, the young adults who turn to the project have already been involved in other AQS activities, as there are 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. As there is a maximum of 20 people that may be involved at one time, and there are always more applications than places available, meetings and individual interviews are ordered in which the beneficiaries are chosen, in which an attempt is made to define an information profile about each applicant which is as accurate as possible. In this phase, information is gathered about their life context, literacy and numeracy capabilities, their work experiences, as well as enquiring into their fields of interest and desires. Above all, in these discussions 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 should be noted how the force of existential roles influences the type of aspirations of the young adults, who envisage themselves filling a handful of stereotypical professional roles, such as beauticians or hairdressers among girls, and barmen or mechanics among boys.

After evaluating the candidacies, the beneficiaries chosen from the interviews are required to sign a training contract stipulated between the AQS, the beneficiary and his/her family (if the beneficiary is a minor), which may then be reformulated or substituted with an agreement between the various actors even during the work placement. From the moment in which the beneficiaries accept the offer and subscribe to the project as a whole, there is a public signature between all the actors, who commit to respecting a kind of educational pact. In order to guarantee the constancy of the young adults in their chosen path, a communication channel is established with parents or guardian figures if this is possible and supportive. The interventions laid out in the training contract are open to ongoing modification, and try to incorporate input and participation from beneficiaries themselves so as to create itineraries around them which are as personalised as possible.

Once the selection stage is over and the training contracts have been defined, the first activities in which the participants are involved in is what are known as *'piccoli cantieri'* ('little building sites'). This is a collective work experience which lasts about one 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 social workers 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. The transversal skills assessment process starts right from this stage, and a logbook is kept, in which each participant has to document the overall experience within the project.

Once this work stage is over, the individual allocation of each participant to a specific work placement project begins, usually within small businesses and crafts workshops found in the neighbourhood. Over the years, the AQS has put together a database of 'companies' in which the young adults may gain work experience, especially those small crafts activities in which there is a 'master' who may take on the role of the work tutor, i.e. someone also willing to take on an educational responsibility. The social workers define this database as a sort of 'pedagogical company register' which has been used to build a relationship of trust over the years.

The work placements are articulated into four hours of activity per day, five days a week, for an overall period of between four and six months. An attendance fee of €12 per day is paid to participants, while the company receives €8 per day for its tutoring activities. As already mentioned, the project does not make use of classroom activities, preferring to focus entirely on the hands-on work placement experience, while valorising the inherent training component. The intervention methodology is based on experience and learning on the job, and support for participants is provided by a personalised tutoring programme. Each young adult is thus entrusted contemporarily to a work tutor, recognised as the placement tutor, and an educator of reference from the Association, who provides personalised tutoring and counselling. There were four educators that the AQS could rely on at the end of this research report, and in past editions of the project there were never more than six. Changes may be made to the work placement programme even once it has started if deemed necessary to reach the educational goals laid out in the training contract or if participants present insertion problems.

From a pedagogical point of view, the approach adopted is largely that of 'scaffolding': a support strategy based on learning processes which makes it possible for the participant to carry out a task even without the sufficient capabilities to carry it out on his/her own. Social workers follow the insertion of the participants in the companies with weekly counselling sessions, the times and lengths of which may be flexible. The fact of being able to speak about themselves with competent and authoritative adults as well as being able to receive suggestions which show new options opens up 'new horizons', providing highly personalised support on the basis of the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries. This constant monitoring throughout the insertion path is structured through the use of a series of tools: interviews, assessment and self-assessment sheets, logbooks, 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.

Once the placements are over, the participants leaving the project 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, capable of bringing together all the documents and testimonies necessary to demonstrate their 'know-how'.

At the end of the placement experience, a 'working sample' is taken, in which participants are filmed on the job in order to outline the activities they are involved in, in which they also describe their work placement itinerary, including both high and low points.

4.4 Decision and implementation

There were various reasons why the Trespassing Project appeared relevant for our research right from the beginning. Firstly, the target: the AQS works with young NEETs living in a complex context in which youth projects of this kind are few and far between. Secondly, because the methods and means available to the social workers – the result of long-term educational work carried out right here in the Quartieri Spagnoli – if adapted appropriately, could be partially exported to other contexts with other young adults. Lastly, because the structure that supports it, i.e. the AQS, has managed to build up a strong network of trust in

the Quartieri Spagnoli, historically one of the most difficult areas in which to intervene on the entire Neapolitan territory.

For clarity of exposition, we shall present and discuss the results of the analysis keeping the three capabilities separate, while at the same time operating on multiple levels for each one of them. We shall simultaneously discuss the micro level (dealing largely with the practices adopted by the project), as well as the meso and macro levels of institutions and policy, considering the factors which favour and hinder the conversion of resources and formal rights into capabilities. Often however – as will be seen – these elements overlap, for it is hard to maintain an analytical distinction in the face of an empirical situation which is the result of the interplay of relationships between people and institutions.

4.4.1 Capability for voice

One of the main focus points of the work of the AQS is coming up with interventions which serve as familiarisation activities, thus allowing participants to acquire basic relational skills that may later be deployed in the labour market. With this aim in mind, the project works explicitly on the reconstruction of the young adults' *voice (*Hirschman 1970).

This may be evinced first of all from what the social workers say:

> *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.*

The participants' voice cannot be considered a prerequisite: for this reason the project merely tries to promote it and let it be heard. The participants themselves start off not knowing exactly what they want to do, despite expressing a general need for contact with the labour market, even though they often fall into the classic local stereotypes based largely on gender conditioning:

> *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.*

Therefore, while on one hand attention is given to what the participants say, on the other hand the project (and above all the educators) focuses on the characteristics of the participant and the work placement in order to put together a tailor-made itinerary, also based on a profound knowledge of the young adults' cultural and social background, as well as drawing on a strong basis of trust which leads the young adults and their families to strongly believe in their course of action.

This bond is created and strengthened in particular by the constant daily presence of the territorial head of the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli: Anna, who spends the whole day in her *'basso'*, the door is open and she is available to listen to whoever comes in. The fact that

she is present at any time of day, that she acts as a medium, mediating between the needs of the neighbourhood and public services, translating the needs of people and families into concrete actions and interventions constitutes the very basis of the Association's approach. Anna has created a real social helpdesk which brings the few resources available closer to the needs of the people of the neighbourhood. Her story is also a somewhat special one, as we are told by one of the social workers:

> *Anna 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 proof of this can also be found in the words of the young beneficiaries. Anna is people's first point of contact with the Association; she 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:

> *Anna is the one I went to see to ask about getting a job placement.*
>
> *My mum came to talk to Anna and it was her that told her about Trespassing, we always speak to her.*

The placements may be modified while the project is in progress: where problems arise, after a thorough evaluation of the situation through exchanges and checks both with the beneficiary and the company tutor, a change of itinerary may be taken into consideration.

A great deal of attention is paid by educators to this kind of situation, as emerges from V's story:

> *V is a boy who started his placement as an IT technician. The manager of the shop, however, is often absent, and V sometimes goes to work only to find nobody there. T, the educator, would therefore have liked to change V's placement, because he was missing out on too many hours and it seemed to him that he was not adequately followed. And so he talked about this with V, who told him though that he was quite happy where he was and that he was picking up a lot of things quickly. After speaking to the shop manager and visiting the shop a few times, T decided to leave things as they were.*

Within this itinerary, a fundamental role is played by the time spent counselling, both in the company and at the AQS headquarters, where the educator supports the participant's development, guiding him/her through his/her work placement. The main tool used during this contact time is the work material which organises and defines the stages and times of the activities of participants and educators: the worksheets and tasks register. Every week, during the counselling hours in the company or at the AQS, the educator – together with the beneficiary – fills 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 in general, its rules, aspects of working contracts and relevant legislation; others deal with general basic skills bound up both with the labour market and society as a whole; yet others address the emotional and relational levels of the participant, examining his/her network of relationships, desires and expectations from life, etc:

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. 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.

As has been observed, the educators adopt a listening stance with regard to the beneficiaries and their development, and try to bring out their desires and expectations in order to draw comparisons with the local social/work situation. But at the same time, they are adults who propose values and behavioural models which open up perspectives and approaches different from those that the participants are used to, and which – albeit partially – manage to put in doubt the behavioural models which the participants have grown to accept as the norm. Passivating or inferiorising approaches are rejected, and educators cannot take the place of participants on the job. On the contrary, these are development paths that revolve around the sense of good faith:

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 specific methodology used and the process of ongoing assessment shared between the beneficiary and the educator defines highly-structured pathways with a strong support from the Association, allowing for an all-round operation of promoting the participant's capabilities. The voice is therefore considered throughout all the various phases of the project: participants have the right to their voice; indeed, it is a prerequisite for the development of all the other capabilities.

However, while from the point of view of the project practices and the action of social workers the capability for voice is also promoted in its combined dimension (Nussbaum 2000), because the Association is able to listen to the requests and needs of the territory and of young people, unfortunately such action is limited to the local context. The uncertain and irregular involvement of public actors, such as the Regional or City Councils, does not allow for the aims and practices of the Trespassing project to permeate other governmental levels, thus running the risk of isolating the work done with these participants, leaving them without perspectives due to the lack of a more general context of policies aimed at supporting the condition of young adults. The lack of institutional support is in fact a great problem for the AQS, which is unable to open channels of communication with the public administration, as the head of the AQS states:

It's hard for us to find financing; the AQS is permanently on the brink of bankruptcy because we're unable to keep up with payments, even those for the participants, because the money from the Regional Council doesn't come through.

And then the fact that there is a lack of integration between the interventions and the measures deployed for young people ensures that these remain detached from the broader

context, and that in some ways stifle that voice which is so painstakingly pieced together through the placement scheme:

> *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, their social milieu makes 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 depresses their capacity to aspire and therefore their possibility of voice. The risk is therefore that after having exercised their capability for voice within the project, the youths then find themselves in a situation in which the only possibility is that of reproducing the patterns and logics of their local culture without having the chance to think of or construct alternative futures (Appadurai 2004).

4.4.2 Capability for work

In putting together work-placement processes to insert into the local working context, the Trespassing Project must also bear in mind the general situation of the labour market and its above-mentioned characteristics. For this reason, 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. Both social workers and policy leaders in fact try to make it very clear that their intervention is designed around the participants and the development of their own individual capabilities:

> *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; they are shown that there are places, 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-occupiability."*

On a micro level, the project promotes a series of actions aimed at the promotion of the so-called 'capability for work' (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006). In companies (generally small crafts workshops to be found within the Quartieri Spagnoli) participants are encouraged to approach work through everyday activities with a company tutor who follows them – along with the educator – throughout their work placement. The close collaboration and integration between these two figures, 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).*

Hence the tutoring activity "expands strategically right into the workplace, facilitating the participants' learning process and supporting the artisans in their own pedagogical commitments," (Rossi-Doria, Pirozzi, 2010) and therefore not only concerns the participants but the entire context, including the relations with the artisans, who also need support in the development of their own role towards an overall assumption of responsibility for the young adults. And so a genuine shared educational pact emerges that allows for the activation of participants.

Another characteristic of this on-the-job training is that of entering unprotected working environments, in the sense that participants are inserted into small companies or shops and right from the first day they take part in work activities. The path they follow, however, is a gradual one: they start out from the simplest tasks, and over the months and under the supervision of their tutors they move on to more complex ones, but in settings and with working approaches that give the participant a feel for 'normal' working situations, non mock-up scenes designed to offer an experience akin to that of art. However much the participants' learning process may be modulated to fit their needs and is the upshot of the agreement reached between the company tutor and the educator, this is still unprotected, 'hands-on' work experience.

> *The work familiarisation process has always been gradual for everyone, from greeting clients first of all, to learning how to keep the shop in order, then how to do a hair-set and at only the end do you teach them how to apply dye and perhaps you might teach some of them something about cutting if you see that they're good. But before you do that, you usually get them to try out their cutting, setting and dying skills on someone from their own family, and so this is also nice because they get involved in the process too. But then that's exactly what I'd do with anyone else who came here to learn.*

> *Here we tried to put together a progressive work-familiarisation process, from the simplest tasks the lad then moved on to the more complex issues until he started doing little graphic projects using Photoshop, especially that boy I was telling you about, who was really bright […]. The whole process was decided together with the tutor and the boy, and it was him that told us what he wanted to learn.*

Furthermore, the project is capable of developing the informal knowledge and competencies of young adults: beneficiaries' key fields of knowledge allows the educators to orient them in their choices and itineraries:

> *For example, N wanted to be a beautician, but she only had one arm that worked properly and she also had a paralysed hand. And so together with her we tried to understand what else she could do, and so we included her in an AQS project, an after-school centre which offers afternoon activities for children in the area. And there we tried to valorise her informal skills, because she had some little brothers whom she had always looked after, going to pick them up from school, preparing food for them, and so we might say she already had some training in care activities.*

There are a number of elements of ambiguity in the practices examined. 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 trade', 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 salon 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 social workers, yet in which the lack of further interventions runs the risk of invalidating the entire project:

These projects have no outlets; they constitute a very important experience in the kids' lives, but there's a need to work on all fronts, otherwise they're just experiences, not policies.

The lack of attention from the public institutions and the scarce integration – both horizontal and vertical – with social and educational policies risk segregating the Trespassing Project and the youths that take part in it, limiting the possibilities of converting the (scarce) rights and resources into capability for work.

Furthermore, another limit to the possibility of deploying the individual capabilities promoted by the project is given by the characteristics of the labour market in Campania. The high incidence of undisclosed labour (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.

Lastly, it is interesting to examine the evaluation of the outcomes carried out by the social workers and by the Association in general. They in fact remain in contact with the kids even after the project is over, helping them to look for work and thus continuing to offer a fundamental presence for them. And so they know what the kids' future perspectives for work are:

In the previous editions of the project, 20% after 6-11 months following the interventions had a regular job, meaning a hypothetically normal job with an employment contract, an apprenticeship or something else like that, but also and above all cash-in-hand but stable, and perhaps they would spend months in that position, even receiving something akin to regular pay. Then there are another 20-25% who shift between periods of work and unemployment, in this case almost always working cash-in-hand, with other non-working periods. The others were back to hanging around the neighbourhood.

From internal research carried out by the AQS social workers on the youths who have taken part in the previous editions of the Trespassing Project and other similar work-familiarisation projects (a total of 220 young adults), it emerges that after 11 months, about 20% had found an occupation that might be considered 'stable', 25% shifted between periods of work and inactivity, 10% had returned to the world of professional training, 35% had no longer had any contact with the labour market, and the remaining 10% had been unreachable at the time of the study. The focus of the project, after all, is to adopt strategies of familiarisation with labour culture, and with the times and manners of the labour market. The action on the youths' capability for work is therefore of key importance: considering the context in which the project is promoted and despite the minimal data available, the project brings young adults closer to the labour market and the world of training, and serves as a bridge between the two in more than half of the cases studied.

4.4.3 Capability for education

Even the educational aspect is one of the main characteristics of the Trespassing Project which, being aimed at young adults with unsuccessful school careers behind them, tries to bring them nearer to the world of education via alternative routes. While this approach does not aim to provide participants with any kind of diploma, unlike the Chance Project, which offered a middle school diploma, there is still a strong drive towards learning paths, in this case based on everyday practices.

The social workers try to support the beneficiaries in their journey of discovery and the deployment of their skills and abilities: the valorisation and the empowerment of basic competencies generally takes 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 beneficiaries, 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 job-seeking, or for advice on a difficult domestic or situation or on a relationship with a partner.

The role of the social worker is based on monitoring activities, administering self-assessment through the sheets that are filled in together with the young adults during counselling activities. These activities promote young adults' self-reflection, giving them the chance to focus on what they have learnt during their working practices, and supporting the latter through the deployment of a broad range of basic skills.

> *We have the worksheets, which ask you questions to make you understand what you're learning and how, and define what you do on the workplace.*
>
> *The sheets are not only about work; there are also ones about the kids in general, about their emotions, sheets on society and about getting around Naples, because there are people who have never been out of the neighbourhood...*

The strong structuring of the itinerary and the educational capacities of the social workers provide the young adults with a solid support framework, in which their capabilities are valorised and supported through a process of personal growth. Furthermore, as may also be seen from the words of the educator as shown above, the worksheets also serve to familiarise the young adults with certain general living dimensions. Among these, an important element is their knowledge of the city: often these youths have lived for years without ever leaving the Quartieri Spagnoli, without having ever used public transport to move around the city. Getting out, seeing other situations and coming to terms with moving around the town (and sometimes even out of it) is a big step for some of the youths, sometimes setting off major transformation processes:

> *Another fundamental thing which was very successful with the kids was the territorial estrangement process, meaning being able to go elsewhere and show them that there is a world beyond the Quartieri Spagnoli. In a project a few years ago, we took the kids to Florence and it was an incredible experience. Because for them the idea of going to another city is a novelty; perhaps at the most they might have been on a school trip to Rome, but otherwise they've never been out of Naples.*

In this process the families play a key educational role: on one hand often because it's the parents (usually the mothers) who go to the helpdesk and ask Anna if they can send their children to join the work placement project. But their role goes beyond this, because during the work placement programme, the families can support and encourage the young adults in the routines of work, just as they can also constitute an obstacle in terms of the excessive protection for their children, which at times leads to their standing up for them against the educators, thus creating a short circuit among the figures of reference:

> *The families are fundamental. If they give the kids motivation, they get behind them and encourage them together with us then we can make it. Only if we have an ally on the inside can we really get through to the kids, if on the other hand they cover up for them and lie to us, it all goes pear-shaped, for us as well.*

However, despite the fact that the project practices show a strong drive towards the promotion of the capability for education, the main limit remains that of the lack of support for the project and the parallel interventions that may affect the overall living conditions of the youths. Educational policies are scarcely integrated with social and employment policies, and are characterised by a sector-based approach that limits the process of converting the (scarce) rights and resources into capabilities.

Conclusions

The following is a synthesis of the main results of the case study:

1) Competence-oriented employability and capabilities. A sort of ambiguity may be noted in the Trespassing Project, which while on one hand aims to increase beneficiaries' scope for choice, especially with regard to the working environment, on the other hand it is centred around individual competences and attitudes in a given context. From this point of view the project activates beneficiaries without managing to activate the broader context.

2) Evaluation and informational basis. It is difficult to evaluate the outcomes of the project, because many cases end up in undisclosed labour. This raises a number of questions: can these results be considered successful? How may undisclosed labour positions be considered in the capability approach? In an ever more deregulated labour market, and particularly in a situation such as that in Campania, what may be considered a 'good job' and thus an intervention targeting such an outcome?

3) Conversion factors. For better or worse, the study confirms the importance of conversion factors which concern social, organisational and institutional dimensions. As regards the organisational structure, the image of the open door sums up an intervention method based on openness, physical nearness and listening. In the relationship between social workers and beneficiaries, organisational tools are important, as is in general the methodology which underlies the programme: the counselling activities, the worksheets, the activity registers, the time organisation of the meetings define a structure which guides the young adults, the social workers and the company tutors in the whole work-familiarisation process. Equally important is the weakness of certain factors, especially on the macro and meso levels, concerning the coordination between different orders of public administration (multiscalarity), between different policies (multidimensionality) and different actors (multi-actorial governance).

4) Local and/or situated actions. Generally speaking, the interventions promoted by the AQS have a relevant local dimension. However, on one hand the strong local attachment is a point of strength in the project action, while on the other hand the lack of other levels of action 'segregates' the action of the Association to within its context. The project is innovative and well-constructed, but it cannot generalise its results and methods and remains short-ranged and isolated, i.e. it is local but not situated. That is due to the fact that there is limited multiscalarity, with very few connections and scarce synergy among the different levels of public action and to the lack of any public actor who might guarantee rights and resources. The measures only manage only in part to intervene on individual situations, while they have no effect on the general conditions which define the youths' living and working situations.

5) Capabilities and capacitating frameworks. We are presented with barely capacitating frameworks. There in fact lacks a network of alliances and support which might link in to other levels beyond the local one. This also affects the dimension of the combination of capacities (Nussbaum 2000). The fact that the system (both local and national) of

interventions in favour of young people is limited hinders the project as a whole. 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 individual capabilities of the beneficiaries, promoted and put into practice through the work placement, thus end up 'on ice' at the end of the project. 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. As mentioned previously, various problems come into play here: lack of opportunities, deregulated labour, criminality. There is also however the issue of understanding which kind of job is consistent with the development of capabilities in a local situation of this kind.

A problem may then be noted of scarcity and sectoriality of the resources available, which leads to situations of discrimination among the weaker pupils: given the small number of places and the limited budget, only those who right from the selection phase seem to have certain resources (be they individual, social or family-based) are accepted to undertake the itinerary, while the weaker ones who risk not completing the programme are excluded *a priori*, for uncompleted placement courses cannot be reimbursed by the Regional Council.

6. Voice and capacity to aspire. Voice is an important element in the case study, and a condition for developing other capabilities. But here too a number of issues should be underlined. 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 with the aim of putting together emancipation strategies. However, the links with the normative and value frameworks of the local context are strong and limiting. In fact, for most of the participants, the end of the project means going right back to where they were before. Voice in fact is not a prerequisite, but must be promoted and put into practice in order for it to emerge, and the meagre support offered by institutions and the absence of complex, integrated projects with regard to the various living dimensions of the young adults depress their capacity to aspire and therefore their scope for voice. The risk is therefore that the youths, after having exercised their capability for voice within the project, then find themselves in a situation in which the only possibility is that of reproducing patterns and logics typical of their living environments without having the possibility of deciding on and constructing alternative paths.

As for the more general lessons that may be drawn with regard to the capabilities, the case confirms the role that institutions play, not only as external factors but also as actors that may use and induce various means of capacitation. On the empirical level, in fact, the conversion factors may operate in various ways and combinations, with unequal implications as regards freedom and implemented capabilities. According to Salais (2008), the public action may go in different directions: it may assign priorities to individual conversion factors, but it may also strengthen and promote conversion factors of a social and environmental kind, affecting the limitations and opportunities of a collective and contextual nature. The weakness of the institutional role as identified on several occasions in this case study entails the difficulty or unwillingness to intervene specifically to address these limitations.

Furthermore, the institutions are important because the capabilities are supported by rights and powers: social rights just 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 the interdependence between these rights is crucial for capabilities. Access to a broad range of opportunities and the possibility of discussing the options which guide decisions are both determinant in terms of wellbeing participation within society.

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Céreq

CHAPTER 5: REGIONAL POLICIES TOWARDS EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS. FRANCE NATIONAL REPORT

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1. Introduction

The qualitative survey[31] conducted for WP4 in France deals with the regional policy aiming at reducing the school dropout. Our main objective here is to assess the relationship between the institutional capacity of local policy-makers and stakeholders; and the enhancement of individual capabilities. To conduct this analysis, we have worked on two different regional situations as one case study. This two-fold study will allow us to show the differences of political capacity and coordination building and the impact of such differences on the kind of services delivered to the beneficiaries.

The capability framework will provide not only an interest to the resources provided but will also assess how individual conversion factors are included or not in the design of the regional public policies. To evaluate this later dimension, we focused our analysis on the perception of the program by pupils. This bottom up analysis will allow us to understand how individual capabilities are strengthened or inhibited by public action towards early school leavers. In that perspective, a specific attention was brought to the non take-up issue (i.e. the individual's refusal to use the resources proposed/ offered by the institutional actors).

We aimed at underlining the regional disparity of these policies by studying a region where the regional council (*conseil régional*) has decided to launch a territorial policy to prevent and reduce school dropout on the basis of a strong partnership with the ministry of

[31] The authors would like to thank Amandine Brizio for her help in translating parts of this report originally written in French.

education (Rhône-Alpes) and another region (Aquitaine) where the educational policies are generally carried out in a separate way by the regional body of the ministry of education (*rectorat*) and the regional council. On the one hand, we have a territory enjoying a strong – though sometimes problematic as shown above – partnership among the central state, the *conseil régional*'s staffs and the social partners allowing an ambitious regional policy in terms of education. On the other hand, Aquitaine is one example of strong oppositions between the regional council and the state authorities which lead to segmented public action and the marginalization of both the social partners and the civil society in the policy making process.

1.1 Domestic context: drop outs as newcomers on the agenda

In this regard, there seem to be two questions to be raised: how is the dropout issue has been raised as a public problem, and what are the conditions of its inclusion on the political agenda, both at the national and regional level.

1.1.1 Dropout as a public problem slowly emerges from a double motion of increase in qualification levels and transformation affecting unqualified employment

Until the beginning of the years 2000, early school leaving was not a matter of concern for the French politicians. It started to change after the 2005 urban riots. An interrogation, or rather the observation of a paradox, jumps to mind as soon as we consider dropout as a public problem. Usually, one would think a problem tends to become a matter of public policy when gaining significance in society, and weighting increasingly on social and political structures. Nonetheless, there is no denial that ever since their numbers have significantly decreased in France, school dropouts have never been more mentioned.

Proportion of dropouts in the active population

	1980	1995	2005
Youngsters with no diploma	***28 %***	***15 %***	***11%***
Source: ministry of education			

If on a strictly numerical basis, there are less school dropouts, one should look elsewhere for the reasons why the issue became a public problem.

A first set of justification can be found in the existence of educational norms, which make the continuing elevation of qualification levels one of the intangible objectives of education policies. However, short of considering that these norms proceed from a purely humanist and philosophical aspiration, one must resort to a second, "upstream" order of justification that is one of the socio-economical conditions.

The issue at stake, contrary to what one could think, is not related to a shortage in low-skilled jobs. After a significant decrease during the 80s, low-skilled jobs bounced back in the mid 90s: in 2001, their share had returned to its 1982 levels, mostly due to a rise in the service industry. Hence the issue does not reside in a shortage of unskilled jobs but in a

labour market increasingly adverse to marginalized youth. In other words, dropout has become a public problem mainly because access to the labour market is getting more complicated and difficult for school leavers, in a context of massive unemployment where young people constitute a very vulnerable category to the selective mechanisms of the labor market.

Indeed, with the elaboration of counter-selective policies – there have been countless measures and programs directed to young people ever since the first plan launched under PM Raymond Barre in 1977- and the objective of increased levels of qualification for young people, dropout has fully been established as a public problem. That is to say an issue considered as calling for "the intervention of the legitimate public authorities".

Dropping out school without a qualification, which did not constitute an issue, has progressively become problematic and has gained a higher visibility on the public agenda.

1.1.2 A complex agenda-setting

The dropout issue is by now very high on the French political agenda. The process of agenda setting is a key issue when analyzing public policy. It marks the moment when a social issue shifts from the status of public problem to the status of governmental priority. As such, studying the timing of the agenda setting gives a snapshot of the interests and stakeholders, and of the perception of a social issue. Agenda setting also prefigures the solutions that will be offered to a specific issue.

As often, knowledge and expertise have played a great role in this process. Launching the public debates and measuring a social issue's importance – precluding its inscription on the agenda – implies a preliminary accumulation of knowledge. Let's recall that "dropping out" as a social phenomenon has been recognized only recently, first in the Region Rhônes-Alpes at the founding conference organized in 1998 by the NGO *La Bouture* (Bloch and Gerde, 2004). Followed the *Interdepartmental call for tenders on dropping out* in 1999, whose studies paved the way to a first set of academic works on the drop out question and especially on the causes of this phenomenon (Glasman and Oeuvrard, 2011).

The inclusion on the agenda as such is even more recent and its timing proved to be highly significant: it happened concurrently to the urban riots of November 2005. Those riots acted as 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. At the national level, the causality algorithms supporting the process of agenda setting deserve special attention. During the analysis of what caused the riots – resulting from a dialogue between experts and politicians (Center for Strategic Analysis and the French Senate in particular) –; failure at school was singled out on a set of social and political perceptions establishing a direct link with urban violence. In other words, a causal relation between dropping out and urban violence was established, over a background of presumed shortcomings in the guidance practices in school. This explains the importance of the security dimension in the French conception of dropout The penalties directed to absentees' parents, for instance, embody such a dimension, as well as the part played by the French 'Préfets' in the concretization of the dropout's "*Système Interministériel d'Echanges d'Informations*" (SIEI, ie Interdepartmental Information Exchange System) and its local support platforms, or the fact

that the most recent report on that topic (October 2011) was conducted by the Mission permanente d'évaluation de la politique de prevention de la délinquance (Standing committee for the evaluation of delinquency prevention policies).

Preventing delinquency and ensuring public safety seems to be one of the main goals when combating dropping out. Yet conceptions of dropout as a social phenomenon and of public policies addressing the matter have hardly stabilized. The unsteadiness of the words used in the scientific, expert and political discourses on the issue attest this. Paying attention to the categories used in public action means turning back to the wording that describe what is addressed by public policies. The words that are used surely matter, and reveal the conception of a social issue' regulation. For example, it is obvious that the meaning differs slightly whether we speak of beneficiaries, user, public or client for a social service. Words are indeed a powerful analytical tool.

It so happens that the dropout issue is overflowed with designations: disengagement, early school leaving, renouncing education, dropout, leaving school without diplomas, without qualifications, young people with no solutions, enrolled / non re-enrolled, invisibles, lost from sight, reconnection, education perseverance, or even the more recent acronyms such as JAMO (Youngsters with less opportunities) or NEET. This anthology raises interrogations on two different levels. What is the meaning of the recent hegemony of the dropout terminology that seems to take the lead in the French public space, in spite of its problematic local use? Second, remains the plurality of terms and the impossibility to single out one consensual and stabilized public action category, which both underline the limited intensity of public policy governance regarding the issue and lead us to our last contextual point.

1.2 Political context: unsteady governance for the policies of dropout prevention?

The inscription of the dropout issue on the agenda occurred in a complex political landscape where different type of actors coexist:

- *Government departments*: ministries of education, labour and employment, and youth, as well as their sub national declinations, resulting from a poorly regulated deconcentration[32] process).
- *Local governments and administrations*: conseil régionaux, généraux, municipaux, (i.e. regional, department and city councils), whose legitimacy to intervene in this field remains uncertain.
- *Local guidance structures and networks*: missions locales, maisons de l'emploi, centres d'information et d'orientation, centres interinstitutionnels de bilan de competences in charge of implanting these public policies

[32] Deconcentration and decentralization are understood here as different ways to foster territorialisation. Decentralization refers to the devolution of power to local elected entities, whereas deconcentration occurs when more autonomy is given to local civil servants of central administrations

Such actors coexist on several territorial levels of government and cohabitate within intricate hierarchical and organizational relationships clearly stating the relevance of interrogating their governance.
The notion of governance designates " *a coordination process of actors, social groups and institutions in order to attain a set of objectives that have been discussed and collectively defined*" (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007).

As indicated by this definition, the issue of governance refers to a questioning where coordination and partnership play a central part. Hence the legitimacy of the following question: can we speak of governance when it comes to dealing with dropout?
At the systemic, or national level, numerous measures and instruments loosely coordinated and quickly outdated, decommissioned or scarcely financed, can be identified (Blaya, 2010 ; Bonnery, 2004).

At the local level, one can observe a profusion of experimentations, individual or collective initiatives, all characterized by a strong awareness for increased cooperation in public action. However, is the local political scale always the adequate one? Indeed, distortion effects push for concentrating investment on urban areas, whereas early school leavers are as numerous, if not more, in rural areas, but the absolute numbers often outweigh the ratios of dropout to the whole school population.

In any case, this short overview strongly raises the question of coordination and coherence in public policies designed to prevent dropout.

Social experimentation has recently been promoted as a tool for establishing links between different levels of government, while stimulating innovation. Experimentations have come to constitute a government strategy aiming at sustaining local programs for educational completion, lead by the *Fond d'Expérimentation pour la Jeunesse* (i.e. Experimental Fund in favor of Youth, or FEJ)[33]. This is the subject of the present case study, regarding two regional experimentations designed to fight school dropout.

1.3 Our survey: two experimental programs fighting school dropout

We have chosen to focus on two experimentations launched by two regional councils (NUTS 2), in the Rhône-Alpes and Aquitaine Regions.

Both experimentations share common characteristics: they are experimental programs carried out by a regional council, resting on a partnership-based management, and supporting local initiatives. Regional councils are not traditionally involved in policies designed to fight dropout. Yet a series of contextual evolutions has opened a policy window for their action:

[33] "*The Fonds d'Expérimentation pour la Jeunesse (FEJ), created in 2009, is putting experimentation at the service of youth policies. It aims at enhancing school achievement of pupils and increases the social and professional integration of youngters under 25. It finances innovating actions aimed at fulfilling the mot important needs of youngsters. These experimentations bring together a program leader and an independent evaluator. The goal is to be able to assess the success of a new program before deciding its widespread implementation.* http://www.jeunes.gouv.fr/ministere-1001/actions/fonds-d-experimentation-pour-la-1038/" (Our translation).

- Preventing dropout has recently been put on the agenda and this policy has hardly stabilized.
- Formation pertains to the region's competencies causing them to progressively invest the issues of guidance and professional integration. They have therefore gained significant institutional resources in organizing the prevention of dropout.
- The ministry of education's operational and financial resources has been strongly reduced.
- The political opposition to the central government controls all regional councils (except for one).

Both regions under study are involved in the implementation of a regional plan against dropout, co-financed by the FEJ. Respectively, those plans are named:

- Regional plan for fighting dropout (Rhône Alpes)
- Regional plan in favor of school perseverance (Aquitaine)

Two distinct intervention dynamics appear in these two plans

- Supporting existing local networks (that is acting on dropout though the improvement of drop outs follow-up in Aquitaine).
- Providing additional funds for the schools as a mean to prevent dropout in Rhône-Alpes

The Rhône-Alpes regional plan aims at directing immediately operational resources to young beneficiaries via their schools. The Aquitaine program comes as a support for existing networks and is consequently less visible to beneficiaries. This constitutes the main reason why the study was primarly focused on the Rhône-Alpes case, while the case in Aquitaine was to be alluded to as another possible type of intervention. Therefore the regional plan in Rhône-Alpes constitutes more or less the core of the study.

2. Main Research Questions

Our research has mainly rested at assessing the added value of such experimental programs. This added value is in turn analyzed on two separate levels: one of dropout regional policies governance, and one of the effects of such policies on marginalized youth. In other words, the question was to know whether experimentation, in financially supporting schools in one case, and strengthening existing networks in the other, has produced structuring effects on public action for fighting dropout and in the services provided to beneficiaries.
Regarding governance, two key questions:

- What kind of changes has been introduced in local and regional governance?
- Did such changes improve public action and granted opportunities / conversion factors for young people?

In respect with the effects on young people, three individual capabilities have been questioned:

- Capability for voice
- Capability for education

- Capability for work

3. Research Methods Used

The method used for the case studies is based on documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews. It is also based on a comparative point of view. The documentary analysis focuses on policy documents, study reports and review of scientific articles. The semi-structured interviews are conducted with 3 categories of actors:

- Regional public authorities (regional council, rectorat, etc.)
- Local operators (head teachers/ heads of school, teachers, guidance counselors)
- Pupils / pupils

Concerning the late category (pupils) we have conducted these interviews in three modes (individual face to face, small groups of 3-5 pupils, larger class group >10) on the basis of an interview guide focused on capability for voice/education/employment.

We have conducted a total of 45 semi-structured interviews during the summer and fall 2011 distributed among the following categories:

- Pupils: 18 individual or small group (2-3 pupils) interviews and 4 class interviews
- Local operators: 15 interviews
- Regional stakeholders: 8 interviews

Finally, as mentioned earlier our fieldwork is also comparative as we have chosen to study two regional action plans against school dropout (Aquitaine and Rhône Alpes). The first one is focusing on supporting existing local networks of actors, the second finances experimental actions conducted inside the teaching institutions. Although our methodology remained unchanged at the regional level, we adapted our interviews to this difference at the local level. In Aquitaine we have conducted our interviews with the local network's organizations. They introduced us to a series of early school leavers' groups and individuals. In Rhône Alpes, the fieldwork was conducted vis-a-vis the teaching institutions and pupils included in the action plan implemented in this school. Our fieldwork in Rhône Alpes dealt with 5 teaching institutions in both the districts of Lyon and of Grenoble. We met with 2 vocational upper secondary schools from the public sector, 1 public agricultural college, 1 private agricultural college (maison familiale et rurale) and finally one upper secondary school specialized in bringing drop outs back to school: the CLEPT (Collège et Lycée Egalitaire Pour Tous). For each of these institutions, we met the administrative staff, the teaching teams, the dropout monitoring teams (when existing) and several group of pupils.

4. Empirical Findings

4.1 General findings of case study France

Regarding the questioning guiding the present study, we shall briefly summarize the results related to regional and local governance for the programs under observation. Results related to the effects on pupils in terms of capabilities will be addressed in 4.2.

4.1.1 Rhône-Alpes: presentation and overall results

The regional plan in Rhône-Alpes consists in financing innovation within schools. It was launched in 2008 (on January 23rd, 24th and 25th sessions) following the 2007 realizations of the workshops set up within the regional council. This plan has resulted from an agreement between the regional council (on February 7th, 2008), the Education Department (more precisely two of its regional sub-divisions or rectorats), the regional directorate for food, agriculture and forests (DRAAF) and the regional network of the missions locales (i.e. local guidance structures dedicated to marginalized youth). The public problem addressed rests on a recent observation of the significant number of early school leavers with no qualifications. The analysis that prevailed in the regional council back then was that prevention should be favored, by supporting schools in helping pupil to success. Hence a call for proposals was launched on February 14th, 2008. Its objectives were *"to improve and develop 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*".

In order to do so, the schools develop proposals based on the following approaches:

- "*Identification, prevention and research for adequate solutions*
- *Tutoring*
- *Individualized follow-up process for pupils (when enrolling and beyond)*
- *Providing re-incentives and remobilization to pupils: allocating time for personal development through socialization, self-appreciation, competencies workshops*
- *In-depth counseling on guidance and academic choices*."

These plans were directed to both public and private secondary schools, vocational and agricultural. The call for proposals was open for three 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 services of the regional council have produced a general assessment of the plan. This record shows several significant observations.

- The main topics of the funded programs have been: training for teachers, small group remobilization workshops, individual counseling for at-risk pupils, tutoring, as well as personal and inter-personal competencies development.
- 80% of the requests for funding have been regarding overtime pay
- Programs are mostly limited to one single school, and partnerships rarely extend to the information and guidance services such as the missions locales, the centers for information and guidance (CIO), the maisons de l'emploi, etc.
- They often speak of families and pupil's involvement, but this is generally concretized by individual or collective information sessions.

The field survey conducted at the regional level and on each of the experimentation locations underlines the following observations on the program's governance. Regarding the regional plan and projects' management, one should first emphasize that the program 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 programs 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).

The founding partnership for the program, formalized in an agreement, has gathered around the regional council, the rectorat, the agriculture ministry and the network of missions locales. It appears according to the actors interviewed that such a regional partnership has been working to their satisfaction, provided two reservations:

1. The missions locales' involvement has been limited, due to a program design that focuses mainly on schools for both the regional plan and the programs submitted by the public, non-vocational secondary schools. "*When looking at the projects, what are you told? I will be very, very caricatural: if the 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)

2. 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. Two months before the end of the program (December 2011), the rectorat was still unsteady: " (…) *sometimes generalizations have prevented understanding. This job here has not yet been a 100% completed by the PRAO's monitoring mission in order precisely to have at the same time a way of working and a type of good practice guide allowing us to define at a given time that these data, the conditions under which we can allow their diffusion if we add commentaries necessary to the correct understanding of them. Then these data, well, we can agree on publishing them. So this process is not yet finalized*." (Interview at the rectorat of Lyon).

Regarding the systemic effects which have been observed in the schools, two elements can be pointed out, as recalled by the rectorat de Lyon:

- A mobilization 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).

- An awareness effect for teachers involved de facto in an internal program for fighting dropout, while the issue tends to be increasingly externalized towards non-academic operators (psycho-motor 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. The regional council's action is set to continue with a new plan "in favor 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 by the will for appeasement with the rectorat, which is not called into question anymore. Indeed, looking for the causes of school dropout means pointing out the academic system's responsibilities. Looking for ways to favor a return to school seems far less accusatory and much more pro-active. The new call for proposal rests 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's period. Yet the low number of responses to this second call for tenders shows the limited progress of a partnership dynamic within the schools.

4.1.2 Aquitaine: presentation and overall results

The program initiated by the regional council in Aquitaine is untitled "*Networks for school perseverance*". The wording "school perseverance" to designate dropout is quite unusual in France, yet frequently used in Québec. The beginning of the project in Aquitaine is related to a fact-finding mission conducted in Québec in 2006. 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. Based on such findings, a second fact-finding trip in Quebec was commissioned with local stakeholders in the aim of stimulating the networks they were already involved in or were to create. "*So we identified those three territories and offered them the following deal: we will organize a mission to Québec (and I will provide you with an account of this mission in 2008), 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. So you will come together on a set of objectives defined in a charter, there are no directives, no framing, it is just a way to approach things, and then we will try and see to what extent you can work together*" (Interview at the regional council)

The recollections from such a discovery trip have been published by the regional council agency, AREPA (Regional Agency for Continuing Education in Aquitaine), whose title indicates the main lesson drawn from it in terms of public policy: "*Towards networks for*

success for every young people". This is how the axis for regional policy has been defined, consisting in stimulating and providing tools for existing operators networks.

The network was launched in 2008, and has been the object of an experimentation co-financed by the FEJ 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*."

The main actions set up by the regional council in this plan are as follows:

- "*Recruiting an agent specifically dedicated to the management of regional policy for perseverance within the Directorate for education on April 1rst 2010*
- *Organizing an international conference on perseverance on the 2nd to 4th June 2010 (450 people involved)*
- *Signing an agreement on local networks for perseverance between the Regional Institution, the Department for Youth and Bordeaux University II on August the 9th 2010*
- *Mobilizing operators from the three experimental networks on plenary sessions: early September. During those meetings, the three networks expressed a need for staff support in order to animate the collective sessions, which triggered reallocation of funding.*
- *Validating the decision of recruitment for three coordinators of the experimental networks*"

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 Nationale 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 regional council and rectorat on the dropout issue in 2008.

Putting the application together has at first been slightly chaotic, yet implementation began in 2009. Over the three targeted areas, two actually invest in the project while the third was finally not involved in the implementation as confirmed by the official in charge of the program: "*and for the Hauts de Garonne nothing happened* ".

Following requests from territorial operators, 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: developing an IT program shared on the local network scale in order to identify and monitor in real time young drop outs. This program, name 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 on the territory of Blaye and implemented on the Marmande area. This

development task, carried out by the coordinators recruited for the project, has been very favorably 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. It also allows us to see whether they are kids under 16, they appear in red on the list, since they should normally be in school. It allows for establishing some kind of light statistics, but most of all to study whether they are at home or not. It could look a lot like policing, but it is not, it is only a tool for a much more rapid reaction than before, for not losing paper files as it used to happen sometimes, for not multiplying them either, and get in touch very quickly.*" (Interview at the center for information and guidance of Blaye).

The program'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 (*Circulaire n° 2011-028 du 9-2-2011 Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire*), 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 experimentations realized 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 will not see their contract renewed beyond the experimentation calendar (December 2011), and the future of the IT program SAFIRE is at the very least uncertain, since operators in state services have been advised to favor the national SIEI program.

4.1.3 Common findings and divergences

Regarding political results, and as the experimentations are coming to an end (generally by the end of this year), here are our general findings:

- In terms of *institutionalization*: no extension or continuation of the projects as they are today have been considered at the end of the experimentation
- In terms of *partnership*: dropout appears as an issue strongly marked by political tensions between regional council and rectorat, especially regarding data transmission on dropout and project management.
- In terms of *project management*: the collision of local and national agendas. Governmental initiatives (SIEI and local platforms) launched after the beginning of experimentations and particularly in respect to identifying drop outs, 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.

The global observation one can provide for both 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 decentralization and national competences.
- For *operators*: local experimentations are alive and well but remain vulnerable to the institutional context in the Region.
- More generally, a picture of uncontrolled repetition for programs very often similar seems to come together.

4.2 An analytical view of the three relevant capabilities onto the case study

As part of its plan against school dropout, the regional council of Rhône-Alpes has allocated funds in order to finance programs and actions within private or public vocational secondary schools or agricultural secondary schools. Are those programs vectors for reinforcement of capabilities in the words of Amartya Sen (Sen 2000)? To what extent and how do the resources allocated to school projects allow for an increase/ enhancement in the actor's actual freedoms, in this particular case pupils (Jean-Michel and Farvaque, 2008)?

The stakeholders (regional decision makers, heads of school, teachers and pupils touched by the issue of dropout) who have been concerned by our study have chosen to implement specific actions in order to prevent dropout. Each school has highlighted its priorities. Those probably strongly depend on the context (type and status, violence in the school…)

In order to underline more accurately this questioning on capabilities, we have widened the scope of our field study in Rhône-Alpes and integrated a school which does not belong to the program and whose academic approach is atypical. We also have paid attention to another French Region, Aquitaine. Those two complementary fieldworks (school outside the regional plan and Région Aquitaine, see box 1 and 2) will nonetheless contribute to a better account of capabilities exercise for pupils involved in the Rhône-Alpes experimentation.

Aquitaine: acting on local networks

Aquitaine has designed a plan for fighting school dropout quite distinct from the one by Rhône-Alpes. If Rhône-Alpes mostly aims at preventive actions regarding school dropout (by concerning pupils who encounter difficulties but who remain in school), the plan in Aquitaine acts in a more downstream way and encompasses in its scope pupils still in school as well as kids with no solutions, waiting for one or without recourses.

This network-setting plan allows, based on a close coverage of drop outs, to take into account the individual, as well as his cursus[34], and from this a potential improvement of his or her capabilities. For one of the operators in Aquitaine, with such a networking, *"the pupil is the winner".* Networking can improve capabilities and favor the care of drop outs without recourses: *"Here is the philosophy behind our approach, that is to say that we obtain a close coverage for schools to signal drop outs to*

[34] The coordinator for the Marmande area noted: "*that is in that respect why I think we understood each other and the idea is to take into account all signals given by the young drop out, saying 'here is a crack or a failure of the system and how can we try and fix it', taking the kid's views more into account and offering adequate solutions?*"

us, that this signal generates care for those kids, and that this care is followed by an offer for solutions, whether return to school, vocational training or else (…). Those kids, if not entering the network, I think they would be provided with less care because they would not be here, we have made it our mission to contact all of them at least once, sometimes several by different structures, where the final objective is to make an offer, they accept or refuse but in any case we have the feeling we did our job (…)".

If, here and there, one can identify in drop outs discourses, existing capabilities for voice, education and work, it is nonetheless very difficult on the basis of interviews to objectively distinguish between what belongs to networking and on the other hand what constitutes the specific task of the insertion structure, particularly because drop outs have no information and are part of the plan[35].

Nonetheless, they mention actual freedom and institutional flexibility regarding their choices for professional and/or school insertion:

"Yes for sure when I come here, I really feel like people adapt to what I am looking for, they do not try to get me on another path, they make offers, I say yes or no. If I say no, they directly go to what I want to do. I think it really makes you trust them, given all the disappointments and all that. I really want to get a degree and for all this to be done after". (Dropout pupil in Aquitaine)

"They offer things anyways, and then it is for us to see if it suits us or not. As you were saying before, it is free choice"

(Do you feel like your choices are taken into account*)*

"Exactly. Let's say that is the plan and then after with this, they provide guidance with different propositions, whether formation or structures, internships or else…Let's say there are two parts, there is their part and then there are us, who also have to do our share of the work, I mean still when you are in a partnership you have to know to adapt as they adapt to us. It is a dialogue" (Dropout pupil in Aquitaine)

One could make the hypothesis that such a "free choice" is more easily elaborated when the program rests on numerous available resources (passing information and plural solutions), due to the specter of partners with distinct horizons involved in the plan.

Finally, numerous operators highlight the issue of public transport and mobility for dropouts. It seems that networking has had little impact on such a variable, in so far as it cannot really act on factors of environmental conversion.

The submissions for the regional plan for fighting school dropout in Rhône-Alpes all aim at promoting academic success and the obtaining of a degree. Yet, when evaluated regarding the capabilities they develop (nature of capabilities: voice, education, work/ employment but also degree of development: adding a new and actual opportunity, or suppressing a previous constraint), they are qui different from one another. When picking *"the achievements people value the most"* (Bonvin, Farvaque 2008, p50, our translation) as an informational basis for judgment, some projects turn out to be "conforming" and others "enabling".

The first type aims at putting pupils in conformity with the existing social norms of "getting a degree", the second one targets pupil's empowerment. The latter guarantee the freedom of individuals by offering them the possibility to transform the resources at their disposal –the right to education- in actual freedom –school cursus, degrees and skills they have reasons to value. Those are ideal-types. Our observations underline that in the experimentations, the conditions for actual freedom are imperfectly met. The projects can act on one or another of

[35] Which in turn reduces the dimension « capability for voice »

its dimensions but none of them concurrently on resources and factors of conversion, whether individual, social or environmental.

4.2.1 Analyzing the regional programs in terms of capabilities

Despite the fact that our interview guides where designed to shed light on the capability dimensions, we decided to implement a three steps process in order to operationalize the capability approach as an analytical tool for our empirical material. The first exploration of our interviews focused on identifying in each of them the main aspects related to one of three capabilities (voice, education and work). On this basis, a second exploration brought to light the transversal characteristics on each of those capabilities. We have then taken those transversal elements attempting to accurately translate the understanding of freedom in its process-based aspects (democratic participation) and of social justice (choice between a plurality of value functioning or adaptive preferences).

Capability for voice

The voice can be a crucial element of some projects. A capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies, according to us, the active involvement of pupils but grants them the freedom not to participate. More generally, a project will be enabling if its operation is one of value in the pupil's eyes. Pupils are not compelled to participate to experimental programs. They are invited to get involved and therefore have good information (families nonetheless have less systematic access to information). The plan targets pupils with the more difficulties yet it does not identify[36] them. They are granted easy access to the program (free access) and the organization takes into account their constraints (timetables, public transportation, living conditions…) and what they appreciate and give value to. Pupils can be a force of proposal, for the choice of a school field-trip, or for the timing and the discipline of tutoring for instance.

Voice can also be absent 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 (ROC and LYCAM[37]). 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 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 institutionalized one, through the "délégués de classe" or pupil deputies. Outside of such representation, they have no voice granted to them.

[36] Thus preventing for stigmatization as a reason for non take-up.

[37] ROC : collective spelling identification. LYCAM : lycée ça m'interesse (or I am interested in secondary school), test for indentifying dropout risks.

Capability for voice in projects for schools under study (pupil's speech)

Schools/Classes	Participation	Opportunities					
		Information		Access[38]			
		Pupils	Families	Free	Easy	Adaptive	Non-stigmatizing[39]
CHESSY	x	x		x	x	x	
SEGUIN 2nde TU							
SEGUIN 1ère TU							
MONTRAVEL	x	x		x	x	x	
LUTHER KING		x		x		x	
CLEPT (cf. encadré 2)	x	x			x	x	x

From the operator's point of view, voice seems to be present to different extents, and under distinct forms from one school to another. The Maison Familiale et Rurale de Chessy (Family Rural House for Chessy) has opened spaces for listening and expression for 3rd years, for instance, and instituted sharing groups for pupils. Besides, psychological support has been set up for voluntary participants, which can choose the place and the subject of those sessions.

The agricultural secondary school of Montravel 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[5]. In the vocational secondary school Martin Luther King, voice might be less dominant in the operator's discourses. The school organizes tutoring on a voluntary basis. When being tutored by the school non-teaching staff, pupils can pick the topics they wish to study. In the vocational secondary school Marcel Seguin, the analysis of interviews with heads of school and teachers matches the one for 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 organized 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, 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 enrolled) 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 long",* can be adjusted depending on the pupils, "*we hear what they have to say*" (teacher) and is given incentives: *"they will not get*

[38] Access to the action:

- Free: no constraints to participate
- Easy: means offered to guarantee access to the resource
- Adaptive: access to the resource is adapted to the youngster's needs and constraints.

[39] Some projects target some group of pupils. They point them as being in difficulties. If above this they are forced to participate then it becomes obvious that exclusion is added to stigmatization!

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, firs 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 six 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. At the end of the session, we have offered -as in every interview conducted with pupils- to give them time for any questions they might have. There again, the maturity of questions has been surprising. They wished to know who we were directing the study to, and what will concretely happen for young people, as well as whether EU institution can act on education. Those questions contrasted with the more personal ones we got elsewhere (how much do you make? How long did you study for? What car do you own?)

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 envisaged here as a conversion factor, increasing their positive ability to do something worth doing. The social norm does indeed make it crucial to get this upper secondary school qualification in order to access the job market more securely.

To the majority, being successful at school is valuable. The domination of the educational norms does not escape pupils. 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 enrolled[40] in a curriculum they

[40] In 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.

did not choose. It is thus virtually impossible to witness any capability development. The regional plan impacts possibilities predetermined by the education system constraints.

In a number of schools 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, as a solution to failure to continue education in other schools. In itself, agricultural education is capacitating, since it gets numerous pupils a qualification they would not have as certainly obtained otherwise.

In Aquitaine the regional plan's target is focused on youngsters after they dropout and do not act inside the teaching institutions. Its aim is to sustain the existing networks of social workers, educators, guidance counselors. When studying the capability for voice of the youngsters, it is obvious that their voice was very low during schooling and remains still very low during the dropout period. The capability for voice of these vulnerable youngsters was and remains very weak.

Capability for education in projects for schools under study (pupil's speech)

Schools/classes	Teacher's commitment	Perception of the help received as centered on					Expands the range of choices
		Well-being at school	Learning	Getting a diploma	Study follow up	Education to choice and career guidance	
CHESSY	x	x	x	x	x		x
SEGUIN 2NDE TU			x	x			
SEGUIN 1ère TU			x	x			
MONTRAVEL	x	x		x			
LUTHER KING	x		x	x	x		
CLEPT	x	x		x	x		x

Teachers and heads of school do not all mention, at least explicitly, a concern for developing capabilities for education. In its discourses, a school like the vocational school Marcel Seguin seemed non-vocal in that respect. However, some schools do put at the heart of their projects the interest for education. Pupils should "*feel well in their/ at school*", enjoy academics again (Lycée de Montravel), get back the pleasure which will make them return to the education system. They can focus on contents, on meaning or interest of education. Teachers from the vocational school Martin Luther King 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, for this school, the issue at stake is to provide a type of affirmative action by allocating in priority new migrants to the program. 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

The Rhône-Alpes' program is carried out within the schools. It is by definition more focused on education than employment. However, all the pupils we have met are already very concerned with their insertion on the job market. This project could be considered as guaranteeing a functioning: getting a job. But is it always a self-valued functioning?
In order to answer these questions, let's quote a very typical interview

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.

Capability for work in projects in the schools under study (Pupil's speech)

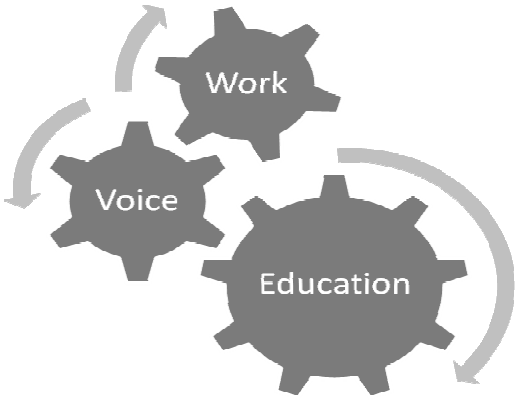
Schools/Classes	Project perceived as centered on helping to reach the chosen job	Project perceived as *also* fostering job attainment	Project perceived as expanding the possibilities of choice in employment
CHESSY	x		
SEGUIN 2NDE TU		x	
SEGUIN 1ère TU		x	
MONTRAVEL		x	
LUTHER KING			
CLEPT	x		x

Similarly to the way operators did not seem in their discourses to deliberately develop capabilities for education, all operators do not emphasize the capability for work dimension. Some openly mention capabilities for employment: in the MFR of Chessy, some allude to the work done on the professional project, in addition to the regional plan and the acquisition of job description flyers, as an additional resource to the numerical documentation. If in the

following excerpt, the teachers in the vocational upper secondary school Marc Seguin do reach the idea of capabilities for education, but in their mind, it appears to be submitted to a capability for work first strategy: "(...) *the idea was to get the pupils identified either as absentees, or not following in class, having make up for skipped classes or not paying attention in class, to talk to them in private for a week, get them out of the classroom, and work with them on their individual aspirations, their professional project, giving meaning to their attendance in school and work on classes contents too. (…). So in the beginning we thought that a pupil who already acquired professional skills could make sense of this by speaking to the newcomers, so they ended up as a professional big brother, or on the opposite pupils unhooked to their classes and who did not register information, could meet with senior pupils who already possess real professional skills in order to see what they might achieve if they got to work (…) we could establish in advance and depending on the pupil's profile, working both to remedy gaps in some subjects, and working towards the elaboration of an individual personal and professional project leading to reconcile the pupil and the school, and fully integrating its formation"* (Teacher in vocational secondary school).

Consequently, it follows that in terms of capabilities, this particular school is in an opposite position. Capabilities for work appear to come first because providing motivation to pupils, giving them the ability to act is primarily channeled through the discovery of jobs. The issue of access to employment seems to condition the desire and the will to get an education, maybe contrary to what happens in other schools such as agricultural school Montravel or vocational school Martin Luther King where operators are first concerned with 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 Montravel's Agricultural secondary school)

4.2.3 How capabilities for voice, education and work are related



Our observations show a direct link between this weakness in terms of voice and the two other capabilities. Our case study suggests here that a weak performance at school is generally related to a poor capability for voice. 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.

In the absence of choice concerning school, we find and instrumental capability for work. 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 on the job training. In that situation, all the functionings related to the work capability are not fully graspable. There is in that sense a strong relation between capabilities for education and work: weak performances in education result *in fine* in a weakened capability for work. 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 & Guy

Manu and Guy are two dropouts we met at the mission locale of Marmande

What is your priority: employment or education?

Manu: *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*

Guy: *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.

Antoine

The case of Antoine is significant of the relation between the three capabilities. We meet Antoine at the mission locale. Invited to meet us without knowing exactly the purpose of our work, Antoine came because he was asked to.

And the idea to start an apprenticeship, was that your idea?

I don't like school, so… I asked for a BAC pro[41] *but I have not been taken.*

Do you regret it? Was that what you were looking for?

Yeah of course

How was that explained to you?

Well, first, how can I say, I did not have the good results, I was underscoring!

Example 3: Jerôme

Jerôme has a degree in vocational education (woodwork), he tells us more about the weakness of voice:

They proposed me some firms.

And what you are proposed, does it really look like what you want to do?

It's not exactly the same but it's close.

And if you are not interested, do you say so? How does it work?

No, but after you can get a second thought about it. I do not necessarily agree but I think about it.

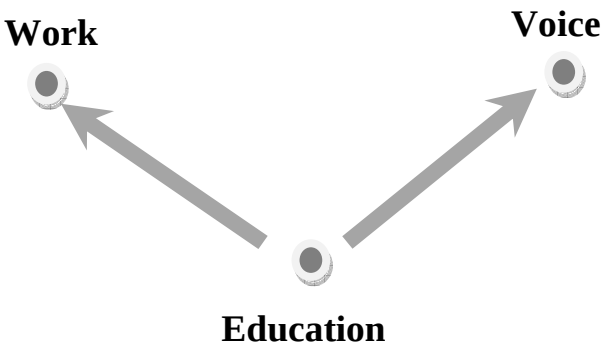
Have you ever said no?

Not so far

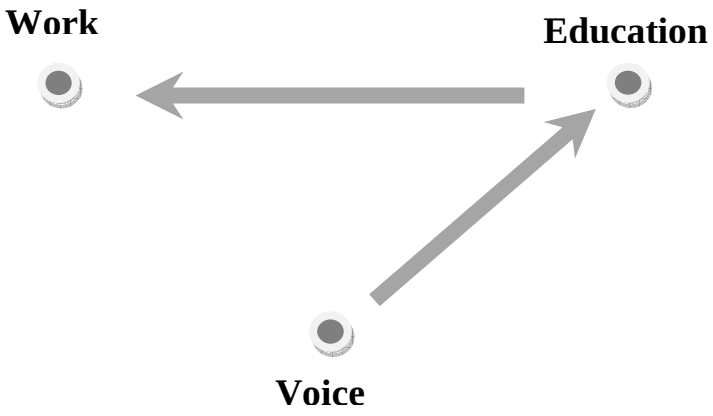
[41] Vocational education degree comparable to A level.

To sum up, we can say that in France the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education. We can illustrate these intertwined relations by the following figures

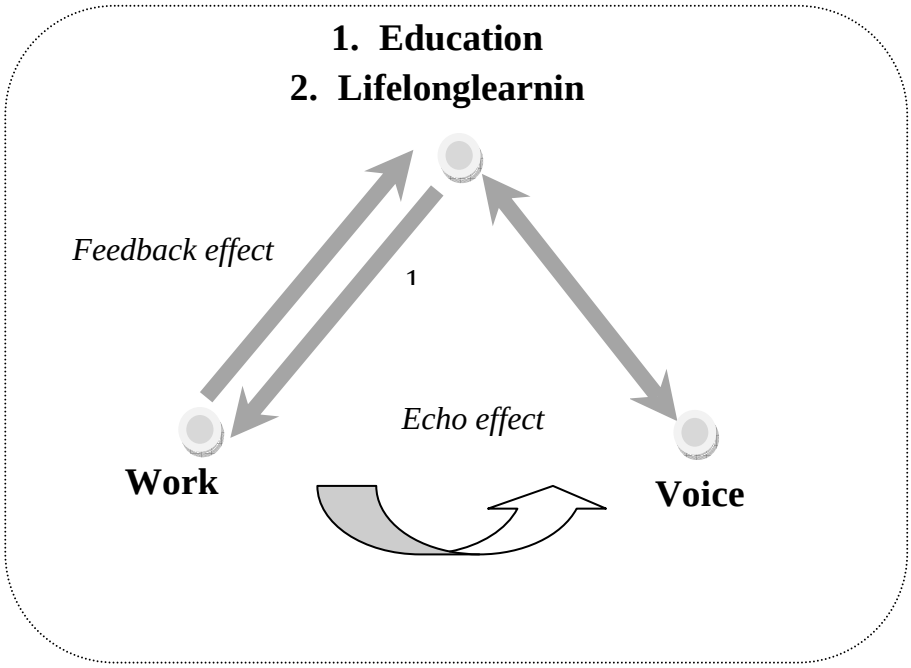
A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two other capabilities while, on the contrary, a strong capability for education drags up and reinforces voice and work



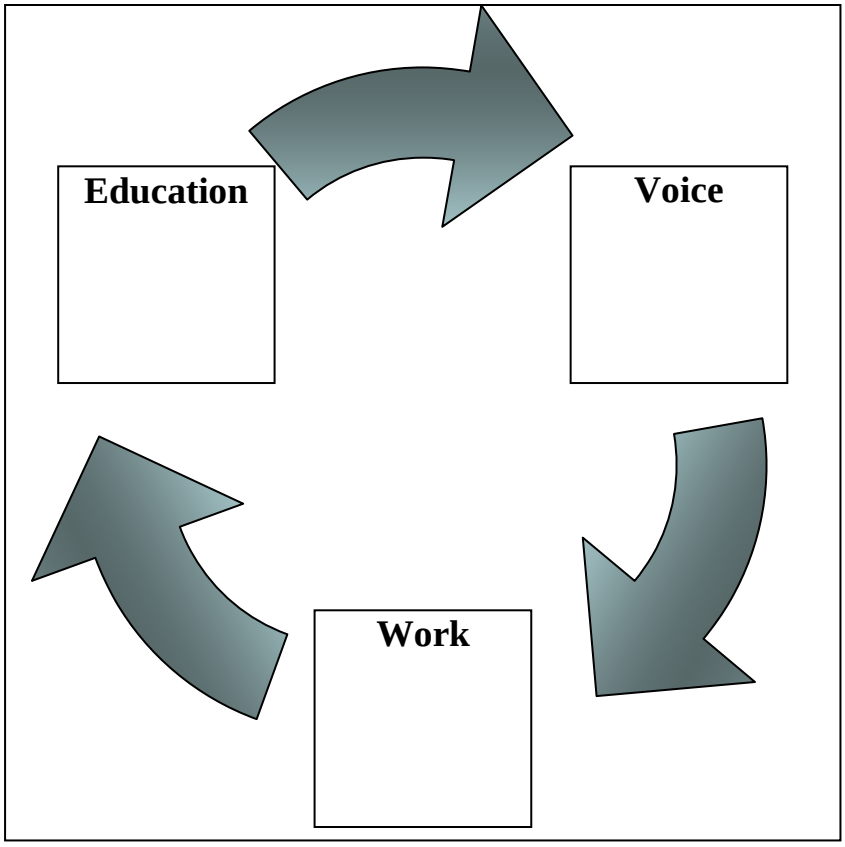
But it should be reminded that with the same performance at school, the children coming from well-off families get better diplomas than those coming from poorer families. The first are able to express themselves (they show their guidance preferences, the act to put pressure, mobilize their social networks, etc.) when the second 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 long life education through training.



These effects tend to institutionalize in a permanent way if nothing comes to counterbalance the initial individual/social situation: education or belonging to a given social category on the capability for voice[42]. 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.



4.2.3. Resources and vulnerability: what kind of achievement may be reached?

What do we learn from our fieldwork 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.

First it should be noticed that the "schooling situation"[43] supporting the projects rarely leaves room for a deliberate choice of the children. These projects intervene at a moment when the guidance choices have been generally made, the pupils are engaged in their high school and if a constraint was preexisting, she will be remaining. 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 dropout whether they have chosen or not this school, this path or this diploma. By this they are supposed to increase

[42] Pierre Bourdieu's works have established the relation between school and social hierarchies. Although they are well known in France they remain all but theoretical. The social and educational structures are still strongly linked (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970).

[43] By this we mean the mix composed of the teaching institution, the educational curriculum and the targeted diploma.

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. By supporting a self-valued achievement in the medium term, the project finally increases a positive freedom.

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 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. Some kids told us they needed help but were not able to find any usefulness in the proposed one: "*It's always the same thing. We see what is done inside the program and franky I don't need this. I can handle this myself.* And you would like to have another kind of help? *Yes may be*. Like what? *Yes some… well in fact I don't really know what kind of help*" (Pupil in final year of vocational upper secondary school).

On the contrary, learning basic skills in vocational school, fighting against a downgraded education for marginalized youngsters can increase the attraction and the pupil's involvement in the program. Even if the fact of being there reflects an initial adaptive preference, it still can work and the pupils might not drop out.

These considerations lead us a step further in questioning what we mean by vulnerable. In a recent article (Ferrrarese, 2009) on the care issue, Estelle Ferrarese makes a link between vulnerability and institutional help that "*always protect, in their organization, some and expose others*". Then it should be accurate, from a political point of view, to "*fight the conditions by which certain lives are more exposed than others*" (Ferrarese, 2009, 136, our translation).

Seen this way, our case study is questioning. Do the studied programs intend to fight or regulate vulnerability?

First of all, it would probably be necessary to define precisely what we mean by vulnerability. Second, this should lead us to consider a further hypothesis. If participating to a program targeted on a declared "vulnerable" category can lead to assume a depreciated identity, and then non taking-up the program could be explained by the rejection of such an identification process.

4.2.4 Constraints and limits to capabilities development

In spite of the projects, numerous constraints remain within the schools and the absence of conversion factors limit the pupil's capabilities. First of all, enrollment 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 programs allow for participation or not, it

appears clear that in the same pupils can be prevented and/ or dissuaded to participate. For instance activities aiming at professional insertion can disrupt the project: "*I guess I started with them, it must have been mid-December. It did not start right away. Over the academic year we did not have much, because they are pupils who often go out on internships. So I suppose I spoke to them maybe 20 times tops, no more"* (Vocational School supervisor). Other pupils also have to provide for themselves and have a job. Sometimes, tutoring hours conflict with the fact that "*teachers and pupils are submerged with classes*" (Head of school, vocational upper secondary School). Long hours in transports between the schools and their homes can also be a strong disincentive for pupils.

Regardless of the projects themselves, environments seem to have an impact as an exogenous variable on capability deployment (location of the school, pupil's problems). Such examples (jobs in addition to full-time education, geographical distance) 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. The interviews with pupils/operators/decision-makers illustrate that the most successful conversion factors are individual ones in those programs: tutoring, building-up self worth, widening what is expected to be academic knowledge. Thus, additional funding from policy for urban cohesion or family would provide some of the pupils with more opportunities and choices in their curriculum.

Moreover, the interviews contribute to identify ideas and programs that could foster capability development in ways that are not necessarily taken into account in the program. Indeed, some of the financial support allocated to generate academic success could be translated into conversion factors, some of which might lie outside the project's scope:

- This is the first academic year for the implementation of the Baccalauréat Professionnel reform. The implementation of this reform has led to gather in the class pupils completing the 1st and 2nd year of their Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel. The new comers have enjoyed the support of their elders, more advanced in technical subjects.
- In order to promote academic success, those pupils call for less overcrowded classrooms. This would in their opinion help teachers to take care of each of them, and not just of the best of them.
- The atmosphere also appears to be a crucial variable. The fact that they get along well improves their academic results, as underlined by some pupils. Within the structure, it is a bonus that the teaching staff is not the only supporter of struggling pupils.

More generally, in order to improve their education, according to what the pupils told us, variables that matter are:

- Supporting the learning process throughout the whole academic cursus
- Providing guidance that would not be constrained by overbearing concerns for filling-up classes
- A timetable taking into accounts their travel time and transports difficulties. Teachers are well aware of the issue but lack appropriate solutions

- Consultation when it comes to changes in internal rules organizing life at school
- An approach to teaching less focused on written skills
- A way of providing wages for education (yet only the teachers did mention this)

4.2.5 The "non-take up" issue

By this we mean the action of "*any individual who -in any case – does not benefit from a public offer, of rights or services, to which they are entitled*" (Observatoire des non-recours aux droits et aux services, http://odenore.msh-alpes.fr/)

Non taking-up should naturally be a crucial issue when analyzing in terms of capabilities but it is extremely difficult to measure the extent of the phenomenon of non-take up regarding dropout. A recent study conducted in Rhône-Alpes showed that such a dynamic can last for long, since young drop outs stay on average 29 months without claiming for the services they are entitled to. For the two regional programs we studied, we have observed an uneven awareness of non-take up. In Aquitaine the plan focuses on network building for operators who are directly involved with the social effects of dropout. Non-take up for services that could prevent dropout is a very pressing concern there. In Rhône-Alpes the plan concentrates on the schools, where one could be led to think everything is still possible and things are less terrible. Non-take up would then be of less importance.

Youngsters have some very good reasons to refuse the "benefits" of the programs proposed to them. For example, in some schools, when pupils do not take advantage of a service, they bring forward the issue of time, the service being outside their timetable. It adds up to already numerous hours of class.

Some services can also cast a specific identity on someone, "struggling pupil", "drop out", all derogatory labels. Targeting the program may bring in is a risk of excluding as well, the dark side of positive action. If they are a priori considered as "deficient", or lacking in some respect, and not like responsible individuals, pupils resist.

In their design as well as their implementation, the programs have to imply autonomy or take the risk of no guaranteed involvement. Pupils can be made to participate but they do not benefit from it, do not see what it is for and experience it as rejection: "it feels like we have been sacked" (pupil in vocational school).

Pupils resort to these programs when they are directly focused on academic skills. The use of the service is then obvious. On the opposite, activities that are not directly centered upon academics (cultural or artistic) can be a powerful motivation for some. According to them, a new routine is a source of motivation. Getting involved in activities where success comes more easily can trigger self worth, reassurance, be a means to make up in academics later on. This could be seen as one of the indirect uses for such services.

An easy access to services is of equal importance. It is a conversion factor. Resources must be available easily if needed. It happens when access is open with a simple request, at any time and where their concerns are taken into consideration. Uneasy access to the program is also a valid reason for non taking-up

Related to the topic of the non take-up, a significant number of paths to dropout find their origin in a kind of withdrawal even before being allowed to access the program[44]. On the other hand, by trying to escape from educational vulnerability, the program may generate some forms of dependency to the given help. Withdrawing from this dependency may well be a kind of reflexive non take-up.

To conclude, in terms of capabilities, the plan in Rhône-Alpes aims mainly at capability for education, which in France means graduation. The call for proposals directed to the schools did not contain any indications regarding what conversion factors should be mobilized. This intentionally unclear formulation should have allowed for innovation. In fact, the projects have rarely been innovative. Almost half of them (45%) are currently funding teaching hours. With individual conversion factors, the projects carried out in the schools contribute to make a kid into a pupil, helping him or her to complete education with more assurances. Still there is a gradation (from less enabling to more) on the nature of the pupil's project. Except in one atypical school led by activists, such project is usually the result of "adaptive preferences". In order to safeguard their right to graduation, they adapt their preferences to the possibilities offered to them. Interviews do illustrate this: within a very large set of options in France, struggling pupils are only offered a choice between devalued cursus (they hold no value in their mind but not exclusively since these cursus all have recruitment deficits).

To sum up, if the regional plan can be conceived as a social conversion factor transforming a formal right (graduation) into a real one (actually getting a degree), allocating resources (funds directed to schools or pupils); then we must observe that services allowing the beneficiary to pick what he thinks suits him best are scarce, and environmental conversion factors often absent.

5. Preliminary Conclusions 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 programs 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 programs addressing this question but they remain scarce, discontinued over time and un-coordinated among actors. In particular, the lack of coordination can be pointed out both in terms of horizontal (intersectoral) and vertical (territorial) coordination. The public intervention at the national level remains segmented among the different ministries and administrations involved in fighting against early school leaving. The French public policies are also segmented between territorial bodies. Promoting anti-dropout and back to school programs supposes a high level of coordination between national and local public and private organizations. The complex and somehow poorly assumed process of devolution to territorial bodies (decentralization)

[44] By this we intend the lacks in basic skills, school failure being a major cause of dropping out.

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 criticized 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 mobilized, easily collaborating and innovative. Directly confronted to the concrete difficulties of dropouts, they appear convinced of the necessity to overwhelm the sectoral/territorial barriers. In that sense, the idea of launching a national fund aiming at subsidizing local programs is an interesting initiative. But the local experiments appear to be too vulnerable to the national/regional institutional context. Besides no framework of policy transfer has been created and the policy evaluation conducted are not taken in consideration as elements of judgment 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 processes. 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 interesting to focus on the "non-conversion" factors.

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CHAPTER 6: THE DANISH CASE STUDY. WORKABLE WP 4 DK CASESTUDY REPORT

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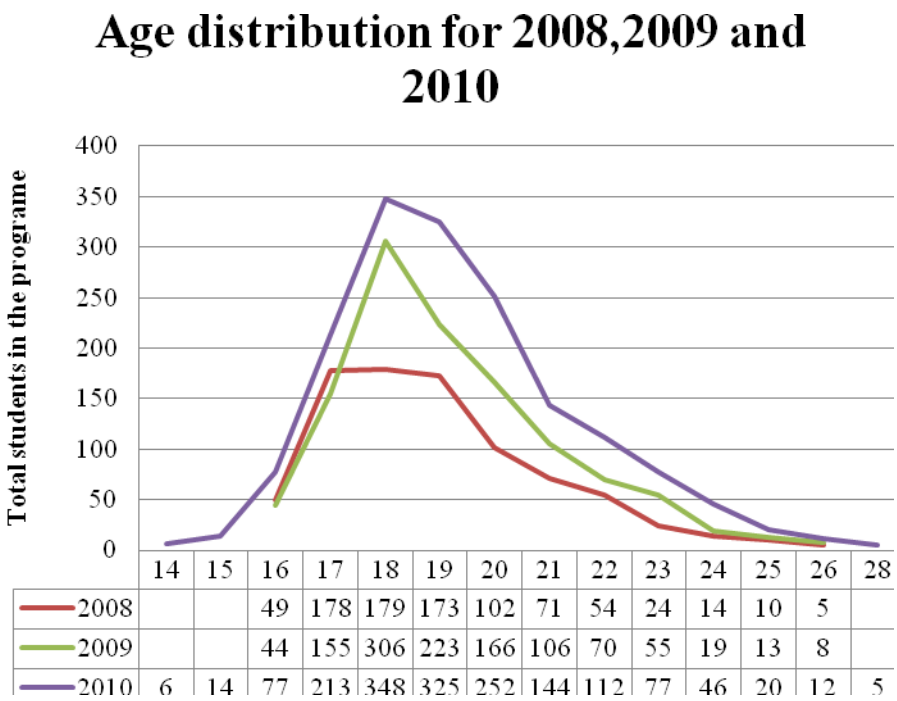
1. Introduction

The main aim of the Danish case study is to reconstruct the conceptions, aspirations and practices of local actors implementing educational and training programs. At the same time this is aimed to be done for the young people in question. Likewise it aimed at revealing the factors that promote or hinder vulnerable young people in their transition to the labour market. The Danish Case study has therefore been focusing on the arrangements done for adolescents 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, R. 2003a pp. 46-53; Yin R. 2003b pp. 23-24), is situated on a local municipality level with local institutions being responsible for this **Basic Vocational Education and Training (EGU)** program.

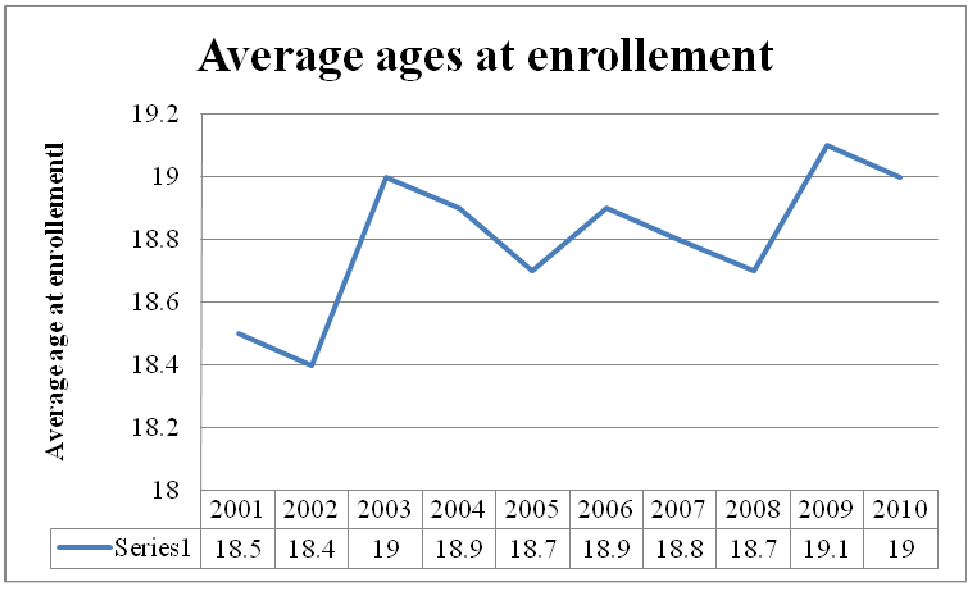
An initial description of the target group

The target group in question is affected by having all lost their track in the transition from school to further education or work. Due to this the target group of the Basic Vocational and Educational program (EGU) can be understood as a subset of three out of the four vulnerable target groups that WorkAble aims at in the transitions from school to work. A group often considered as early school leavers with no upper secondary education which are unemployed and vulnerable.

The young people who are at the centre of our interest, being part of the target group for EGU, can be described as persons under the age of 30, as it is stated in the legislation for the program (Act 987 date 16/08/2010). This in principle, but in practice it is quite different – due to different reasons, for one the financial support for the person involved. As the following extract from the educational database provided by the Ministry of Children and Education over the time span 2008-2010 shows, there has been a rise in the numbers of enrolled pupils, but this has mainly been pupils aged 17-21 years.



Comparing the age spread using the data provider UNI-C Statistics and Analysis for the years 2006-2008, we can also record an average decline in average age among EGU students. But all in all a central tendency over the years cannot be identified.



The median age when enrolled also supports this, whereas it is 18 years for 2001-2010.

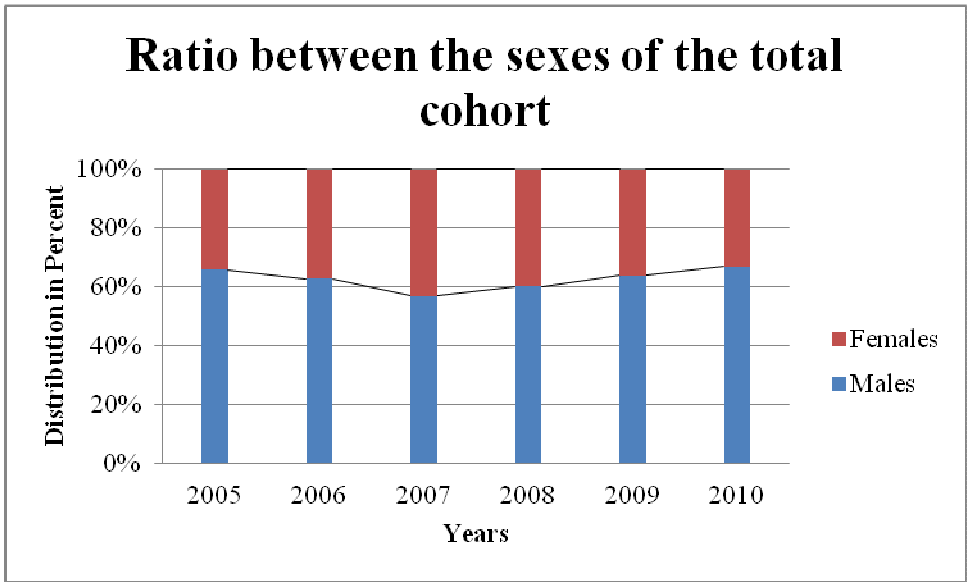
Pupils become enrolled in the basic vocational education and training programme (EGU) at their local municipality and the number of pupils that can be enrolled have until recently been decided locally, implying that the local offer is a matter of locally political decision. In 2007 it became a legal duty for the municipalities to offer the EGU program, in the same period the financing structure has been changed (2009,2010) which can explain the raising numbers of pupils in the program (Ministry of Children and Education 2010).

As stated above, the municipality is the contextual place for the programme and has the main responsibility for offering and implementing the programme. There are many differences between the ways in which the programme is handled within each municipality due to demography, job possibilities, history and the local governance. The total number of pupils who are currently enrolled 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. It may also be interpreted as an expression of the chosen service level within each municipality (DHI report).

The numbers of pupils in these programs were at the moment of the design phase placed at different organisations. The main provider of data and statistics for the Ministry of Education, called UNI-C, had only published data for enrolled pupils in the EGU programme for 2008. But: *"Past surveys of EGU activity in the country's municipalities conducted by Uni-C are published with a significant time lag. It has for long time been a problem that the available data for EGU activity was very old. Currently, the latest official figures are from 2009."* (KL, 2011a) Therefore we sought data from one of the organisations which also have data for the cohort of students within EGU – UVdata. This has given us access to some of their meso-level data. The overall picture for 2009 showed that the total number of EGU pupils was 2438 - according to figures from UVdata Ltd.

Following the data we had access to at the initial phase of the empirical data collecting, the figure for the first four months of 2010 we interpreted as an expression of a continuous rise. The inclining trend was also shown for the years 2005-2008 (UNI-C 2008). But the most recent numbers show that the total cohort of EGU-pupils of the municipalities at Mid-April 2011 counts 1.605 pupils. If one adds to this the interrupted, completed and newly started EGU plans for the year the total number of pupils been in relation to the program duing the year is 2.175 (KL 2011b).

The proportions of males and females in the programme have been quite steady over the years, with a higher number of males than females (Ministry of Children and Education, 2012).



This reflects in our interpretation quite well the proportions between females and males attending special needs education within class in primary and lower secondary school where 33 per cent were females and 67 per cent males (Ministry of Children and Education, 2012, DATABASE). Compared to more full-time special need education in different other arrangements out of the schools the proportion of boys are higher, but we find that the target group is more comparable with the former form.

All together in numbers this is still a relatively small programme in relation to the total cohort of pupils in the educational system at that stage.

2. The main research interests

The methodological, theoretical and empirical design has followed the outline for the common research questions for the project and thereby serves as the analytical grid. This has been refocused to fit the context within the interviews for the Danish case study - though without losing the overall comparability.

The research interest 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 possibilities, the institutional (external circumstances) and individual conversion factors related to the transition from education to labour market for young people within this particular educational and vocational program (EGU)are working and how this influences the individual's capabilities to live a life they have reason to value.

In a further search the following sub-questions have also been raised:

1) What are the institutional conversion factors that convert educational and vocational resources into capabilities for learning, work and voice?
2) What are the most important conversion factors concerning the transition from education to work within the EGU program?

3. Methods applied and their experienced limitations

In order to answer the research questions it was planned to adopt both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Unfortunately problems occurred with carrying out the latter task evoked by time delay caused by the required official approval process and concerning the research in the specific educational institutions.

The overall research design

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 judgments 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 as well. This was followed up with an in depth analysis on how the different contexts pursue labour-market requirements and seek to focus on those who fail within these regimes. Secondly, general aims, patterns of interpretation and practices of professionals working in transition programmes where taken into consideration and, finally, the needs, perspectives and prospects of youths and young adults have been analyzed.

The qualitative framework contains semi-structured interviews and group discussions aiming to tackle the main research questions with respect to all interviewees as well as biographical (back ground) information with respect to the juveniles and young adults. These data collections involved interviews with young pupils, teachers and the institution's managers at four basic vocational education institutions located in two Danish main cities (Copenhagen and Aarhus) and two smaller cities (Haderslev and Assens). The difference in size intended to show if the urban surrounding has (in these cases) an impact on the results, i.e. on the institutional practice.

In all 4 basic vocational education institutions and training programs 23 interviews have been carried out. 3 institutional leaders (managers), 7 teachers, one internship practitioner as well as 12 pupils have been interviewed. The main interview technique was the semi-structured interview based on different interview guides corresponding with the research questions but from a different perspective in order to be able to triangulate[45] these various interviews (cf. Ramian 2006, p. 26) As the Capability Approach is used as the overall theoretical frame the design of the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews has been aiming at assessing the different specific capabilities young people lack in their struggle to live the life that they have reason to value.

Table 1: EGU 1 (Basic vocational education institution 1)

Staff Participants	
Position	**Code**
Manager (male)	I: manager
Teacher (male)	I: teacher 1
Teacher (female)	I: teacher 2
Internship teacher (male)	I: internship teacher
Young Person Participants	
Position	**Code**
Pupil (male)	I: pupil 1
Pupil (female)	I: pupil 2
Pupil (male)	I: pupil 3

The group discussion setting arose spontaneously twice: the first time within the transition between two semi-structured interviews of two teachers where the two teachers began discussing their practical experience within the interview of the second teacher. Thus, the interview dynamic resulted in the reconstruction of spontaneous (re-)creations of social situations. (cf. Garfinkel 1967; Nentwig-Gesemann 2010) The combination of group discussion and semi-structured interview was further used with two pupils in order to create

[45] Moran-Ellis et al. shows that triangulation is too much used without reflecting and questioning the combination of the used methodology because "such an elision is problematic since it obscures the difference between (a) the processes by which methods (or data) are brought into relationship with each other (combined, integrated, mixed) and (b) the claims made for the epistemological status of the resulting knowledge." (2006, p. 45)

an atmosphere supporting a comfortable interview situation whereas with respect to the other interviews the design of the semi-structured interview was kept.

Table 2: EGU 2 (Basic vocational education institution 2)

Staff Participants	
Position	**Code**
Manager (male)	II: manager
Teacher (male)	II: teacher 1
Teacher (male)	II: teacher 2
Young Person Participants	
Position	**Code**
Pupil (male)	II: pupil 1
Pupil (male)	II: pupil 2

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, p. 52) Because of severe concentration problems of some juveniles it seemed to be unsuccessful to carry out pure autobiographical interviews. Alternatively the interviews have been carried out in a free speech situation where the two interviewers tried to catch as much information as possible about biographical information and everyday life by using, for example, sequence-narration.
Table 3: EGU 3 (Basic vocational education institution 3)

Staff Participants	
Position	**Code**
Manager (male)	III: manager
Teacher (male)	III: teacher 1
Teacher (female)	III: teacher 2
Young Person Participants	
Position	**Code**
Pupil (female)	III: pupil 1
Pupil (female)	III: pupil 2
Pupil (male)	III: pupil 3

Ethical concerns

A written agreement explaining the aim and context of the research, guaranteeing the obligation to deal with the collected data anonymously was made on the spot between the researchers and the interviewees. The interviews have been carried out in the corresponding basic vocational education institutions after oral agreement with the institutional leaders. In mostly all cases extra locations have been provided by the institutions taking into consideration that the interview person felt herself/himself "like home".

The reprocess of the empirical material

To analyze the data the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9 was used. In the first place using open/free coding at the start and afterwards reworking the coding scheme and thereby prepare the final node-structure, which led to the final coding of the interviews. In a first phase, the interviews from the participating institutions have been analyzed separately and in a second phase the data from the different institutions have been analyzed all together.

The duration of the interviews was between 26 minutes and 59 minutes depending on the communication availability of the interviewee and has been translated by a team of translators providing minute by minute points, which served as a possibility to return to the audio recording and hear it in relation to the transcript.

Table 4: EGU 4 (Basic vocational education institution 4)

Staff Participants	
Position	**Code**
Teacher (female)	IV: teacher
Young Person Participants	
Position	**Code**
Pupil (female)	IV: pupil 1
Pupil (male)	IV: pupil 2
Pupil (male)	IV: pupil 3

The age and sex of the interviewed pupils reflect the overall cohort quite well. 64 per cent are male and 36 per cent are females.

Empirical limitations and discussion of the methodological framework

The research plan has at the end been a success after some rearrangements from the first initial research design. The reasons for this are as follows. A greater number of the young people had severe difficulties by reading, understanding and answering the questionnaire (due to dyslexia, learning difficulties, etc.). In one of the four institutions they got so much help as possible and succeeded (reading the questions loud, discussing possible answers, etc. during the filling out of the questionnaire). In the other institutions this was not within range due to lack of staff. A further obstacle stems from the fact that research in Denmark has to be accepted by Datatilsynet (National Supervision of Data Collection, Storing and Using). An application from our side was under consideration for two months; during those months we were not allowed to do any collection, but just to arrange for the coming visits, interviews, etc.

Another limitation to the quantitative approach using questionnaires appeared due to insufficient statistics of pupils within this kind of arrangements.

4. Findings

Social and structural factors

As briefly mentioned earlier, the offer of a basic vocational education and training for pupils in risk of leaving the educational and vocational track for a formally recognised qualification is characterized as an *individualized* programme aimed at both employment and continued education. Furthermore it is seen as a second possibility for those adolescents who do not fit into the more ordinary educations having a mere labour market perspective.

The entrance 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 characterized as not having the: "*preconditions for completing*

another qualifying youth education." (Ministry of Education, 2010b). This description has furthermore been documented by the interviews done within our case study. 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 0-9 grade (primary form grade 1 to 6 and lower secondary from 7-9 grade with a possibility for a 10 grade) 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).

The target group is by the professional actors and the Ministry constructed as young people more oriented at 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 enrolled raise some important questions in relation to this. It seems to be the case that the pupils have experienced situations in their earlier educational path where they where bullied. This has resulted in a low self-esteem that works as an *individual conversion factor* in relation to further education. Seen from Martha Nussbaum's perspective this would be a violence of, or lack of *affiliation* that also concerns with the social basis of self-respect and non-humiliation (cf. Nussbaum, 2011). 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 three to four years and also in the technical school, I really do not know what they had against me"* (I: pupil 2)

The educational track and unplanned departures from it

This vulnerable group of young people points to an interesting characteristic of the Danish welfare state: "The reproduction of inequality" should not be considered as a past stage in the history of educational sociology. Unequal distribution of education exists. 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 is 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 (ibid. p. 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 stand and participate as democratic members of society. It promotes *less educational* and vocational opportunities than they are formally entitled to. It promotes *fewer valuable opportunities* (seen from the individual´s point of view) *to enter into the job market.* And thereby enjoy the mutual recognition with other workers that this entails (cf. Nussbaum, 2011)

But, who are the pupils, students of the education and training program? Except for the definition of the Ministry of Education (in the text) one may further add some further characteristics.

Social and structural circumstances characteristic for the target group

The majority of the students are having a parental background characterized by a non-familiarity with the educational system. Most parents have only completed the comprehensive school and have no experience concerning the next educational levels. To some of the parents, education is not valued as important since those parents are not sharing the common values of the Danish society. They prefer jobs and wage on the cost of education. Many of them are unskilled workers and have had or still have a job primarily in the industrial companies.

Hence, the students themselves did not succeed well in primary and lower secondary school. As the former quote also points to 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 competences these students are often lonely, meaning that their networks – except for their own family – are only scarce. This lack of capacity to experience and enjoy affiliation to other young people is worth taking into account and the study speaks for changing the viewpoint. Instead of accounting it merely as a subjective characteristic of each individual it seems to be a structural product of the circumstances.

Other structural circumstances that need to be said in relation to the Danish case is that modernization 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 1970's become a still more important factor in shaping youth life and youth trajectories (cf. Young 1998). Therefore these past school experiences seems follow 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 utilized 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 structural reasons on the job market to match the students' needs and wants concerning a life they feel reasonable to value. The institutions offer or perhaps even promise to guide young people to social integration 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 (or just from their responsibility to the responsibilities of the labour marked) 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 education – shift to another one and sometimes return with renewed energy, aspiration and motivation. On their way towards adulthood they would usually lose the temporary job (due to increase of wage compared to productivity – by the age of 18 a young person is regulated by the collective bargaining; his/her minimum wage is then about 11€ per hour which in relation to the Danish living costs is not overwhelming) and have to suffer from unemployment leading to further training and/or to another job of a similar kind. This emphasizes 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 forward and do their own experiences with the different job and educational opportunities (and 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 marked brings the vulnerable young people into a situation where they do not have the needed time for shaping their identity and especially their wishes for their future life, hence *practical reasoning*. In this dramatically rush of demands for decision making that influence their future life to a great extent, the actually chosen path for the target group becomes arbitrary – in many cases it could have turned out quite different. 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 program have 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 the EGIRIS-project (Blasco, McNeish and Walther 2003). We may, therefore, compare our findings with what is called "misleading trajectories" (ibid., 26-31) and at the same time call for a sub concept for that, which 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 ground 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 characterization, 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. In the next section we combine the findings of our case study with new conditions.

New conditions

There are as always in human social development new conditions to bear in mind. At the current they can be phrased as new or changed digital conditions and impacts not only the young people in question, but 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 anomical mastering constellations. 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 e.g. 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 20th 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 20th 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:

1. 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 (cf. Sennett 1998).
2. *Flexibilisation* requires adjustments that no longer follow the collective strategies that Robert K. Merton generalised in his anomy 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 a logic appears, according to which success leads to cultural inclusion and risks to exclusion.

3. Success versus responsibility – 'one man's death, is another man's bread' (Brecht). To be successful today means to be able to implement rationalisation steps etc. for the sake of companies' profits. In this logic, there is no room for social accountability.
4. 'Abstract worker' versus 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.

Analyzing the educational arrangement we may find the concept of education very broad. In principle students are participating in a dual-training system composed of relatively short courses at the EGU institution, technical school or production school and longer periods of work or training at a work place in the local environment. It is of course questionable whether this is recognized as a real education by employers or not – and by the students themselves, their families and friends. Recently, the government and a number of municipalities have developed social clauses. E.g. when inviting tenders for building a new hospital, school or railroad municipalities and 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 (about 80.000 or 12% compared to the 6% of unemployment in average). This is assessed to be better than just being kept in waiting loops for months or years.

Individual voice in the planning vs. Counsellors' idea of a "realistic" plan

As mentioned earlier the pupil enrolled in the programme gets his own 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 Children and Education 2012). But this could also be interpreted as a result of individualization 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. This seems now and then to de-motivate 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 programme that has been the target of the case study in Denmark 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 rather 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 have many tensions to the German understanding of *Bildung.* Also the enhancement of personal, social and professional competences should enable the EGU pupil to be enrolled in either one of the other education and training programmes (EUD) that leads to a professional qualification as a skilled worker (a certificate of completed apprenticeship) or at least provide the basis for entering the labour market. To reach this goal the single pupil has an individual arranged educational plan (Ministry of Education, 2010). In other words either the program helps the young person back on the educational main track or it secures enough competences for the young too seek employment. The programme becomes thereby at the centre of re-transition into the labour market for those who failed the main educational path. If it is assessed that the individual pupil has been misplaced in the program or develop educational and professional skills it is then: *"A special feature of EGU is that if ... the pupil has achieved the prerequisites for, and the will, to go on to an education and training programme in a qualified manner, or to achieve permanent employment, it may be appropriate to discontinue the EGU plan".*

Conversion factors of vocational resources

Private craftsman companies situation as a conversion factor for the capability for work.

As stated earlier the local municipality influences the number of pupils that are enrolled in the program. 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. The companies have to pay an internship wage. Therefore the main expenses linked to this program 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 program 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 his 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 argumentation 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 pp. 33-34; Nussbaum 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 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 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 – conversation factors for voice

From a capability perspective it becomes clear that even though the EGU program intentionally should be planned individually and therefore be giving voice to the youngsters' wishes for a future work life, 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 counselling 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, labeled as:

1) Demand for adaption to job market possibilities
2) Practical reasoning (the pupils internal capabilities)
3) The space of internship opportunities (external circumstances)

Job market adaptation as conversion factor for voice

Young people in this program often need to *learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market.* Providers find that the young people are often in need of learning to have a more "realistic" view on 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 their social environment" (Bonvin 2009 p. 3).

Target group specific conversion factors in relation to work, voice and education

What works seen from the perspective of the young in EGU

Seen from a Capability Perspective the young people within the EGU program are offered capabilities to develop their capability set. These capabilities are chosen individually. The content of the individual plan is meant to be negotiated between a person in the guidance system (counsellor), the parents and the pupil. Following Martha Nussbaum capabilities this arrangement can be divided into internal capabilities and external circumstances (Nussbaum, 2011 p. 21). From this view point it is interesting to reveal if the adolescents in this educational practice (making the plan with a counsellor) really have the external circumstances (capability) that fits with the capability of voice. We are at the present stage in favour of stating that they are not having the necessary external circumstances to use their voice.

When putting attention to the vocational and training programmes and focusing on the basic vocational training the elements are individually built together as building blocks. We observe that the education/training provides contents that are much broader than ordinary school subjects. If we look on the contents of the education in practice we find that pupils for instance are offered small focused seminars in lessons covering topics such as: *"When do you stay at home from work if you are sick" or* "*Give bread at work - but what kind of bread?"* In the last example the syllabus describes the purpose as *"To be able to choose the 'culturally appropriate' when you have to give bread to the coffee at work. That you do not 'fall through'*. The process is described concretely in an educational manual. For example: *"First a collection of students' preconceptions in the field will be collected - What would I choose to give at work if I just had a driver's license? The teacher will inform about, for example: What time of day do you give rolls. Do you have spreads? When at the day do you start giving Danish pastry? What do you choose for the afternoon break? When you give something to drink instead - and what"* (Stakeholder interview and documents).

In that sense and not very surprisingly we find inequalities in the capability for education. But similarly we find similarities in the approach to handle this. In both cases the deprivation in the capability space of education, work and voice is sought to be compensated by these interventions.

The question, though, is whether this structural problem of unequal distribution of educational capabilities should be compensated at this later stage or rather avoided at earlier stages of the educational path, providing in Walker's terms "a just education"? Thereby education could take into account that many of the pupils describe earlier school experiences of failure as a key reason for their education path away from the main track.

Work-first perspective as a negative conversion factor for the capability for work

Employability, human capital and human capability for work are distinct different concepts. In this respect our perspective differs from a human capital understanding of the function of work. "*This view would be tremendously one-eyed by overlooking that capability also is a freedom of choice (Sen, 1987, p. 15)"* (Jensen, Michel & Kjeldsen 2010 p. 44). But the choice dimension is as stated earlier only formal and in contradiction we find that work gets a first priority in practice. This leads to a danger of exclusion of the young from different work places. An example of the work first perspective can be seen from the following part of an interview:

> **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.*

5. 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. Therefore, 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.

Structural factors

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. When we look at the way counsellors' act, it seems obvious that they make the decisions for the young people. The choices of the youngsters are not "realistic", as the study has pointed to.

As education systems become more and more elaborated as well as sub-divided 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 latest 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 secondary education. The age of selection 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.

In 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.

Personal and biographical factors

The study shows that young people with learning disabilities are heavily influenced by their earlier experiences of schooling. They are in no way easy to motivate.

A similar characteristic goes for disengaged youngsters. They seem to be rather "unreachable", even in this individualized 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.

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 founds 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 lack of recognition of anything other than the roles of individuals. In that case, neither parents nor the school master 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.

A brief intermediate result here points to: worldwide social disintegration, marginalisation and social inequality; increased disparity between the world's rich and poor; a demographic distortion – a larger number of elderly people in the developed countries thrown in relief by increased juvenalisation in the undeveloped countries. The present interpretation of these aspects is that they point towards a sixth wave that will focus on social growth with a view to re-establishing social balance as regards economic globalisation. 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 is 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 that many other factors – such as biotechnology, environmental protection and new sources of energy. This was a decisive deficiency in the consensus-based realm of understanding of the Brundtland report (1987). A Marxist analysis of the same problems therefore also involves social and cultural aspects (Bestusjev-Lada 1984), which is also pointed out in a recent German presentation (Negt 2002).

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?

Pedagogy – a different productive force?

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 ground. 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. But 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 throw its human traditions and characteristics over board. Rather, it may become "pedagogy for the capsized, the superfluous and those who have fallen short". Instead, digital capitalism will draw on market *fähige* learning technologies that focus on human beings' unconditional flexibilisation. Those who fall through in this process can thus be left to traditional pedagogy (cf. also Sennett 1998 and Bauman 1998).

Hence, the danger is obvious: it may result in polarisation, which will by far exceed previous troubles and discussions on e.g. public versus private schools, narrower learning goals, à la PISA, versus wider goals etc. When pedagogy settles its own socio-economic accounts and, on the basis hereof, must produce corresponding social connections, such polarisation must be avoided. This is based on the fact that the development of the CA is most likely to become social, because disintegration and mastering problems, as a result of globalisation and digitalisation, make up just as big a threat to economically and socially stable growth as linear learning psychologies to a psychosocially balanced development of personality.

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 (cf. 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 socio-political 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, 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 re-organisation of problems and discussions (cf. 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: anomy), and at the same time it is thrown upon social integration (cf. Marx' presentation in Das Kapital). 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 (cf. 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 Capability Approach. 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 & 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. The consequences hereof encompass far more than do Marx' concept of alienation and Ford's notion of the versatile consumer. 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 (cf. Jensen 2005 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 (cf. Rose 2000).

Thus, a pessimistic development is one possibility (cf. e.g. the dialectical account in Betusjev-Lada 1984: 103-123). 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.

A shift presupposes pedagogy's acceptance of natural science, i.e. recognition of the interplay between genes and milieu and, thus, that many things and forms cannot be explained by socialisation and pedagogy. It must learn to relate offensively to the discourse of gene economy, and the 'brave new world' that some see in it. It presupposes that the opposition to objectivity is overcome – i.e. the fact that 'all that is fixed and solid vanish, all that is holy is undressed, and human beings are finally forced to look objectively upon their own position in the world, their interrelationships' (Marx 1952, I: 30). 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 socio-political. Do we, in contemporary Denmark, want to or have to accept that some parts of the population undergo socially repressive liberation, while others undergo socially extended liberation? This Marx-inspired objectivity manifests itself under other conditions, because pedagogy and the education system have contributed extensively to:

- *Changing the experience of childhood and youth in our century.*

And, in addition, made known that:

- *The main currents of pedagogy still need to grapple with the structural changes in work and business (unemployment, digitalisation, lifelong further education, growth in the service sector etc.).*
- *It has not taken the consequences of 'education inflation' (good exams no longer guarantee good jobs, but they are nevertheless a condition for entering the qualified areas of employment).*
- *It has still to grapple with and grasp what will happen when dynamic 'lifelong learning' really begins to replace the traditional static career structure.*

Policy implications

Our case study also shows that EGU-students or –pupils are not champions of the educational Olympics. On the contrary we have to deal with social exclusion. How do we overcome stigmatization and social exclusion? Politicians and experts have been calling for special and often individualized measures – now and then forgetting that such measures may increase stigmatization or even social exclusion of vulnerable. They may be characterized as "losers" and this status would easily undermine their already low motivation and self-esteem. By use of the capability approach plus local development it can be possible to develop a "mainstreaming approach". The kernel of the capability approach points to mainstreaming or unity in diversity, as there are many pathways to fulfil a life which the individual has reason to find valuable.

A holistic approach should be recommended. When we in our investigation turn to the young people, our research and the practitioner experience and the important statements of the young people themselves show their low expectations. Their ambitions are usually short-term, expressed in terms of immediate and tangible goals. This implies that a number of general frameworks must be further discussed in order to define policies and programs for young people.

A holistic policy must at the level of systems maintain the idea of prevention and early intervention as a part of a broad, active and continuing support. Furthermore, integration of services, systems and approaches are necessary. Particularly cooperation between agencies in order to downsize the differences between different parts of the legislation (education, labour market, social services, etc.) seems to be of great importance. The overall question is: does the service make sense to the users?

Formal and informal must be linked – many institutions have developed important experiences in the work with the young people; it appears to be of significance to promote the participation of these organizations and institutions as equal partners in all aspects of in the planning and delivery of services.

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CHAPTER 7: LEARNING HOW TO WORK: YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION THROUGH THE SUPRA-COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

WORKABLE WP4 FINAL REPORT AUSTRIA

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1. Introduction

Background

Austria's national educational regime has traditionally been oriented towards the "dual system", which puts special emphasis on young people's vocational education. In 2009, due to an increasing lack of company-based apprenticeship places for young people, the "**Vocational Placement Guarantee**" which foresaw the incorporation of **supra-company apprenticeships** (SCAT) into the Vocational Education and Training Act was established. The aim of the Vocational Placement Guarantee is to supply a greater variety of apprenticeship places for those in need. Supra-company training facilities ("SCAT trainings") are financed to allow young people to complete their entire apprenticeship in such a training centre. Still, young persons' integration into regular apprenticeship places remains a primary aim. The supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a "safety net" for those young persons not able to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.

In 2009/10 16.314 places for the overall SCAT programme (going up from 10.213 in 2008/09) have been financed publicly with a funding sum of 225 million Euro. (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2011: 60) The SCAT is designed not to be competing with company-based apprenticeship training but supplementing it and hence supporting this traditionally important pillar of the Austrian educational system. There are huge differences in apprentices' wages depending on whether they are learning at SCAT (240 Euro in the first and second year/ 555 Euro from the 3rd year on) or in company-based training (depending on collective agreement at stake but usually much higher or even double). Currently, 7-8% of all apprentices are taught in a SCAT setting. (Bergmann et.al. 2011: 141) Evaluations of SCAT's impact on the participants' labour market performance show an overall positive labour market integration for graduates though depending heavily on the regional labour market situation. All SCAT programmes are rather high-threshold measures not capturing youngsters with high learning difficulties or "personal and social deficits". Hence, more than 70% of SCAT dropouts (around one quarter of participants) are either unemployed or out of labour force. (ibid: 111)

The training is school-like organised. In contrast to company-based apprenticeship trainings groups of up to 15 apprentices per module theoretically and practically learn in workshops. Furthermore, internships in companies are part of the educational programme. The programme also provides tutoring and socio-pedagogical support for apprentices having

learning difficulties or deficits in the accompanying vocational school. The innovative aspect of this training is its supportative and workshop-like character giving the young persons more time and space to develop their occupational capabilities than in company-based apprenticeship settings. The professional knowledge imparted by SCAT is assessed as on par with company-based training. (ibid: 143)

Target group

Evaluations of supra-company apprenticeship programmes showed that two thirds of participants were male owing to the fact that apprenticeship training in general is a "male domain". (Mairhuber/Papouschek 2010) Another important characteristic was the fact that half of the participants had migrant background. (Bergmann et.al. 2011: 35) The labour market integration of young people with migrant background is especially difficult. In addition to the often low educational attainment of their parents (youngsters are "inheriting" though often overriding) and their allegedly insufficient German language skills, they frequently experience discrimination when applying for a company-based apprenticeship. (Gächter 2011: 7ff.) Other participants come from difficult social and family backgrounds and were said to have deficits in their social competence, manifested in a lack of work discipline, low frustration tolerance, etc. With respect to the participants' educational performance, in particular weak German language skills and mathematical skills were evident. However, the SCAT programmes also cover youngsters who simply had "bad luck" when looking for a company-based apprenticeship training and take the chance for an alternative training facility. (Dörflinger et.al. 2007: 23)

JAW – Case Study

In Austria, the case study took place at „Youth at Work" („Jugend am Werk" - JAW) which is a rather large provider of a range of labour market and VET programmes for young people and persons with disabilities. JAW provides places for more than 1.500 people of different target groups; including some 250 supra company apprenticeship training places. Here, JAW offers a range of apprenticeships in craft, industry and service sector professions. It provides a vocation oriented training fostering technical and professional skills on the one hand. On the other hand social competences to meet the requirements a flexible labour market is demanding are promoted. These requirements not only include the amplification of professional skills and "secondary virtues" but also the unfolding of a personality able to decide independently and deliberately about his/her (professional) future and to take over responsibility. This latter objective shall also be reached by the establishment of youth representatives being elected by the entire trainees' staff.

Within the Austrian case study, 18 apprentices, four trainers, three social pedagogues as well as senior staff of the training provider (head of the professional training department, head of the metal branch, deputy general manager) were interviewed covering two different professional branches[46].

[46] „Zoba Eck", a training centre for the catering and cooking sector, and „Technologiezentrum" where electricians, plumbers and automotive technicians are trained.

2. Main Research Questions and Research Methods Used

We began our empirical research by conducting explorative and expert interviews with the JAW's management on various levels, with trainers and social pedagogues. [47] The aim of this explorative step was to get an insight into the logic, philosophy and self-conception of the institution and its executives in handling and forming the youngsters' transition from school/unemployed status to employment. The institution's mission, values and pedagogical principals applied are important external conversion factors the youngsters are dealing and struggling with –more or less supporting the youngsters' personality development and capability formation.

Next, we conducted two group discussions with the apprentices themselves. The interviews were designed interactively with role plays, brainstorming rounds and associative methods. (Bohnsack et.al. 2010) The aim of these two sessions was to get an overview over the young people's main topics and problems when going through this kind of educational shaping. Besides, we wanted to explore how the youngsters interact, how they relate to each other and which topics they find worthy for discussion among them when talking in peer groups about their experiences with teachers, learning contents or the training's time structure.
On the basis of the group discussions' results a semi-structured interview guideline was created for individual interviews with 18 apprentices. A combination of biographical-narrative and problem-centred interviews was used. (Rosenthal et.al. 2006) This phase of empirical research brought deeper insights into individual strategies of capability formation, its limits, room for manoeuvre as well as into incisive internal and external conversion factors to lead a life/hold a job/choose an educational pathway the youngsters have reason to value.

The data was analysed according to the main strands agreed upon in Milano/prepared by NAPIER and broken down to our case study:

What is the capability for work and education; what is the capability for choice and voice? How are they formed? How is their formation restricted or supported? Is supra company training at JAW an adequate way of supporting young people to develop missing capabilities while at the same time discovering and applying unacknowledged capabilities?[48]

[47] We used a very precise interview guideline covering the following topics: general information on the philosophy, history and pedagogic concepts used at JaW; bidding process; detailed description of supra-company apprenticeship training; inter-institutional collaboration (Public Employment Service, vocational school, other bidders); target groups: institutional support in transition phase from school to apprenticeship training, socio-demographic description of target groups, main challenges for working with the target group from institution's perspective, empowerment strategies etc.

[48] More concretely: How have the young people been experiencing education in the educational system? (personal history of learning: gaps between public resources and resources linked to social status and mismatch between different conversion factors); Perspectives on strengths and weaknesses of institutional (educational) setting (gap between conversion factors and capability formation); Transition Process: Experiences of searching strategies, expectations, plans/influence of social networks during search phase; Do apprentices use other places of learning/spheres of other activities in leisure time? (gap between official resources and informal/unofficial resources); How do they experience the concrete measure? What changed since attending this measure?; Modes and places of voicing within SCAT: Young people's possibilities and limits of participation in working life/training life; Dreams, fantasies, hopes, aspirations beyond everyday sense of realities (gap between choices they have reason to value and actual choices).

3. The Macro-, Meso- and individual perspectives on capability formation at Youth at Work

This section shall briefly outline what different perspectives on youngsters' capability formation are at stake in the *Youth at Work* setting. The executive personnel, trainers, social workers (meso level), the apprentices themselves (individual level) and the institutional setting (macro level) JAW is ‚locked up', i.e. stakeholders from the Public Employment Service (PES), are pursuing partly overlapping and partly contradictory point of views.
Supra-company apprenticeship training is provided and financed by PES funds, and potential participants need to be registered as unemployed or job-seeking. [49] As participants' wages (*Ausbildungs-/Lehrlingsentschädigung*) are paid for by PES, the measure is clearly part of labour-market policy. At the same time, however, it is run in a school-like mode, with the option – and expectation – to acquire work experience in companies and/or to be transferred to companies at a later stage of the training. The aim of PES labour-market policies is to integrate those registered as unemployed into the regular labour market. Therefore, those who are guaranteed a vocational placement in SCAT are still PES clients – and not (just) young people to be trained or even educated. Interviews showed that – apart, of course, from the content-related vocational training – a main emphasis of PES measures, including SCAT, is placed on the improvement of so-called secondary virtues such as punctuality, discipline to work, reliability, "proper behaviour" etc. These are seen as preconditions for successful labour market integration.

This later objective is also taken up by stakeholders implementing the SCAT at JAW (meso level).At the same time SCAT is a VOCATIONAL training preparing for graduation in the end. It provides high-quality education for young people who could not find a company-based apprenticeship. For some professions, the JAW apprenticeship program even offers a broader education than companies: while most companies today are specialised in a very specific range of services and/or products and therefore are not able to cover the teaching of an entire profession profile, apprentices at JAW can acquire diverse skills within a profession. Stakeholders see this kind of training in stark opposition to "any of these courses where the youngsters crawl around for months. In the end they hold loads of certificates but they are worth nothing". (JAW_SH1)

However, the *main* target is to prepare the apprentices for a company-based apprenticeship: JAW shall not – from the PES point of view - become a new alternative to "traditional" company-based apprenticeships. It is a "safety net" and the majority of enrolled youngsters should in the end complete their apprenticeship outside JAW. JAW stakeholders were critical about the minimum quota of apprentices to be placed in regular apprenticeships JAW has to prove vis-à-vis the PES. First, JAW of course cannot influence the situation on the labour market, a major factor for apprentices' placement as evaluations have shown. (Bergmann

[49] Interviewees from the first phase of research tackling the institutional background of the SCAT were critical of the location of this early, "primary", phase of training (*Erstausbildung*) within the PES as they would rather see it located within the educational system. In this case, the question of apprenticeship wages, which are essential for the continuation of training for students from low-income families, could be tackled by providing scholarships or other kinds of social assistance when withdrawing the supra-company apprenticeship training agenda from the PES.

et.al. 2011) Second it is paradox to kick out those youngsters from the training who have finally found an environment which fits to their learning requirements. As one interviewee put it: "The PES expects us not to provide an atmosphere for the youngsters of feeling comfortable but to prepare them for an apprenticeship outside the institution." (JAW_SH1) What is more, the facilities provided by JAW for equipping the SCAT workshops required high investments, the financing of SCAT is however limited to one curriculum lasting up to 3 years and has to be newly prolonged after that period. JAW has therefore little room for planning in the long run since two-thirds of their budget is highly insecure (information provided by JAW_SH1). The discontinuity of funding stresses SCAT's conception as being a mere solution for transition management and not an alternative educational pathway.

SCAT is not a third pillar of the educational system, just a "stand-in" for insufficient coverage by company based training. For providers this means high investment costs but insecure funding for the following cohorts of youngsters. For the apprentices this means permanent pressure to change into company-based apprenticeship. The transitory and "stepping-in" character of the measure is also critically viewed by the apprentices: Many young people appreciate their apprenticeship at JAW and are conscious about its advantages whereas others feel that they just get a "second-class" education and do not take the training seriously but hope for a "redemption" outside the institution.

Another crucial aspect of disagreement among the various stakeholders is their perception of the young person itself and his/her capability to voice and subversion. We find the figure of the "deprived" and/or "deviant" particularly male youngster: Policy stakeholders in the education and labour market system are concerned to lose access and control of young people who may turn into an unpredictable and volatile group posing a threat to social peace. As one interviewee puts it, "If we fail to come up with [training and support] opportunities for 1,000 young people a year, we'll quickly end up with a group of youngsters in danger of exploding at some point. Just imagine this: 5,000 youngsters marching across Vienna, causing turmoil." This quotation is pervaded by fear – fear of the concrete young violent man and the fear of their "explosive" power to endanger the system (of …). The "fear metaphor" was interestingly taken up by some of the stakeholder interviewees. This perception of youth is heavily contradicted both by trainers and institutional stakeholders as well as by the youngsters themselves. Some of the stakeholders took up this often cited image of the "violent, robbing youngster not able to express himself verbally" and clearly stated: "I am never afraid. It's fantastic to see all these different people and this crowd of young persons." (JAW_SH1) Another social worker insisted on a differentiated imagination of young men, "It needs social workers who have an access to the kids, who are not afraid of the youngsters, – that's very important – who have open eyes and ears for them. You must be aware how they change their roles between the basket ball cage and being a tenderly carer for their younger siblings." (Ex1) The perspective of the youngsters on themselves became obvious in the group discussions: it oscillated between the fear to become like this image or the danger of being seduced when not actively opposing it, the resistance against a generalisation of the male youngsters' trajectory and coquetting with this mighty image which is attributed to them.

Having in mind these three levels of intervention at *Youth at Work* the next sections will particularly focus on youngsters' opportunities for capability formation and for being able and "free" to choose and aspire the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to

value. On the one hand we will discuss the notions of the capabilities for work, for education and for voice within our JAW case study. On the other hand we will assess the enhancement of capabilities (for work, education and voice) by taking into account the empowerment dimension (availability and convertibility of resources) and the (process and opportunity) freedom to choose dimension found in our case study. The empowerment dimension includes the necessity that commodities (cash or in-kind resources) must be converted into real freedom or capability to do something. Here, a whole configuration of resources and individual and social factors of conversion must be taken into account AND intervention must take place on the whole configuration to allow the effective enhancement of the individual's capability set. (Bonvin 2012) For the empowerment question an adequate redistribution of resources must go hand in hand with an intervention tackling individual abilities to use resources and the social context at large in order to improve people's capacity to act.

4. Education at JAW

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 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 and the capability to participate actively in the definition of the educational content, organisation, conditions, and modes of remuneration (voice option). (Bonvin 2012) Second, education is also identified as a conversion factor having the scope for empowering young people to enhance their capabilities.

The two notions of "education" for the capability approach – being a capability and a conversion factor shall be pervaded by their reflexive and emancipatory nature: 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)

4.1 Capability for Education

How – in the Austrian case study – is the real freedom to choose the education or educational pathway one has reason to value enhanced? What resources are available and convertible for realising the capability for education? What (conversion) factors promote this capability, what factors impede capability formation for education? We differentiate between two phases of standing at the crossroad for choosing the educational pathway one has reason to value: The first "orientation" period is a phase of principal searching, processing information and finding an adequate setting for education. The second phase

involves the decision *for* the SCAT reflecting about its advantages and disadvantages from a youngster's point of view.

"Orientation period": informational basis, the role of the role of the PES, family and peers and the capability for aspiration

The transition phase from one educational system to another or into the employment system is also labelled as youngsters' "orientation period". The PES is one of the major institutional stakeholders being in charge for supporting young people's transition phase into employment or employment-related training. The youngsters interviewed perceived the PES as a rather inscrutable and rigid institution generally supplying useful information, however hardly tailored according to individual demands and youngsters' aspirations. Instead, they are expected to adapt to the institution's culture and to take up its proposals.

The transition phase is also strongly connected with failing school and consequently learning experiences. A strong dissatisfaction with teachers and the particular school they attended was expressed. "The teachers simply were a pain in my neck." (JAW_Y1) But what pursued this clear rejection was often not a deliberately chosen pathway but a questioning and undetermined phase in life: "I was … well … what shall I say? I wanted to earn money by myself. I didn't want to go to school anymore. Actually I wanted to go to school but it just didn't work for me, it didn't fit for me." (JAW_Y2)

In the Austrian education system apprenticeships are traditionally seen as an educational alternative for people who are not good at school – accordingly, a more "practical" education seems to be a suitable solution. But not all youngsters want to do a practical education – they rather need support to be able to stay in school or need a reorientation "break"/period where they can reflect about themselves and their abilities - and maybe reformulate their wishes in order to choose the educational pathway they have reason to value.
So first, time constraints and the PES's pressure to find a more or less adequate training impede a "real freedom of choice" – though the PES also provides useful information on possible trajectories of education (and employment).

Second, some youngsters (have to) choose a profession which they actually did not want or plan to choose due to a lack of apprenticeship places in their initially intended profession. Here, the unsatisfactory support of PES having few time resources for extensive talks with youngsters and for preparing individually tailored counseling offers on the one hand and the limited range and numbers of desired apprenticeship professions on the other hand restrict the youngsters' opportunities. Many interviewees are ready to start any apprenticeship than to search for "too long" for an apprenticeship place in the intended profession.

Third, as the interviewed apprentices are still quite young (17-19 years old), opinions of friends and (older) family members influence their vocational orientation. The family context is a "safe" space where the youngsters' ideas, dreams etc. can be confidentially discussed. In many cases, parents or older siblings provide the young persons with relevant practical information about a profession (especially about their own profession). This is of course a very restricted scope for judgement – and even more problematic when parents want to influence their children's professional choice.

Another fourth factor for choosing one particular or any educational pathway and readily leaving behind the "transition period" is the desire to get accepted by others who are allegedly not searching "for their way" and who seem to be more settled. To stop "doing crap" or being bored and to start pursuing some decent and socially valued activities such as working, going to school, attending a training is an expression of *individual and collective disciplining*. The "others", other youngsters not yet matured to an ambitious young worker, are the „kids (financially) dependent of mum and dad", "lazy" and not facing the danger they are manoeuvring into yet: "If you don't have a good education then you are nothing. I have many friends who have not completed school. They sit at home and live on mum and dad. Then I saw: boy, you have to improve yourself if you want to reach something." (JAW_Y6) Other interviewees justified their decision to switch from the boredom of home to JAW with "here it is better than sitting at home"; "I wanted to do something, to sit around the whole day at home, that's not possible"; "before I sit at home and don't learn anything I come her and learn something". Plomb (2000: 61) speaks about the difficulty of searching youngsters to *justify taking or not taking a timeout* – „the emptiness, the lack of a comprehensible, visible and generally acknowledged activity is a heavy burden".

The phase of transition between the learning and everyday logic of the school system and a system of further education and/or work and employment not only marks – as mentioned before – a radical break up with an accustomed structure and 'old' mates. It is also a phase deeply pervaded by *fear of exclusion*: exclusion from what friends are doing; exclusion from institutional support and the public sphere – the fear to be stuck at home and the uneasy feeling of being bored arises. Boredom and its antinomy variety/change [Abwechslung] are two notions popping up very often in the youngsters' narratives. Daily routine is being perceived as annoying "for those who are still young": "Because when doing every day the same you ask yourself: what I am living for? We want to have fun, we are still young. If we come older then we don't do anything (about that): then we have a child on your hand and a wife at your side and have to go to work regularly." (JAW_Y15)

Boredom on the one hand paralyses: to be stuck at home, to be stuck in the training and not seeing alternatives of change makes you unwilling to conceptualise new ideas and to get active[50]: at home you are stuck when your friends did have found alternative places of being, learning or working[51]; at the workplace (apprenticeship training) you are stuck because due to the rigid curriculum and strict attendance time the apprentices cannot choose to be at another place or to do something alternative – even if you have finished your tasks of the day. Again, interviews with the youngsters indicate very small room for manoeuvre of socio-spatial appropriation.

On the other hand boredom ("Lange-weile haben" in German: to have long lasting time) can also initialise ideas and activities: What was before this "earnest" phase of time at the

[50] „If you don't work, then you get bored at home, then, I don't know, your ideas vanish, you don't know what to do." (JaW_Y17)

[51] "Also psychically, when I was at home for this month I was bored, I don't know. Standing up in the morning at any time and I don't do absolutely anything during the day. I was waiting because also my friends are working or going to school. The whole day waiting. This also has a social value for me this work, it's not only the money. To do something for you so that you have something to do. If you don't have work the others talk about their daily work and you can't say anything about it!"(JaW_Y16)

apprenticeship training is described with "I really had too many fantasies", "I did a lot of crap". These ideas popping up in the transition phase were often referred to as nonsense or even potential pathways into deviancy: be it the "fantastic" idea of becoming a policewoman: "But policewoman? Nothing will come of it because that's not possible. I think I would fail to become a policewoman, to pursue some gangsters or what. I can't do that. Then actually I wanted to become a confectioner, that was my dream. But now I am also content." (JAW_Y12); be it the spontaneous designing of the upcoming day: "Before this training I did a lot of crap. But since I am here it's not possible anymore. I was unemployed and always at home and had time for some crap together with friends who were unemployed. Let's do that - ok. But since I am here, not so often anymore. I don't want to lose that apprenticeship place." (JAW_Y16)

On the one hand to be lost and forgotten when not adapting to what is institutionally and socially expected by the youngsters, on the other hand cluelessness, discontent, unrest of what to choose are feelings pervading this period.

Choosing SCAT and staying there

That desires and hopes have not been yet settled is also revealed by the fact that 30% of those beginning supra-company apprenticeship training drop out, mostly because they did not get the apprenticeship place they initially preferred. What is more: Though many of those interviewed believe that they met the right decision to begin a SCAT training, there was *no "strategy" pursued* – the youngsters are not "masters" of their situation. Their decisions are "practical answers to lacking social structures which could limit insecurity". (Plomb 2001: 65)

According to social pedagogues, some apprentices need the first weeks of the apprenticeship to reorient; in some cases, where the apprenticeship does not correspond to his/her favorite choice, it may also take some time to decide if they want to continue the apprenticeship. In this early phase of the training, having a less strict apprenticeship schedule would be preferable.

The SCAT provides an institutional setting that shall prepare the youngsters for the world of work outside a protective framework. This is not a banal exercise. First, youngsters experience a radical break in their life courses: From school to an empty, meaningless space in-between ("orientation period"), and from a bulk of free time to a strict regime of rules in working/apprenticing lives. "The arrival of work in the lives of youngsters restructures their accustomed daytime, their familiar places of gathering, the doings and distractibility they are used to completely. Work implies a completely different order of things. It is the first step into a CV you are not yet prepared to pursue." (Plomb 2001: 61) The youngsters have to re-invent themselves in a new surrounding. They have to find a sense of living/doing which is not yet revealed to them. (Plomb 2001: 66)

In addition, the easygoingness of school time (which in many times was not as easygoing as perceived in the aftermath) from the apprentices' point of view is idealised as a completely differently organised lifetime of fun and flippancy in stark contrast to the hard working apprenticeship of today. The kid's time is behind them. This is also denoted by the aspiration

to be financially independent from the parents, to "earn your own money". To earn money marks the beginning of a new phase in life – to become a grown-up.

What speaks against "choosing SCAT" is the - still widespread - opinion that JAW only or mainly offers education and training for disabled persons. The youngsters do not want to be perceived as "handicapped" and clearly delimitate themselves from those who – from their point of view – are finally and completely excluded and will never be able to become "unmarked". The youngsters both reject and reinforce the image of JAW as a place where the "rest" is retained. Rejection for example includes emphasizing their productivity and the desire to "prove" to all the others outside that they are not "retarded", that they are "normal persons". At the same time, the youngsters do have different speeds of learning and working– willingly or unwillingly. Some of the apprentices are very keen to adapt to labour processes "outside" and to learn becoming faster and getting to know the stress waiting outside.

During the apprenticeship, many youngsters make positive experiences about their capacity to learn and then start to realize that they are "able to learn" – what is an important process when we think about the (often negative) learning experiences of their schooldays. As a consequence of the apprenticeship training where the young people's awareness on their own capacities was raised some feel more self-confident than at the beginning of the training. Some even decide to continue higher education (e.g. during evening classes or after having completed the SCAT).

One of the main issues the apprentices were moaning was the much smaller amount of money they received compared to apprentices in companies. Some emphasised that the money question was not crucial for them from a financial perspective, however this very huge gap marks the apprentices as being less appreciated than the others who had the power/luck/brains/… to begin a company-based apprenticeship. At the same time most of the interviewees have a very high opinion of the quality of the training they go through in terms of equipment, didactics and support. „Actually we get everything we want." (JAW_Y14) JAW is perceived as a place of structure, of stabilisation, of integration – however a temporary place: what happens afterwards? Some apprentices formulated the fear of failing in an unsupportive surrounding.

4.2 Education as a conversion factor: how to voice the how and what

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? How is the capacity to have the "real freedom to choose" tackled? This includes also the question of "how and what is voiced", where does participation in collective decision making take place? How are the youngsters as beneficiaries of this measure involved in designing and arranging the SCAT? Following Bonvin (2012) there must be three alternatives available when speaking about process freedom of choice: "the individual should be able to choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or to voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or to exit and to escape these collective norms at affordable costs".

Learning support

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 within the supra-company apprenticeship. Learning-friendly apprenticeship conditions imply a respectful, mutually benevolent and friendly relationship between trainers and apprentices where the young people feel free to make mistakes and to ask questions, in other words to learn without being criticized for mistakes. A good learning and working atmosphere, finding friends among apprenticeship colleagues, 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".

For the apprentices, it is motivating if trainers respect them *as capable persons* (*not* in terms of their learning progress), conversely a disrespectful treating does not enhance learning processes. 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 finally of trust. Conversely, to be constrained to speak German not only in lessons but also during breaks is a form of non-usage of available resources and impedes the positive acknowledgement of the institution and consequently the willingness to learn in such a surrounding.

Apart from their social skills and competences, trainers are also appreciated for their professional expertise. Trainers with high professional competences serve as (professional) role models for the young people. They are respected for showing interest and passion for their profession. But also experienced family members or friends who already work in the profession the young person is being trained for serve as role models or "mentors" providing further insights into daily routines of work processes.

Constructive Learning – how to learn

The motivation for learning and working was positively influenced by their chance of doing something productive, useful and tangible.. This involves several features. First, it is defined as "*being productive/constructive*" in terms of *useful*: to produce something of value (for others) and for practical application. To organise and accompany a whole process of production is seen as a very challenging 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 dumping ground. After we "had" them MA48 picks them up with a claw [Kralle], dump them into a container and makes small tin cubes out of them." (JAW_Y1)

Second, prolific doing implies the deployment of *sensuality*, of your senses: The product in the end not only must be "of use" but it also must be palpable ("Be-greif-bar"). The motivation to learn, do and work stems from the production of an enlivened and vital product which changes its features, taste, smell, and shape during the process of production.

Many of the future cooks described processes of production 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.

Third, to learn 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 bread and almost all we produce ourselves. We even prepare noodles by ourselves. We don't just open the bags and put them into the pot. (...) And imagine in a restaurant there are no more noodles. There are no noodles and you can't buy them just like that. Then I have the chance to produce them myself." (JAW_Y12) This capability is closely connected to the conception of "apprenticing a trade"/of learning a handicraft: "It's good if I see that I can do something for people. A life without plumber is impossible. Can you live without heating, without warm water, without stove? No!" (JAW_Y7) Seeing that one can perform a task properly is experienced as very positive and encourages the learning process: "When I fixed something and it works again, I feel proud about myself and I tell myself 'well done'." The apprentices can show that they are able to contribute something to society that has value for themselves and for others. These skills also enable them to help friends and family and to be asked for help – what creates a very "direct" capability. Several youngsters report that they do not only share their daily experiences at the apprenticeship place with their friends but also exchange their personal experiences how to repair a car etc. Providing others with know-how and suitable advices empowers the young person and can have a positive effect on his/her self-esteem. As the young people realize they can bring in their own capacities into their future profession – such as their creativity or strength – their interest for 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, when doing something with all your senses, something that makes sense means you are highly motivated not only to learn ("automatically"?) but also to take over responsibility for the production process and to become more autonomous from the trainer: "I *love* it when we are two or three persons in the kitchen – without the boss [trainer] because … I say to him. 'You are always putting pressure on us, run behind us, or stand besides us and say: faster, faster, faster!" To learn and work under such a pressure … ok, I know that's part of the job. But if we are just three of us and make our own thing … It's stressful between 11 and half past eleven, but that's the wicked thing about it! "(JAW_Y15) The young people enjoy being responsible for a certain task they have to perform within a certain time. They 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. What is more, heterogeneous activities make learning more joyful and motivate the youngsters; even more when uncommon/expensive material is used. The cooks, for instance, produce very high-quality food such as deer or sometimes even lobster.

Through these experiences, the young people see that their acquired knowledge is valuable and useful and that what they do and learn at the apprenticeship centre has a concrete application and outcome. They experience that learning about something enables you to "do things" and to develop sensitivity and appreciation for your own profession. Accordingly work without (visible) outcomes, which will not be used by others, is perceived as useless and de-motivating as this quotation of an apprentices shows: "Our work here, we are not

productive, if we do something on a construction site, then we know that somebody will use it and that it will be helpful but here, we construct something and then we deconstruct it... Here I have to disassemble it again, this is pointless." (JAW_Y7)

Becoming a worker: Scopes of choice and freedom within SCAT

In the course of the training *work is more and more integrated into the youngsters' habits, order and fantasies.* Your daily routine – and dreams are structured newly and "realistically" around working time. (Plomb 2001: 62) The process of adaptation to working life is naturalised – and internalised. The inner resistance against unaccustomed habits of structuring your daily life along the work process is absorbed by interpreting this habit as "normal". „What I don't like is that you have to work for such a long time and that you have to get up that early. But that is the 'job'. You cannot change anything about it." (JAW_Y7) **"Work does not find its place in daily life on its own**" (Plomb 2001: 56) but it is a process requiring a number of adaptations.

Becoming "normal" and adhere 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 one of the key terms of concrete welcome behaviour. This process of becoming used to be in time and the reflection of its importance is very well pointed out in the following statement: "Punctuality is really important. Myself, I am not punctual." (JAW_Y17)

The youngsters become aware that when going through such a measure you receive something very valued by society: an exam which recognises you as a professional. The motivation to learn is going to be not coerced by trainers or by parents but shifted to an internalised power. The ambition to "make something out of your life" is connected with the youngsters' own responsibility for succeeding or not succeeding. An apprentice claimed that he "didn't have any idea about life" before coming to this institution, that he has changed "by 100%", that he is even worth to be trusted the whole responsibility for the supervision of an entire production process. The pride about his capability to take over responsibility in a working arrangement is intertwined in his narrative with the worthiness of his doing – and being.

Others emphasised their *growing self-awareness* and self-esteem by indicating that they became "a bit louder than before"[52] or that they "can speak more openly with others."[53] Conversely, others had to adapt their behaviour into the other direction, namely to become "more polite" and "to know manners" – for instance "using a napkin when dining or having lunch". (JAW_Y16)

What tactics of behaviour *resisting* this smooth transformation to a functioning worker are used on the other hand? Work avoiding tactics can include becoming physically or mentally invisible (to stay on the toilet until the trainer comes and looks after you or to "fake

[52] "I was very silent before. I have more courage." (JaW_Y17)

[53] "I was a very incommunicative person. I was quite shy... And due to this profession I got much more self-esteem. I can speak more openly with others." (JaW_Y15)

working"- to act as if working). These work avoiding strategies also are known and mirrored (from) "outside", such as hiding on the construction site.

5. The capability for work

Following Bonvin (2012) the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activity one has reason to value. He is referring to work as labour, as paid work and asks what is perceived as a valuable activity or job. Antagonist forces between labour and capital as well as power asymmetries feeding this antagonism are just "tackled" when promoting a "job one has reason to value" but never removed. We would like to contrast this notion of "capability for work" with the "capability for living a life one has reason to value". "Work" itself is coercion in capitalist societies and requirements imposed by the labour market for being integrated and being able to participate in it are more often a threat rather than a challenge.
In the previous chapter sketching "prolific work and learning processes" we wanted to show what doings and activities the young apprentices perceived as making sense and being productive. Motivation lies in the construction of things that "stay", that stay useful and "important", that are kept and that you can look at as a product of your doing.

In contrast, "unproductive doing" de-motivates the youngsters to work "because what I construct is de-installed again. It's useless what I am doing. I don't produce anything. I just learn from this practice. But it's useless, you cannot call that doing "work", you can just call it "learning". What I build I deconstruct again. It's 'production-free', that's simply de-motivating, the whole motivation is gone." (JAW_Y2)

In this chapter, the voice character of work – how work shall ideally be organised and its social function from the youngsters' point of view will be outlined.

Options for choosing work, doing and labour processes one has reason to value

When youngsters are thinking "abstractly" about work and a future job two observations have been made. 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. This can also be linked to how they experienced the period when they did not either go to school nor worked –most of them experienced this period as terribly annoying. Therefore, work has a very basic function in terms of personal well-being. 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." Second, the internalization of capitalist work ethics also plays a role and is expressed directly, for example: "Everybody that could work should work." 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).

When youngsters speak about their concrete doings at JAW, the appreciation of sensuous and sensible doing and the wish for a "just division of labour" became apparent. Concretely, the youngsters are pooled in working groups, practice co-working and exchange their roles

in the labour process permanently. 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. Not the person who is "best in" should specialise on a particular task but everybody should get the chance to learn everything and – at the same time – everybody should be allotted to unpleasant though necessary tasks.

What is more, "abstract labour" without immediate sense and usage for the young people as well as industrialised production, where the production process itself could not be observed and tracked, were perceived as "alienated labour". The youngsters also had a clear picture on what "exploitation" of their labour means: they mentioned extensive working time, physical and psychical stress ("a better wage does not compensate for lost lifetime"), doing only annoying and/or repetitive work or working in unqualified jobs (such as cleaning woman). In contrast decent work includes a good working climate; nice colleagues; to have much to do – "so that I am challenged in my work" (JAW_Y13) and to "have fun when working" (JAW_Y1). Here again, sensuality – "to enjoy" work – is a crucial feature. Another condition is voicing your right as a worker and standing up for these rights begins when rights "you are used to" are jeopardised. (Chamber of Labour; Strike of the Metal Working Industry) In order to identify characteristics that support or encourage respectively discourage the young people to value work, they were asked how they would imagine their ideal work place. A benevolent and good working atmosphere – meaning more concretely a good relationship to colleagues and supervisors –seems to be a prerequisite for a work place where learning and personal development are possible and enhanced. To be personally appreciated and treated with respects creates a background where the young people can develop their (cap)abilities (such a working environment also enables the young people to make suggestions, for example, what – as a consequence - enhances their empowerment). In respect to the tasks, they should be diversified and should be felt as meaningful.

A third aspect for shaping the capability to work, i.e. being integrated into the labour market, was their deployment in internships outside the institution. To do an internship at a company outside the supra-company apprenticeship program provides the youngsters with practical insights into their (future) profession. Sometimes they experience the diversified tasks of their profession "in real". The fact that SCAT apprentices do not produce goods or services for "real" clients has constrictive effect on the above described empowerment through skills and know-how. This might especially discourage participants who choose an apprenticeship because they wanted to work (instead of going to school). Experiences in internships might also motivate the young people to become part of the labour force as several of them get very positive feedback during the internships which increases their self-esteem. What is more, they make experiences they can share with others, especially with their friends – most of them are also apprentices in a company. Here the apprenticeship appears as a very strong factor of social inclusion. On the downside, sniffing the air of "real" working life also prospects 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 internship in a canteen they just had tin food. I didn't see how to do things. And here we hardly ever take food from the tin." (JAW_Y12)

Fantasies about *Post-JAW* or „realistic*" aims for the future* are dominated by modest expectations and reachable dreams, in other words, by adaptive preferences. The catering and cook group took the "ship" as an allegory for what could be achieved beyond grey everyday life and where you could possibly land. It was perceived as a realistic fantasy to see the world, to cross borders in a geographic and in a metaphoric sense. Realistic it was since their trainer really has worked on a ship as a cook before joining JAW as a trainer. Some of the youngsters formulated as dreams for their future to travel or to make their hobbies to profession (drawing) or to go on with studying. Most design their future as very realistic and traditional concentrated around labour and family: founding a company; having a flat on your own; founding/sustaining a family (boys); owning a car; acquiring additional qualification. A good income (from work) is especially raised in the context of family building and that the youngsters want to afford their child a decent life. One interviewee formulates employment as a necessary pre-condition for founding a family. MATERIAL resources ARE important. Only one apprentice had a kind of "vision" for his future doings: changing the world and reveal faults and abuse (of oil companies or atomic corporations).

The interviewed youngsters mentioned family as the main stabilising factor for settling moral standards in life, for material support and emotional stabilisation. In contrast future employment is perceived as something volatile, but as well an indicator for personal success or even the basis of surviving. This means first that earnings through employment to make ends meet and to be an accepted part of society are seen without any alternative. Second, the profession is a valued means "to be able to survive" on one's own – it is perceived as the foundation for a decent life even if it does not pay well. Finally, not to be included into society via skilled labour is equalised with strong metaphors of fatality ("then you are lost", "then it's over").

6. The capability for voice: Process Freedom and Opportunity Freedom for choice at JAW

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 the available entitlements, de-commodification/a reasonable fall-back position/endowment with rights (following Bonvin 2012: 16). Are these conditions fulfilled when turning to three different points of crossroads in our case study? What process freedom and what opportunity freedom do the youngsters encounter in the JAW setting?

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 over his/her "real" opportunities? How can he/she gain all information necessary to decide for one or the other pathway? How can he/she make the right decision loaded with the pretensions of maturity and responsibility?

Not surprisingly*, friends and peer group* do have an important impact on behavioural norms of the young people. Their judgements can influence the youngsters' immediate decisions (and their consequences) positively in terms of future- and social inclusion oriented ways or negatively in terms of fostering deviant behaviour. The peer group is the doorman at the entrance into the world outside – but is it a "collective body" of agency?

"I know my family wants the best for me but I also wanna have fun. My family can only have an eye on me when I am at home. But what I do outside, that's important. What I do at home that can't be that bad. If I screw up something outside and my friends don't say anything against what I've done then I am at some time really fucked up and in the bucket – and then?" (JAW_Y2) Young people spend most of their free time with their friends and peers. Friends are important for the youngsters to talk about daily life - working experiences, relationships etc. – and to enjoy their free time together or to follow their hobbies. Another important function of peers is to take care of each other (e.g. to prevent others from illegal activities). In other cases, apprentices report that they wrote most apprenticeship applications together with a friend.

Schnittenhelm (2010: 95) refers to *collective status passages* between education and employment young persons who have completed school are experiencing. This transition phase might collectively be pervaded; peer groups do have an incisive influence on decisions about future educational pathways. At the same time the youngsters experience a radical break up with familiar institutions and schedules as well as with the acquainted company of colleagues and teachers. Due to the diversity of educational and professional decisions of colleagues/friends they suddenly might 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 for "choosing" might be exhausted.

Instead of being coerced to choose the youngsters clearly formulated a *request for „structure"* of their daytime during the apprenticeship training and for being set "limits". Free choice "of doing what pleases" and the self-determined adaptation of free space are linked with fear of disorientation. In contrast, the limitation of searching processes in learning settings and the correction and supervision within these settings is connected with fostering learning capabilities.

"I don't have any idea" as a reference to confusion and disorientation came up as an answer to several interview topics (about personal strength; about visions for the future; about what can/should be improved or changed in the training; about where and how to voice and bring in ideas). It can be read as an expression for capability gaps not yet filled with meaning, orientation and sensuality. Sensuality was an important (conversion) factor for the enhancement of capabilities.

Second, all youngsters should be adequately equipped to escape from the constraint of valueless training either through the real possibility to refuse the training or through the possibility to transform it into something one has reason to value. However, the opportunity set is necessarily limited and constraining since not everybody has all options or has the possibility to convert all options into capabilities. What is more, the exit option –alternative pathways going beyond another training or a badly paid job – are perceived as very negative.

Fantasies about socio-spatial appropriation outside the institution or outside the labour market are – in several cases – full of fear to "get lost on the street", to become deviant, to fall from grace. Often no way back from a non-conform way of living is seen. 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 just botching 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 the toilet – that's all what is left for you to do." (JAW_Y2) At the same time, the "street" ("spazieren gehen" – "to walk around"), the park ("abhängen" – "to hang out"), the public transport system[54] are important spaces for being seen, for getting into contact with others, for social interaction with peer groups – and for appropriating capabilities.

Process Freedom: Daily schedule of the supra-company apprenticeship training

With the concept of capability for voice also the issue of process freedom is addressed: to which extent are (young) people allowed to express their wishes, expectations and concerns in collective decision making processes and make them count? (Bonvin 2012: 15)
The daily routine within the supra-company apprenticeship is determined by a fixed schedule consisting of theoretical and practical modules. This structure cannot be modified by the apprentices. Time management is very strict – in order to inure the youngsters to the required punctuality and discipline in the "real" working world – encompassing very early starting times at 7.15 a.m. and quite short lunch breaks. What the apprentices can influence is their concrete activities: they can suggest doing practical work instead of studying theoretical modules or vice-versa – of course only if the trainer agrees (whose task it is to ensure that each apprentice does sufficient theoretical and practical training according to his/her individual learning progress). Although several apprentices criticize these strict time requirements (what has to be studied when), they see few 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. 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 feel to have few choices. This may be explicable by the fact that they are (continuously) told – by their parents, the media, the PES counselors etc. - that they have to adapt their dreams to "what is possible" ("adaptive preferences") which leaves few ways open how to imagine and organize life, especially when it comes to learning and their (future) professional life in a competitive society.

What is more, the desire for the practicability of what is learned and for the immediate usefulness of what is produced also finds its expression in how and where the youngsters **are voicing their demands**. The right to smoking breaks, having a beverage vending machine, having different food in the vending machine are demands which from the trainers' point of view seem to be "banal". Youth representatives, directly elected representatives of apprentices, often do not know how to "cloth" this post and it was moaned several times

[54] Socio-spatial appropriation in form of riding through town the whole night by metro and getting into contact with people: "That's the way to get to know people." (JaW_Y12)

that the youngsters do not (yet) know what it means to "take over responsibility". Obviously, such immediate demands are not taken seriously, though these are topics the youngsters affect personally, directly and immediately and have a chance to be successfully implemented. Other – more "profound" – requirements such as more space, more breaks, more excursions, better equipment are hopelessly unrealistic in their realisation. The fact that many interviewed apprentices perceive participation as impossible or only "apparently possible" within the SCAT could be interpreted as a consequence of missing participation possibilities as citizens in society in general. The better possibilities of claiming rights in your immediate surrounding than in the world "outside" are recognised where the feeling of fainting against a big power to have an individual or collective opinion said and heard dominates. Here, so claim the young voices "the boss is also responsible how the workers feel."

7. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

In the following, resources and conversion factors as well as successful practices are summed up for each capability. Furthermore, suggestions for changes within the supra-company apprenticeship training are made.

In terms of the **capability for education** and learning, different resources could be identified which play an important role during the supra-company apprenticeship training. First, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually graspable outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. Furthermore, the apprentices value high-quality material provided by the training institution. Apart from the quality of the material, the experience of working with and of shaping the material is an important learning process for the young people.

Second, t**rainers**, both as teaching persons and as persons, appreciating or depreciating youngsters' abilities and resources are crucial factors for enhancing or impeding the apprentices' capabilities. They are seen as positive role models, as professional craftsman, as those with whom youngsters have to struggle and to argue about their own learning process (and skills) and their acknowledgement. Conversely, they might also be perceived as negative social figures deepening the distance between the established institution and the aspiring youngster.

As a third aspect, the very strict **daily structure** has an impact on the **learning processes** at the training centres. In general terms, structure is appreciated by many apprentices as they provide a framework for doings. More time should be dedicated to recreation in terms of individual breaks and "creative" individually organised non-dedicated time. Trainers and social pedagogues moaned the missing time and space for group building processes and individual orientation/clearing at the beginning of but also in the course of the apprenticeship.

These structural constraints of the SCAT turn out to be ambivalent for the development of the **capability for "self-organisation", for "agency and autonomy"** (Walker 2005:108) which serves like a prerequisite for the capabilities for learning and work. This is referred to as the competence to organise learning processes by oneself when it deems necessary during a

course of action. This is not to emphasize certain personal qualities opening up agency and augmenting spaces of agency but also to consider conditions crucial for the youngsters' (inevitable) solution finding processes. On the one hand the youngsters are trusted from the very beginning of the training with creative and responsible tasks, however supervised. On the other hand, due to the tight institutional and pedagogic space 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 about what work actually is. Possible answers differ completely and are diametrically opposite: Does "being capable for working" mainly mean to prepare a young person for the labour market or does it imply teaching him/her to be proud of what he/she is DOING - of what the person is able to create? In case of the first, 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". JAW "prepares" the youngsters in terms of punctuality, works ethic etc. for their labour market integration. At the same time the training very much endorses the quality of work and of production processes. Unfortunately, these aspirations often cannot be realised in the future apprentices' labour trajectories.

"**Capability for voice**" encompasses opportunity freedom and process freedom. The youngsters feel that they have little choice in their lives in general – in terms of raising their voice as citizens but as well concerning more concrete issues such as choosing deliberately a particular educational pathway. Youngsters should get the chance and (right) time to find and choose an educational pathway they have reason to value. This is admittedly hard to achieve facing the external pressure from society, labour market institutions, peer group and family to succeed in choosing the appropriate pathway.

The SCAT itself – in terms of process freedom – offers little scope for voice and choice. It is a thoroughly structured system offering little room for manoeuvre to develop *self-determined* and *freely chosen* capabilities. The aim – as of every institution preparing for labour market participation – is to form young people for their functioning as labourer. This is done by enhancing so called "secondary" virtues such as punctuality and discipline but also by psycho-social and learning support to sustain the process of maturation of a searching young person to a co-worker in a company. This approach is also seen critically within the institution and more time and financial resources would be appreciated to go beyond this tight training structure. At the same time SCAT is a space for "practical capability formation": it was impressing to see how emphatically the young apprentices emphasised the "productive, meaningful and creative doing" within the SCAT – be it the preparation of a meal or the completion of a certain production stage. This positive aspect can be spoilt by two constraints: first, by choosing the "wrong" apprenticeship profession during the orientation process; second, work pieces produced shall be used. To only exercise production processes and even to de-install them is perceived as very demotivating and frustrating by the youngsters.

In policy terms, the SCAT is an important offer for young people during the transition from school to work. It would be necessary to establish the SCAT as third pillar besides the dual system of (company-based) apprenticeships and the school system in order to reveal to the youngsters that they can choose between equivalent alternatives. Besides, this would allow the training institutions to plan in the long run and to develop an educational profile of their institution better responding to the youngsters' needs of learning. In concrete terms, the

following **adaptations** could be made in the SCAT for enhancing young peoples' capability for education, work and voice: integrating an orientation period into SCAT, preferably at the beginning of the training; smaller groups or more equipment available. It would also be better if SCAT was not financed by PES means but by (e.g.) the ministry of education's budget to signal that apprentices are in an educational process and not in a labour relation. Furthermore, the apprenticeship compensation should be augmented or scholarships for those in need should be provided.

Furthermore, the "transition period" must not be labelled as a "problem period". It is loaded with significance as the period when youngsters are supposed to grow up and make the first "serious" decisions in life. Youngsters perceive this period as very annoying and unsettling. Therefore more time and resources but perhaps less public attention would be needed to arrange this period.

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CHAPTER 8: FP7 EU RESEARCH PROJECT "MAKING CAPABILITIES WORK" – WORKABLE. WP4 - DELIVERABLE 4.1. SWISS CASE STUDY

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Introduction

In the early 2000s, Swiss social workers and institutions dealing with social and occupational (re)integration faced a rapid and important increase of a new type of public - marginalised young adults and young adults at risk of marginalisation – and decided to investigate this phenomenon. In the canton of Vaud, the so-called "JAD collective[55]" created the nickname "JAD" to label this category (JAD stands for "jeunes adultes en difficulté" which means struggling young adults in French) and conducted a pioneering study published in 2001 (Regamey et al, 2001). However, no programmes targeting JADs were launched in the Canton of Vaud until 2006.

Between these two dates, JADs became a main political target group and the framing of this issue followed a bottom-up logic. Indeed, political and administrative cantonal representatives designed the definition of this specific group (along both their age and their position with regard to the labour market) and its labelling, but also the proposed solution (enhancing employability through vocational training) was formulated by the "JAD collective" in their study. The fact that all actors, both at field level and at decision-making level, shared the same normative views, i.e. vocational training as the unique legitimate route towards autonomy and the basis for personal life plan, was key in this respect.

From 2006 onwards, a stronger emphasis was put on social and occupational reintegration measures with the introduction of the so-called RI ("revenu d'insertion"). However, the budget available for these measures was too small to guarantee that every beneficiary could access such programmes (Piotet, 2004). Hence, the cantonal department in charge of Social Affairs (DSAS) decided to identify young adults between 18 and 25 as the priority target group. Among the nearly 1,800 RI beneficiaries aged between 18 and 25 in 2006 when the FORJAD programme was launched, more than 70% had not completed vocational training or earned a professional certificate (Von Muralt and Spagnolo, 2007)[56]. Thus, decision was made to bring as many welfare recipients of this age category as possible back into vocational training and apprenticeship. However, according to the cantonal law on social assistance, the status of student or apprentice was incompatible with the payment of welfare benefits. This meant that young adults on social assistance who entered training

[55] The different members of the JAD-collective were the following: the ASEMO-Relais (socio-educational action in an open environment), Jet Service (youth and labour service) within the protestant social centre of Vaud, the cantonal social centre (canton of Vaud), the Saint-Martin Centre (drug dependence unit, canton of Vaud), and the head of the social security and environment offices of the city of Lausanne.

[56] National studies also identify the lack of training as one of the major factors accounting for poverty among young people (e.g. Drilling 2004).

were losing welfare benefits. As a result, many of them did not have sufficient resources and had no choice but to return to social assistance.

Therefore, the DSAS, together with the departments of Education and Economy decided to set up a new programme in order to promote vocational training[57] among the JADs. This programme was labelled FORJAD, which stands for the French "formation pour les jeunes adultes en difficulté" (training for struggling young adults), and started during the summer 2006. In order to eliminate possible disincentive effects resulting from benefit loss or substantial reduction due to starting vocational training, all involved departments designed a directive to coordinate the welfare and the scholarship systems, and allow young apprentices to keep the benefits paid by the RI. Until 2009, the FORJAD programme was mainly funded by the RI (covering both the training costs and the basic needs although most of its beneficiaries were apprentices[58]). However, this situation was a legal exception under the Law on social assistance for which the status of student or apprentice is incompatible with the payment of welfare benefits. That is why the funding of the FORJAD programme was transferred to the cantonal office of scholarship grants in September 2009. Since then, the RI (based on a real costs logic, monthly reassessed) still funds the preparatory stage of the FORJAD programme (the so-called MIS for "mesure d'insertion sociale" dedicated to JADs). The MIS are aimed at assessing and validating their professional project, but also at testing their motivation and job readiness. As soon as they are accepted into apprenticeship, they become FORJADs and are then supported by the scholarship grants (based on a "package" logic established once a year).

The FORJAD programme aims at getting marginalised youth out of welfare programmes and giving them more chances to lead an autonomous life (better chances to lead the kind of life they value in the terms of the Capability Approach, henceforward CA) by offering them the possibility to achieve a vocational training, as it is considered to be the best protection against unemployment and therefore the best way to return to paid employment. In consequence, the objective of the programme is to reintroduce these young into the vocational and education system (VET) they exited prematurely. However, it does not aim at adapting and changing the VET system or other social parameters, e.g. by taking into account the reasons (both individual and collective) accounting for the JADs' educational failure.

Thereby, the issue of marginalised youth is identified mainly as a problem of individual training or educational deficit, and not a structural problem linked with the functioning of the labour market as such, and the selected informational basis of the FORJAD programme is tightly related to this dimension. This choice to use vocational training as the mean to (re-)integrate marginalised youth received the political support of both the right wing and the left wing. The FORJAD programme also aimed at responding to the growing financial weight of the social assistance programmes dedicated to marginalised youth, as well as to the risk of long-term poverty, persisting over generations, and the constitution of so-called "assisted families". From 100 beneficiaries in 2006, the year of its launch, the FORJAD programme

[57] 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.
[58] JADs are also allowed to keep up to 126 Euros per month out of their apprentice wages.

included more than 600 young adults in 2010 (out of 3,000 RI recipients between 18 and 25). And the cantonal objective is to raise this level up to 1,000 JADs in the next few years.

More precisely, the FORJAD programme combines a) an attention to particular individual needs resulting in an individual follow-up by a "coach", based on a multidimensional intervention in four main fields and b) a clear activation logic coupling behavioural requirements and benefits (Maeder and Nadai, 2009) and based on a contractualised social policy support. As such, the FORJAD programme, despite its originality in the Swiss context, is in line with the transformation of the Fordist Welfare-State observed in most Western societies and aimed at responding to a new mode of production (Sennett, 2000) that requires more flexibility from all economic actors (Duvoux, 2007). Despite some national diversity, this evolution is unanimously analysed as a radical shift from a "caring" or "providing state" (de Swaan, 1988) to an "activating" or "enabling state" (Gilbert, 2002). Whereas the former aimed at providing a safety net for social risks like the loss of income and was based on a redistributive logic sought to reduce social inequalities, the latter insists on activating the beneficiaries and pushing them to the labour market as quickly as possible.

Like in many other national contexts, one of the main instruments of active labour market policies (henceforward ALMPs) is contractualisation. Many authors have stressed its contradictory effects that result in transferring the responsibility of failure from society to the individual itself (e.g. Duvoux, 2007; Saraceno, 2007). Moreover, Lafore (1989) has emphasised that social integration contracts are not proper contracts in the juridical sense since: 1) there is no encounter of two free wills, the social integration contract precisely aiming at producing or framing the beneficiary's will, 2) beneficiaries' engagements are not compelling, they are rather declarations of intentions subject to change through time and 3) there are no sanctions for institutional actors in case they do not fulfil their part of the contract via offering social integration opportunities. All these elements confirm the paradoxical side of contractualisation in ALMPs: whereas reciprocity is at the very core of this device, social integration contracts tend to exacerbate the beneficiaries' individual responsibility. These ambiguities result in important tensions: between empowerment on the one hand and obligations and constraints on the other one (Saraceno, 2007); two contradictory views of the recipient, as a responsible citizen and as a non capable individual upon which constraints are legitimate (Duvoux, 2007); public service users entitled to rights and "beneficiary-partners" (Lafore, 1989: 581).

As contractualisation is ambiguous, it is necessary to analyse the effects it produces in a dialectic manner. Only this way can we show whether and how contractualisation, beyond constraints for individuals and more severe controls from institutional actors that illustrate the asymmetry of the relation between them, can nevertheless produce symbolic resources allowing the individual to organise and plan its own life, and to ask for recognition as an individual capable of self-determination and self-planning.

The FORJAD programme is a very good illustration of the tensions underlying individualisation and contractualisation within ALMPs. To put it another way round, in this study, we will strive to analyse what kind of individualisation is promoted and implemented on the institutional side, but also experienced and reframed on the one of the beneficiaries. As Pohl and Walther argue (2007), it is indeed crucial to distinguish between two types of individualisation: individualisation in terms of personalised measures starting from individual

needs, and individualisation referring to individuals' responsibility for compensating for their lack of competitiveness.

Research methods

This report is based on two types of sources: documentary and "grey literature" analysis on the one hand; semi-structured in-depth interviews on the other hand. In a first step (spring 2010), both exploratory and more in-depth interviews were conducted with cantonal officials (4), field social workers (3) and directors of social integration institutions in the Canton of Vaud (4). In a second step (summer 2011), 32 semi-structured interviews were conducted with young adults (the so-called "JADs") among which 18 were at the preparatory stage of the FORJAD programme (engaged in social-integration measures; these interviews will be labelled as 'M' in the present report) and 14 were engaged in the FORJAD programme itself (i.e. they were already in apprenticeship; interviews designated with the letter 'F' in what follows). Two different interview grids were designed according to the situation of the JAD (either engaged in a MIS or already in apprenticeship), although largely overlapping. They aimed at assessing to what extent JADs managed to voice their concerns and to make them count during the implementation of the programme (i.e. were they able to choose their vocational training? to change the rules of participation to the programme? etc.), and perceived it (both the MIS and the FORJAD programme itself) as a capability experience (or not). The objective was threefold: 1) to reconstruct the beneficiaries' life paths and trajectories (particularly in relation to past schooling and work experiences and to being a social assistance recipient); 2) to identify, from their own perspective, the degree of information, knowledge, voice and liberty to choose they experienced at different stages of their lives (and particularly at what appears to be turning points, defined as such by the JADs themselves or *ex-post* by the investigator) and 3) the means through which they had (difficulty to) access to relevant resources. Four main dimensions (related to financial, schooling, personal and professional aspects) of JADs' lives were investigated in depth and different strategies to cope with their existence and to project themselves into the future have been highlighted.

The capability approach

The CA is used to analyse the extent of the individuals' "real freedom to lead the life they have reason to value", according to Sen's recurrent formula (e.g. Sen, 1999). Hence, it calls for assessing public policies against their contribution to the development of capabilities for all beneficiaries (and not only for the happy few). In order to implement this approach in the specific field of social integration policies, three issues need to be tackled (Bonvin, 2008):

1. What objectives and targets are pursued when it comes to integrating marginalised youth: putting them back to work, enhancing their employability, developing their capability for work (i.e. the real freedom to choose the job they have reason to value), or their capability for work and life (i.e. the real freedom to choose the life they value, esp. with regard to the balance between work and other dimensions of life), etc.? The main issue here is to grasp the specific meaning given to the notion of "activation" in the case of marginalised youth. More precisely, what activation efforts are expected from young marginalised people? If activation is viewed in strict connection with having a job on the primary labour market,

then the intervention will focus only on the dimensions related with occupational integration, and consequently all other aspects e.g. housing, health, family problems, etc., will be discarded. If activation is envisioned as something that concerns all relevant dimensions of the young people's life trajectory, then a much more encompassing intervention will be designed. This issue can also be related to Levy's distinction between a "thin" version of activation advocating the rolling back of state interventions, and a "thick" approach requiring much more from the State and the individual alike (Levy, 2004).

2. What information is considered as relevant in the pursuit of these objectives? More precisely, when individuals are assessed, what dimensions of their life courses are emphasised: qualification, professional experience, other dimensions such as family life, health, housing, or more subjective dimensions including their expectations or tastes? Policies aiming at integrating marginalised youth will differ to a considerable extent, depending on the informational basis selected. In the analytical grid of the CA, at least three distinctive sets of data or information should be taken into account when assessing the situation of beneficiaries:

a) *resources or commodities*, i.e. all goods and services (be they public or private) that are available to a person. These encompass not only one's income or properties, but also all transfer incomes or welfare cash benefits. The conditionalities imposed on such resources are of great significance, e.g. if cash benefits distributed by the welfare state are conditional upon the adoption of an appropriate behaviour, then the access to resources is made more precarious;
b) *individual conversion factors*, i.e. all individual characteristics that allow (or prevent) the conversion of available resources into capabilities or real freedoms to lead the life one has reason to value. The impact of those features (e.g. age, gender, competencies, experience, etc.) depends on the way they are valued, i.e. it cannot be grasped irrespective of the dominant values and norms in a specific social environment;
c) *social conversion factors*, i.e. all dimensions of the environment that impact, positively or negatively, on the conversion of resources into capabilities. These include in particular the following aspects:

- What social stratification prevails (and along what lines: class, gender, nationality, competencies, etc.)? In other words, what categories are valued or disparaged?
- What social norms or values are dominant in the society (or the group) concerned? What is the image of marginalised youth in society, and particularly among employers?
- What opportunities are available (in terms of occupational and social integration)? In particular, are they equally available for all target groups?

To assess a situation against the CA, one should take into account the whole informational configuration listed above: not only the resources and the individual features, but also all dimensions connected to the social context, and especially to the way resources and individual characteristics are valued and to the opportunities available to convert them into capabilities or real freedoms. In terms of public policy analysis, it is therefore crucial to see whether, and to what extent, policies include information about all these dimensions or if they exclude some of them. In the latter case, that would imply that they rely on a reductionist notion of integration or activation (e.g. putting people back to work as quickly

as possible is always the best solution, whatever the resources, individual or social conversion factors at hand).

3. How are the normative references and informational bases of the public policies defined and implemented? Who participates in these tasks: experts, civil servants, local agents in charge of implementing those policies, end users, etc.? In Sen's perspective, the inclusion of as many stakeholders as possible is key to the development of capability-friendly policies. This is tightly connected with what we suggest to label "capability for voice", i.e. in this case marginalised youth's ability to express their wishes and expectations and make them count in the field of social integration policies. Indeed, if activation is defined by employers or experts or public administration officers alone, then the voices of all those activated are discarded, and this would result in biased normative references and informational bases. To avoid this, "capability for voice" is envisaged as the necessary complement of the configuration of factors identified above (resources and conversion factors), since it guarantees everyone the real possibility to be actively associated in the selection of the informational basis and the design and implementation of social integration policies.

Let us now apply the CA framework to the FORJAD programme. Assessing this programme against the analytical grid of the CA allows comprehending whether it results in enhancing or constraining the beneficiaries' freedom to choose and lead the life they value. It thus allows tackling crucial issues such as self-fulfilment or real freedom to choose one's training or job. In what follows, we successively examine these issues with regard to the financial, schooling, personal and professional dimensions as they are tackled in the FORJAD programme.

1. The financial aspects

The FORJAD programme is based on a step-by-step logic leading to the completion of a vocational certificate. Launched in 2006, this innovative programme was initially funded by the "revenu d'insertion" (so-called RI), i.e. the social assistance income, which covered both the basic needs of everyday life and the training costs. Under the RI funding system, recipients aged 18 to 25 who entered in the FORJAD programme benefited from a real costs logic, monthly reassessed in order to take into account contingencies and unexpected expenditure like health costs, transport, childcare, etc. In practice, beneficiaries received around 1500 euros each month comprising their apprentice income (very little but increasing every year of training) that was complemented by the RI (corresponding to the "subsistence minimum" that could not be cut by more than 25% in case of possible sanctions). Besides, housing costs, compulsory health insurance, transport and childcare costs were entirely paid by the RI on the basis of effective costs. However, this situation was a legal exception as the Law on social assistance always considered the status of student or apprentice as incompatible with the payment of welfare benefits. This is the reason why the funding of the FORJAD programme was transferred to the cantonal office of scholarship grants in September 2009. Since then, the RI still funds the preparatory stages of the programme dedicated to JADs (the social and occupational reintegration measures), while, for those who are accepted into apprenticeship, they become FORJADs and are then supported by the scholarship grants.

This evolution resulted both in higher amounts of scholarship grants for all applicants (as the scholarships standards have been aligned with those of social assistance benefits) and in the reinforcement of the selective logic in the scholarships system. Moreover, it introduced a "package" logic based on an accurate assessment of the youngster's personal situation. As many factors (such as the parents' income and assets, training expenditure, transport, lunches, childcare, etc.) are taken into consideration for calculating the scholarships, their final amount is totally individualised and therefore unpredictable. For example, this young mother of an 8-year-old daughter received exactly the same amount of money after September 2009 because, according to her:

"they have calculated (her daughter)'s custody, (her) trips, (her) food at work, everything was taken care of. Even the school books" (F9)

This evolution illustrates the importance of individualisation in the FORJAD programme that privileges a tailor-made logic of support.

The changing funding bases of the programme explain why some FORJADs received less and others a bit more after September 2009. Furthermore, the individualisation of the scholarships is based on a scrutiny of each demand that may take some time during which potential beneficiaries may be without any kind of resources. This is what happened to this FORJAD who experienced during his apprenticeship the changing funding system of the programme:

"I'm really irritated because I had to wait six months before they paid me. It was so long for them to make their calculations. Because of this, because of that. (…) I had all the documents. But I don't know what they were doing, they didn't care. I had my training subscription, my rent, my bills… all that didn't work out. I was better off as a welfare beneficiary. They were paying me my money, they paid my rent, it wasn't even me, it was really easy." (F11)

Like this beneficiary, another one regrets not being fully funded any more by the welfare services. He especially points out the impossibility to be reimbursed for healthcare costs.

"The rent, the insurances, that's the problem. With the RI, we didn't need to pay insurances, the bills, we didn't really have to think about it. The cost of a dentist, I could bring it to them. Now, I've never been to a dentist. Since it's the scholarships' office in charge, I began to have holes everywhere. (…) Had I still been in the RI, I would have made a request. But now I can't do it anymore." (F5)

With the new system, many FORJADs regret the complexity of the procedure and the quantity of "papers" required. Among these, certificates concerning their parents' situation are needed as well as their signatures on the scholarships application form that has to be renewed every year. For many JADs who have no, or conflictual, relationships with their parents, these requirements can be a source of delay at best and of increased familial conflict at worst.

Here contractualisation goes along with the tightening of the control exerted by institutional actors and induces a more bureaucratic functioning. As this FORJAD puts it:

"What is worse now is that I need to make my parents fill out papers. That's horror. (…) I would have preferred not to have to ask my parents to sign a sheet of paper when I'm 24." (F11)

The new opportunities opened up by the FORJAD programme coincide with new duties for the beneficiaries and their families. As a matter of fact, their parents' financial situation is thoroughly examined, and those with sufficient means are asked to contribute to the costs of their children's vocational training.

Hence, one of the most important consequences of the transfer of the funding basis of the programme was the reinforcement of JAD's – legal and financial – dependence to their family. Because FORJADs have become full apprentices with this transformation of the funding basis of the programme, i.e. when they begin their apprenticeship they are no longer social recipients, their parents are submitted to the legal obligation to maintain them as long as they are engaged in training (this obligation weighs upon all Swiss parents). As this FORJAD apprentice recalls:

"you really had to prove to them that my mother could simply not afford it. (…) And they searched and searched, and I got my first grant after 8 months, all I remember is the number 8." (F5)

In return, this evolution reinforces and confirms the principle of subsidiarity that is commonly used in social assistance devices. Scholarships are distributed only in the case parents are judged with insufficient means, i.e. not in the economic situation allowing them to exert their legal duty to support their children engaged in training. Social assistance benefits are distributed as a kind of support by default, hence on the basis of a specific conception of social justice in line with the residual welfare state and the liberal regime identified by Esping-Andersen (1990).

While the 2009 change imposed more administrative requirements upon FORJADs and their families on the one hand and restricted access to certain ad hoc benefits on the other hand, it also meant for many beneficiaries a real increase of their autonomy. This illustrates the "positive" and capability-friendly side of the individualisation promoted by the FORJAD programme, i.e. public policies as a real support for personal choices and individualised life planning.

First, FORJADs have the possibility to receive their scholarships every month and not once a year, as it is the case for "regular" scholarship students. From the perspective of the beneficiaries (both FORJADs and JADs about to enter the programme), this allows them to limit the risk of significant expenditure and more significantly gives them the control over their whole income according to the "package" logic of the scholarships system. This JAD insists on this point:

"It's not like the cantonal grant which is paid all at once. There is a choice. Either you want it all, either they pay it every month. It has changed and it's good. Because when you live alone and you have all this money on your bank account, you say "Cool! I'm gonna have fun with all that money!" And then, at the end of the month, you're broken. So it's really cool to actually manage your revenue." (M3)

For this young mother benefiting from the FORJAD programme, being given the capacity to manage alone her budget is a key factor of self-esteem and self-confidence. As she summarises:

"It's really starting from the bottom to reach the top." (F11)

Second, as the funding basis of the programme is no more the RI but the scholarships, the beneficiaries have the obligation to pay back to the Canton (part of) the grants if they fail to achieve their training. Since the loan logic imposes a dependency of the borrower towards the lender, it is legitimate to ask if such a device makes FORJAD beneficiaries obliged or capable, according to a capability perspective.

Although this requirement can be a serious burden for JADs' future as many of them are already highly indebted before entering an apprenticeship, it can also be perceived as a genuine incentive for success and a motivating factor from JADs' own perspective. 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)

Third, unlike the RI system that obliged JADs to report all their revenues that were then deduced from the benefits distributed, the new funding system allows FORJADs to earn extra money and to keep it entirely if it doesn't exceed a certain amount. In practice, this possibility has been very useful for several apprentices who were engaged in summer jobs or had planned to save money to get a dental appliance. One apprentice underlines positively this new possibility:

"Now, with the scholarships, there are fewer constraints. During the summer, if we want to seek a job, we can get a few pennies. We are no longer obliged to declare every penny we earn. It's actually relieving to be independent. It's easier. We manage ourselves without having someone always behind us looking at everything we do." (F4)

However, this possibility did not prevent some youngsters from not announcing all their income coming from undeclared activities like being a courier, hairdressing or DJing.

Finally, financial matters are a key explanatory factor in JADs' trajectories. For JADs engaged in an apprenticeship, the possibilities to benefit from additional courses and to find childcare solutions, both fully supported by the programme, are unanimously celebrated as determining conditions for their success (what is also acknowledged by employers). This confirms the crucial importance of an intervention taking care of the multidimensional origins and causes of actual training and/or professional difficulties.

This is why some JADs do not care about the origin of the benefits, and therefore about the negative image associated to welfare recipients, as long as the level of these benefits allows them to support their career plan. This opinion is well illustrated by this FORJAD:

"I did not care actually who was paying me. Whether the scholarships or the RI, it was totally equal for me. My goal was to achieve my apprenticeship." (F11)

Echoing this testimony, a JAD about to enter an apprenticeship answers the question whether exiting social assistance was important for him as follows:

"As long as I have the same life I have now, although it is crap, that's fine." (M13)

2. The schooling aspects

According to the young persons interviewed, school has played a decisive, and even often a dramatic role in their life course. Retrospectively, many of them recall the end of compulsory schooling as a turning point in their biographical trajectory. As we have previously seen, all JADs engaged in the socio-professional integration measures and the FORJAD programme have not completed a vocational training successfully and lack a post-compulsory certificate. This means that by the age of 15 (end of compulsory schooling in Switzerland), they had failed two times: first, on the basis of their school grades, they had failed to access the general post-compulsory schooling (which is highly selective in Switzerland as only about one fourth of all Swiss youths goes to a Matura school) and were oriented towards vocational training paths (that are nonetheless very much appreciated and very often chosen by youngsters in Switzerland); second, they had failed to find an apprenticeship or to complete it successfully in the case they had found one. Significantly, to the last question we systematically asked at the end of the interviews "if you had a magic wand, what would you change in your life course?", many interviewees answered they would have obtained better marks at school and wished they had accessed general education paths. For example, to the question "if you had the possibility to change something in your past, what would it be?", this JAD just about to begin an apprenticeship answers:

"I would go back at the end of compulsory schooling, I would do again the class I attended and be more serious. I could have passed into the general education track." (M13)

Independently of the degree of endorsement to the dominant views (linking successful professional careers to good marks at school) that this answer reveals, this repeated insistence on presenting the end of compulsory schooling as a pivotal moment confirms the early differentiation in educational pathways and the high (social) selectivity in the Swiss education system.

The in-depth interviews with the JADs allowed us to highlight several other points. First, access to information appears as a key element in explaining the educational paths followed. Indeed, the Swiss education system is very complex and characterised, despite important differences between cantons, by very early selection among pupils, as well as high differentiation and limited permeability (both horizontal and vertical) between the different pathways of education and training. Indeed, almost all JADs are from low social and economic background and most of them (26 out of 32 JADs interviewed) have at least one of their parents of foreign origin.

These two characteristics appear as cumulative disadvantages limiting the knowledge that the JADs, and their parents, have of the Swiss educational system and therefore their ability to orientate themselves within it, but also their capacity to prepare and to build a professional project. As this FORJAD recalls, finding an apprenticeship at the end of compulsory schooling is lived as a sudden institutional injunction pupils are not prepared to face:

"Otherwise, I was still doing quite well at school. But it's especially about the professional choice, when suddenly I was told... that's where all of a sudden, everything has broken down." (M2)

Furthermore, among the 32 JADs interviewed, 2 of them (M14 and F4) faced the same impossibility to enter a Matura school because of an orientation mistake related to the choice of an optional language, due to a lack of information at the time of the choice. Although the Swiss education system is characterised by a traditionally limited permeability between education pathways, it is worth noting that this situation has evolved since more bridges have been recently introduced.

Most of the JADs describe the last year of compulsory schooling as a lonely year dedicated to finding an apprenticeship and to multiplying internship applications in order to test their professional choices. Parents seem most of the time to be absent and so are teachers and career counsellors at school. Worse, many JADs report the disincentive and demotivating effect resulting from the despising attitude teachers had towards them at school, since they were not deemed able to access to general education. As this JAD states:

"I remember, it was something quite gore. At the end of the 8th grade (one year before the end of compulsory schooling), we were asked: "who wants to go to the Matura school?" Everyone raised his hand, really, except 2 or 3 pupils. "Well, among all of you who raised their hands, only 2 or 3 will make it to the Matura school. It's how it works. We only want the best, and you don't have the capacities". It was really like that. But, I mean, to tell someone "you don't have the capacities", well, you believe it! There's no more future for you at school afterwards." (M2)

The lack of information and support at that particular moment when pupils have to make their professional choice is retrospectively highlighted and perceived as a sudden, and brutal, "end of youth". All the aspects involved in this transition are well evoked by the same young person:

"What could have been of help to me would have been a school more attentive to people, a bit more social I would say. (…) But it's especially in the 9th grade (last year of compulsory schooling) when they really force us "Now, you're 16 or so, and you have to find an apprenticeship." You don't even ask why you have to find an apprenticeship, that's life, you have to work for a living. Finally, I lived in my youth a bit like... we are young, we have our dreams, we are in the imagination, we live day after day, we have fun and then suddenly there is a barrier. Basically, it's over now. You dream: it's a failure to dream, it's a failure to have imagination, a failure to believe in things that others do not believe in. You have to get involved on what everyone believes, you must choose now, you must define steps, goals, projects. Finally, it really made the transition from youth to... all of a sudden, "tac", now you're responsible, you sign up, without even really explaining us the meaning of all that." (M2)

Finally, it seems rather paradoxical that the pupils who appear to be the least equipped, in terms of financial resources but also in terms of cultural and relational capital and resources to cope with the apprenticeship market (and the labour market), are precisely those who are obliged to make educational and professional choices the earliest. This is emphasised by some interviewees like M1:

"In class, I was not at my place, my head was somewhere else. I couldn't understand why at 16 years old, you had to have an apprenticeship and I remember, you had to find a place otherwise you were a loser. Apprenticeship should begin at 17 or 18. 16 years is too early. Start an apprenticeship at age 16, who can make it? I say apprenticeship should start at 17 or 18, when you have developed a little and then, it's ok. (…) It all started by the time of school. It was the teachers "you're rubbish, you're average, you are no good". It was all for them. Them, they will go to the university, they will do stuff and we looked at them, they were the rich and we were the average and the poor."

3. Aspects regarding youths' personal situation

One of the major characteristics of the JADs' population is cumulative disadvantages and difficulties. This aspect is particularly striking when reconstructing JADs' life paths on the basis of their interviews. The couple continuity / ruptures appears at this point as a key analytical tool. Indeed, young persons report a wide variety of ruptures, ranging from life hazards or accidents to more significant changes and sometimes dramatic events that have decisively changed the direction of their life course. At the same time, and not unsurprisingly, JADs voice their claim for continuity and stability, both dimensions that are presented, and self analysed, as key success factors.

3.1 The role of life hazards (migration, health problems, parents' divorce, etc.)

Life accidents or hazards appear to play an important role in JADs' life courses as they determine educational and professional choices, i.e. they enhance or constrain the range of possibilities available for JADs and therefore their capabilities. This is particularly the case for migrations and removals, both from abroad to Switzerland in the case of economic or political migration and inside Switzerland, from one canton to another or from one city to another. It is to be noticed that Switzerland is characterised by a restrictive access to residence permits and Swiss nationality (jus sanguinis), yet even more restrictive for non-EU residents and immigrants from countries outside the Schengen agreement. This can lead to complex situations from a legal point of view. Indeed, some of the youngsters we have encountered asked for and obtained the Swiss nationality while their parents, or even just one of them, had not. These differences inside one family can be of determining importance, e.g. for travelling abroad especially in order to visit parents and relatives still in the country of origin. Therefore, the legal status determines differentiated entitlements to social benefits (among which the FORJAD programme) and significantly impacts on youngsters' trajectories. In our sample, this issue concerned 26 out of 32 JADs interviewed.

As an example of non-EU immigration, a young woman fled the war in Somalia with her grandmother and dwelled in several countries before arriving in Switzerland, where she had relatives, at the age of 12. The first refugee permit she obtained allowed her to go to school but placed juridical obstacles in her search for an apprenticeship. Nine years have passed before she obtained a resident permit allowing her to formally enter the FORJAD programme. As she states:

"Before, I was depending on Fareas (the former refugee office in the canton of Vaud) and I was receiving 3 euros every day and I had to pay for everything: travels, meals, all that. And I had no help. But since I entered FORJAD, they help me. Since I received my "B" residence permit, I automatically became a social recipient and they helped me a lot for money, travels, meals." (M4)

In a capability perspective, this life course illustrates how migration can enhance (or impede) training and professional possibilities for a person. However, the issue of the legal situation is crucial as it conditions migrants' access to different rights and duties. Thus, the particular nature of the residence permit is a determining conversion (or obstruction) factor for migrants.

Furthermore, as Sayad (1999) pointed out, migrants are always immigrants in the host society and emigrants from their society of origin. This "double loss", which is also and simultaneously a double belonging to two different cultures and communities, can be, alternatively or at the same time, a resource (for example by providing free and immediate childcare solutions, what can be determining in order to solve timetable problems for a young mother and to enhance her capacity to find an apprenticeship or to work) or a constraint (e.g. interviews have shown that finding an apprenticeship for a young Albanian-born girl can be even more difficult as she faces paternal limitations and social control when she is outside the circle of the family).

What determines a life course can also be a life accident such as an unexpected health problem. In this sense, our interviews revealed that many JADs were facing important health problems such as nervous breakdown or addictive behaviour that severely limited their ability to engage in social and professional integration programmes on the long term. Others had allergy that compelled them to abandon their training and seek another apprenticeship.

In addition to these life hazards and experiences, family and/or conjugal situations can deeply affect JADs' life trajectories. For example, young single mothers represent an important share of JADs. Divorce, separation, removal, death, etc. are events that may occur in one's family; they significantly impact on young people (especially in terms of self-esteem and self-confidence) and restrict their space of available options or capability set. These episodes may hence be considered as turning points. Indeed, whereas transitions imply a state transformation, turning points imply a change in the direction of one's biographical trajectory (cf. Runyan's distinction between stages and states in one's life trajectory[59]).

Finally, let us notice that, consecutively to (sometimes dramatic) family events, a significant proportion of the JADs interviewed were social recipients long before they entered a social integration measure or the FORJAD programme, as their parents were themselves social assistance beneficiaries. This element is crucial to the explanation of the JADs' perception of their situation. Whereas some of them say they are not really bothered by their social recipient status, others endorse the dominant views that associate a negative image with social assistance beneficiaries and confess suffering from their situation. Nonetheless, whatever their appreciation of the status of social assistance recipient, JADs repeatedly take their distance with other social recipients, that are presented as "bad" beneficiaries seeking to take advantage of the situation without actively trying to find a way towards employment. This opinion is illustrated by this young girl arrived in Switzerland at the age of 6 as a political refugee after the death of both her parents due to the genocide in Rwanda. When she obtained a Swiss passport in 2009 after living in Switzerland for 15 years, she immediately looked for an apprenticeship as she was convinced of the necessity to hold a vocational training certificate. As she states:

"Here (in Switzerland), there is social assistance, but you must know which door you have to knock on. (…) Finally, access to them is not that easy. At the same time, it's not their fault. Because there are people who exaggerate" (F14)

[59] Runyan defends an analysis of life histories based on the combination of the two concepts: "A stage-state analysis makes the simplifying assumption that the life course can be divided into a sequence of stages and that a person can exist in one of a limited number of states within each stage" (1984: 101). See also Verd and López, 2011.

In line with this judgement, a young JAD who fled the Balkan war with his family when he was a child argues:

"The social services wanted me to find an apprenticeship, that's what made me really nervous. Whereas there are people who take advantage of the social assistance for many years, I just wanted a few months paid to find a job as I had not benefit from it before I was 20." (M17)

3.2 Housing issues

Among material conditions, housing conditions play an important role in JADs' access to autonomy. The limited availability and the cost of housing in certain parts of the Canton of Vaud explain why JADs have often no choice but to remain at (or to go back to) their parents' place, what generally aggravates the relationships among the family members. Others are kicked out of their parents' house at an early age and forced to cope with this situation alone. Among the 32 young people interviewed, at least half a dozen of them report a period of homelessness and great difficulty directly linked to this situation, as it conditions both their access to work and their possibility to keep it. For JADs who experience housing difficulties, the necessity to find an independent accommodation is the priority before seeking an apprenticeship. It is not rare that JADs are compelled to take an apartment outside big cities, where rents are lower and conditions for granting an apartment more flexible. This also may emphasise the importance of the issue of transport. In this sense, it is interesting to notice that certain MIS addressed to youngsters in the countryside around Lausanne insist on the mobility issue, and present the acquisition of driving licences as a main objective of the measure.

The same kind of reflections applies to housing issues. Social workers are well aware of the specificity of the housing problem for JADs, and finding an independent accommodation can become the main objective of a MIS. Indeed, it appears as a determining condition of success for JADs in their route towards completion of a vocational training and can significantly contribute to improve their relationships with their family, as this apprentice tells us:

"And there were meetings with psychologists to reconnect with my mom because I had no contact with her for all that time. I also had a host family. So we tried to make contact again with her and the apartment I had helped me to settle down and to have better contact later with my mom because at first it was a bit tense." (F13)

3.3 Other important personal and social dimensions

Social and family networks are often mentioned when it comes to elaborating a professional project and validating a vocational training choice. Although parents and family members are not always helpful for the orientation in the complex Swiss educational and social system, they are nonetheless regularly present as advisors validating the JADs' training choices. The role of peers appears as more ambivalent: they are sometimes presented as possible obstacles towards entering or successfully achieving an apprenticeship, esp. if they give priority to partying, but they are also considered as important counsellors at an age where peer recognition is decisive in the construction of one's personality.

This also supports the claim for a multidimensional approach acknowledging that, although work experience may be central in the construction of one's identity, both positively and negatively, since work is a "privileged vehicle of social integration" (Papinot and Vultur, 2010: 4), it cannot be seen as the unique dimension in this process.

The desire for autonomy is also an important personal dimension. Indeed, JADs unanimously yearn to become the authors of their own lives.

"Several times, I asked my coach to trust me, to let me do things as I wished" (F2)

Here, by choosing not to use the facilities offered by the coach and by deciding to do things by himself, the youngster illustrates the fact that the contractual relation with his coach should also leave him the space to autonomously handle his life, to organise it and to claim recognition for doing – and succeeding in doing – so. Beyond the obligations associated with the contractual nature of the relationship with his coach, the contract can also provide the youngster with symbolic resources that are key for his self-construction and affirmation as an individual capable of defining and helping himself (Saraceno, 2007)

Autonomy is therefore perceived as a key issue for JADs. Proving to themselves but also to people around them like social workers, teachers and family members, that they are able to handle their existence and build their own life path, thus fulfilling their personal objectives, contributes to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. In this sense, almost all JADs' trajectories are marked by so-called "crucial moments" (that can be retrospectively defined as turning points) when the JAD receives trust from an adult (a social worker, a teacher, an employer, etc.) who becomes for him a key reference person. JADs strongly insist on this turning point, and very often identify a 'before' and an 'after'. Hence, the trustful relationship that can be established with the coach is presented as very important:

"She (her coach) has always been very nice from the beginning. Sympathetic was not the right word. She does well her job. She's not a social assistant who creates trouble. No, she's a good person and we have a good contact. And the more time passed, the better our relations were. And she trusts me. She knows I'm not a RI beneficiary to take advantage of the situation. She understands I'm motivated and I'm doing the things right" (M9).

In this sense, being trusted as capable coincides with feeling socially recognised, which is a key factor in the JAD's personal development and boosts his ability to project into the future. This clearly contrasts with previous experiences where the JAD felt devalued or despised. Moreover, being trusted is also a key motivational factor for JADs. This young woman exposes the virtuous circle such signs of recognition initiate, and she explains in detail the Maussian-like "gift – counter-gift" logic that started with her social worker as soon as she felt being trusted and recognised by her:

"(Her social worker) is the person to whom I owe most of the things. Before, I was a girl who was lost and had no confidence, I did not even believe in me. And with the program, I talked and talked and I found someone who understood me and I trusted her. (…) For me, personally, having people like that around, it motivates, it actually gives you the courage to go further. (…) That's why I said to girls 'go ahead, there are people who will help you, that really give you confidence. They really are there to help you and not to judge you'. And there are many people to whom I have recommended to follow the programme." (M4)

4. Training and professional integration

4.1 Choosing a social integration measure

The social integration measures (MIS) are aimed at helping young people in their search for an apprenticeship. All MIS are provided by private non-profit bodies such as foundations or associations that get funded for these, since the cantonal welfare and social assistance services decided to outsource their execution. In the Canton of Vaud, about 20 MIS are available. Some of these measures are dedicated to the acquisition of social competencies (team work, self esteem, etc.) while others are more oriented towards employability via vocational training and professional experiences. Besides, the MIS also provide basic language and maths lessons in order to enhance JADs' chances to find an apprenticeship.

Whatever their (social or professional) orientation, the main objective of all MIS is to enhance beneficiaries' employability and probability to find an apprenticeship. Indeed, even the social skills that are encouraged and advertised in some of the MIS dedicated to the acquisition of social competencies, are developed because they are deemed necessary for both building and fulfilling a professional project and adjusting to the labour market prerequisites. In other words, these social competencies are considered as basic resources compulsory to compete in the labour market.

According to the law on social assistance, young adults benefiting from social assistance, the JADs, have to participate in MIS conceived as activation measures. If they do not, they will lose up to 25% of their benefits. As this interviewed tells us:

"-He (the 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)

As illustrated in this case, beneficiaries' loyalty can be somehow constrained, especially by the threat of financial sanctions. However, many JADs declare using different strategies to circumvent this legal requirement, like medical certificates etc. But they also say that they experience the MIS as a turning point (be it explicitly due to the MIS or to other personal events like having a new partner, moving, etc.). For the most disaffiliated JADs, the MIS is thus a first step towards re-socialising, regaining self-confidence and confidence in others. The number of participants involved in every MIS is limited and this feature is often presented by the JADs as an advantage, compared to other structures like the SEMO (the Motivational Semesters, provided by the unemployment insurance):

"In the SEMO, we are all the time in different workshops, there are always new people coming and leaving. There are many more people than in this MIS. Here, all in all we were 20 people maximum. During the workshops, we are in different groups but twice a week we are all together for maths and French lessons and to work on our career plans (…) and thus it creates links between us." (M3)

Thus, the MIS offer a context to meet and discuss with other young people, which is not a trivial issue for disaffiliated people:

"I liked to go to the MIS. Because when you have been in a precarious situation for a while, I think you need to see other things, to discuss with other people, to meet other young people who are in the same situation as you." (M8)

When it comes to choosing a MIS, some JADs tell us that their social assistant (AS) presented different kinds of MIS and let them choose which one they wanted to enter. They could thus make a choice according to their personal situation (e.g. choosing a MIS according to its content, its geographical location in order to avoid long travels, according to the timetables, etc.). In other cases, the choice was already made by the AS.

It is important to note that, due to the organisation of the MIS (multiple private bodies) and because of the extended area of the Canton of Vaud (Vaud is the 4th largest Canton of Switzerland), all MIS are not available to all JADs. While young people in Lausanne generally have more choice due to the concentration of MIS in this area, the geographical criterion seems to be a real constraint for many young people outside this town. In the region of La Broye, in the backcountry of Lausanne for example, only one MIS is available for JADs living in this large territory. Therefore, gaps may exist between the actual needs of youth and the proposed measures, because of a lack of available places or a limited inclination to travel longer distances. For example, this JAD chose the closest measure to her home, but she realised that the timetables of the MIS did not suit her and hence was late or absent very often:

"Timetables, I found it too much for a first reinsertion. It was from 9 am to 5 pm on Mondays and Fridays. And Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, I finished at 6 pm. There was only a one- hour break for lunch. I found it a bit hard then, especially when you haven't done anything for 2 years. Getting a normal rhythm and keeping it for so long was a bit hard, while I wasn't doing anything at all." (M16)

In contrast, this young person considers that the MIS available in his area offered an insufficient follow-up of only 2 days per week:

"Two years ago, I went there but I was so bored to come on Monday and Thursday. For the first year, I could understand but for the second, the third year ... I had nothing to do at all and they were loads like me". (M1)

The same gaps between supply and demand are also noticeable with regard to the content of the MIS and the follow-ups. Some young people sometimes accuse the MIS that are oriented towards the enhancement of social and personal competencies (personal development, self-confidence, art, etc.) to be insufficiently focused on their career plan, or even useless because not individualised enough:

"If you want to help us, you won't give the same thing to everyone, you target, you target a little better." (M1)

Meanwhile, the MIS that are employability-oriented, i.e. aiming at the acquisition of professional skills, may lack meaning for some young people. This is the case of this measure supposed to familiarise young people with jobs in sales:

"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)

In the case of this MIS oriented towards the acquisition of professional competencies in the field of sales and logistics, beneficiaries complain about doing a worthless job. All of them underlined their disappointment, and in some cases, their disillusion, after discovering very quickly that the work at the second-hand shop was not as interesting as it was first presented by the social workers. Their common opinion was that they just had to be physically present in the shop, independently of the fact that there were very few customers and therefore no concrete activity or task to do except price tag, cleaning and ordering the shop. Boredom was their main judgement about their participation in the MIS. At this point, we can say that work in this MIS had no other virtue than occupational and that it was considered as still better to occupy these youngsters by the possibility that a customer could enter the shop rather than letting them do nothing. In this sense, endurance and motivation of the beneficiaries were tested, especially with regard to work discipline. As Maeder and Nadai have observed in other work programmes addressed to unemployed people in Switzerland: "the programmes inevitably turn into a parallel world of work, which seems somehow 'unreal' to the participants. This in turn creates problems of meaning, motivation and cooperation. The participants often feel that their work does not make sense, that they do not learn any marketable skills, that they do not make useful contacts and that they do not really profit from the programme. Again, those who lack a sense of meaning are not committed – sometimes to the point of refusing to cooperate. In fact, keeping up morale is one of the main problems for staff, because a few unmotivated participants may severely hamper the whole operation" (2009: 73).

In the case of this specific MIS, our own study confirms the thesis developed by Maeder and Nadai who argue that such "programmes set the stage for a kind of *conformity test*" (2009: 73). In other words, these programmes aim at testing the youngsters' willingness and ability to work (Nadai, 2006) or, in our case, to get an apprenticeship. What is at stake here is the beneficiaries' capacity to demonstrate that they share the dominant normative conceptions about the value of work and vocational training. And that's precisely the sense the young beneficiaries interviewed gave to their ongoing participation in this specific programme, despite their feelings of boredom and worthlessness. The case of this young minor who accepts to work for free in the second-hand shop because of her age (unlike the other participants who receive social benefits because they are over 18) is paradigmatic:

"It's little hassle (the work in the 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).

One of the transversal activities in all MIS consists in helping the youngsters in finding an apprenticeship. To this purpose, young people are strongly encouraged to answer to a job advertisement. Some people told us they sent more than 200 application forms for apprenticeships or internships. Here again, for some of them, this approach appears to be insufficiently personalised:

"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)

Because of the limited number of available apprenticeships for JADs, the role of their integration advisors appears decisive. Indeed, since JADs' career plan has to be "as realistic

and achievable as possible", as stated by the cantonal law, integration advisors strive to match labour supply and demand. That's why the cantonal Head of the specialised education and training support service refers to them as traffic officers: "*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 advisors very often have to "cool out" JADs' initial ambitions or plans which are regularly described as non realistic 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 perceived as more "realistic and achievable". In a capability perspective, this implies that the youngster's training and/or professional wishes and claims, i.e. his or her capability for voice, may be constrained by a possible top-down imposition of institutional views through the intervention of the integration adviser. Indeed, the latter can guide them towards vocational trainings or occupations, where employees are needed like catering or construction. Hence the risk here is that integration measures and programmes serve the purpose of selecting and categorising the workforce.

At this point, it is possible to stress an important contradiction many youngsters have sometimes identified, and most of the time only suggested, in the interviews we have conducted. Although they are told by social workers and coaches that they have to identify their individual competencies and highlight them as strengths in order to catch the employers' attention and succeed in the competition with others in their search for an apprenticeship, once they effectively embark in the search for an internship or, better, an apprenticeship, they realise that the instructions they are given to succeed are standardised and leave no or little room for individualisation understood as the possibility to turn to their advantage a non-linear and more or less chaotic life course.

Finding an apprenticeship is a key issue for the JADs. It is conceived as the best way to take them out of the social assistance and precariousness and it is the only way to enter the FORJAD programme. This conception of the transition from compulsory school to professional training places a great part of the responsibility directly on the youngsters as they ought to find an apprenticeship.

To counterbalance this effect, the MIS offer different kinds of support to the JADs (access to computer, internet, printers, listing of enterprises, etc.). But the effective involvement in this process of the local agents engaged in the MIS can vary from one measure to another. Some of them revise the CVs, cover letters, etc. and intervene as little as possible, considering that the major part of the process has to be autonomously undertaken by the youngsters themselves; others contact directly employers in order to find apprenticeships and speak in the name of the JADs they follow. In this sense, the IPJAD programme has been created (Professional Insertion for JADs) by the Canton of Vaud. The aim of this programme is to assist JADs who already have a precise career plan to find an apprenticeship by providing the help of professionals coming from the private sector, specialised in placement activities and collaborating with a large network of employers.

To enhance JADs' chances of finding a place, the MIS emphasise the importance of acquiring work experiences through internships. These allow young people to see more clearly what they want or do not want to do, i.e. to test both the relevance of JADs' professional choice and their motivation. In some cases youngsters told us that after an internship, they could

negotiate an apprenticeship within the same company. But in other cases, the internship experience was too short (e.g. 2 days) and sometimes even counterproductive, and it did not represent a real step further in their career plan. This is for example the case of internships without any real practical content:

“I started an internship and I stayed 2 days. I really disliked it, the shop was empty. I got so bored that I gave up, I was pissed off. Doing sudokus during the internship wasn’t okay for me, I could do them at home.” (M11)

Retrospectively, many JADs outlined the gap between the workplace they first discovered during an internship and the one, totally different and generally harsher (i.e. submitted to more direct professional injunctions), they then discovered as apprentices. In this sense, and referring to Weber’s well-known analysis (1971), many JADs experience a “disenchantment of the world” of work.

In such cases, negative experiences in the labour market can be de-motivating. In addition, internship hunting "at all costs" is 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 working experience is better than no experience at all, i.e. work in itself, whatever its content, is a virtue. But the MIS agents have no specific tools to ensure that employers are committed and respectful vis-à-vis the young persons engaged as trainees and do not abuse them or exert pressure on them (in terms of timetables for example):

"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 to go 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)

JADs are not efficiently protected against such abuses by the wide-ranging tendency to contractualise all relationships in the FORJAD programme (at the same time, FORJADs may sign up to 4 different contracts: a) with the social regional agency as they enter the FORJAD programme, b) with their employer as apprentices, c) with the body providing the coaches who will follow them up and d) with the cantonal office of scholarship grants as they receive a scholarship once they have signed their apprenticeship contract). Indeed, these numerous contracts do not protect them against possible abuses and pressures from the employers. In this sense, contracts may end up in a “simple routine procedure”, which is one pitfall N. Duvoux (2007) has well reminded.

4.2 Planning a professional project

If some young people told us that they really wanted to start an apprenticeship, many said they chose to seek a vocational certificate (CFC) because their AS or their referee in the MIS strongly encouraged them in this direction:

"They told me “It’s okay to work, you have a salary, etc. But do you really want to have the same salary later?” They told me it's easier to find a job when you have a vocational certificate. Because when you don’t have a certificate, it's hard! So they motivated me, they really tried to make me think it over." (M5)

The same argument frequently occurs in the speeches of the JADs who mostly seem having incorporated this idea. In this context, young people generally give an instrumental value to training. Training is conceived as a protection against insecurity and precariousness, especially regarding the labour market that is perceived as hostile[60]:

"I would like to have a CFC, to have the paper. Because you don't need a paper to work as a truck driver but I prefer to have a CFC and a paper saying that I am qualified to do this job." (M14)

"Being submitted to a boss because he threatens to fire me, it's not interesting. I have done my apprenticeship because I said to myself that if a boss disrespects me, I am free to go to another one." (F2)

Both social workers and the JADs themselves share a common and dominant view about the functioning of the labour market, and more specifically about the possibility workers in general (including apprentices and internees) have to voice their concerns. Indeed, as they see little possibility to influence employers who are in a strong position on the labour market, they (somehow) accept to restrict their freedom of choice to using the exit option, i.e. they act as consumers free to choose between different options on the labour market (provided of course that there are indeed different options available on the labour market).

Moreover, in the JADs' discourses, taking advantage of the apprenticeship to enhance their professional prospects seems to be a priority for them, sometimes without real consideration for the type of the apprenticeship itself.

"- *In which sectors did you search for an apprenticeship?*
- I would have accepted any opportunity as long as there was a CFC at the end." (M17)

Concerning the way young people perceive their training and more broadly their future, almost all the JADs we met seem to have fully endorsed the idea of life project and life planning, which are generally expectations of active labour market programmes. During the interviews, the youngsters tended to present and insist on their own projects as a sign of maturity:

"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 don't have projects, they don't know what they are going to do after the apprenticeship, and it sometimes interferes in my relationships with them." (F4)

In the same line, the youngsters use very often a vocabulary that relates to the logic of activation (to be "active", to "wake up", to be in "real life", etc.) 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)

Here again, young people display a will to get rid of the stigma attached to passivity. In the same vein, their concern for continuity and linearity in their life course is often asserted in their speeches:

[60] It is to be noticed that many of the interviewed youngsters completed compulsory school during the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and were told by the teachers, the media, etc. that integrating the labour market in this context was going to be especially hard for them.

"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 way." (M2)

"I realised that if you do not plan your future as soon as possible, it will be a mess later." (M14)

These quotations illustrate, on the one hand, JADs' awareness regarding the stigmas attached to their situation, and on the other hand, their commitment to official discourses and dominant views that promote the linearity of the life course at the expense of non-linear trajectories. This reflects Beck *et al.* idea of modernity (2002), where individuals are asked to find biographical solutions in order to deal with social problems.

However, this pro-active logic of "life through projects" reveals ambiguities regarding the meaning of JADs' autonomy. Indeed, autonomy is also a deep-rooted normative injunction (e.g. Cicchelli, 2001), as was often 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 three and a half 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)

This willingness to display autonomy may conflict with the follow-up provided by the MIS and the FORJAD programme, insofar as young people feel tired of being followed by someone:

"- And for you, it was nice to have someone following you?
- It did not bother me as it's a habit for me that there is all the time someone behind me... But, it's true I'm a bit fed up." (M11)

"Having someone behind me during my apprenticeship, I think it devalues me. It bothers me." (M17)

This tension between JADs' objective of autonomy and the follow-up they are subject to can also be linked to the fact that they are uncomfortable 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)

Finally, let's notice that 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 JADs we met, 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 precise 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 their own temporality as stressed by these quotes:

"The first time I entered the SEMO (a transition programme provided by the unemployment insurance) I was 15, I said to myself "What is this?" I had to enter it, I had no choice, and I did not understand the meaning of it all, the first and the second time I went to the SEMO. But, the third time, I understood that these people could be useful; they were not just there to cause me problems. And once I understood it, I found an apprenticeship." (M17)

"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 lead a horse to water, 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.

4.3 FORJAD and the role of the coaches

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, vocational, social 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. All coaches are social workers belonging to the same private non-profit association (TEM-Accent, which stands for the French “Transition école métier – accompagnement en entreprise”) that first initiated this particular type of individual follow-up for each JAD in the Canton of Vaud and further developed an original approach of this kind of intervention. It is worth noting that regarding JADs’ coaching during their apprenticeship, the cantonal administration relies exclusively on this association.

When we asked young people about their relationship with the coaches, they usually emphasised tutoring (individual support courses), but also administrative support (with insurances, taxes, etc.) and more broadly logistic support (housing, finance, etc.). These various forms of support are appreciated by young people who usually declare enjoying

having someone by their side to answer their questions and help them handle those kinds of issues. The fact that all these different kinds of problems could be resolved with the help of one single person is also frequently presented as an advantage by JADs.

"I think there is a social dimension, because they go beyond professional issues. They try to put themselves in your shoes, to know how you are, how things are going with your child." (M9)

"It was up to me to tell him what I needed. Either French, or maths lessons, if I needed to revise something or a specific topic, it was really up to me to say what I needed and it was done." (F4)

"I can talk to her about anything. Now, for 2 or 3 months, we have talked little about the apprenticeship and mostly about the next step (finding a job). Instead of redirecting me toward someone else, she made inquiries for me and we did it together and the problems were solved immediately or during our next meeting. That is what I appreciate, she is there for me, she does not delegate to someone else." (F12)

These few quotes show the satisfaction of young people in relation to the follow-up offered by the coaches. The last two quotes particularly focus on the human commitment of the coaches and the climate of mutual trust induced by this specific relationship. In this sense, the coach represents a support that goes often far beyond practical issues. Indeed, many youngsters told us that their coach was a source of motivation and an emotional support, the coaches themselves being often unaware of this.

"I had the feeling that I was not alone anymore. When I was doing something, if something was wrong, I knew where to go to ask for some help, it reassured me. Even if I actually did not ask for help, the only fact that I knew that I could ask for help motivated me, it allowed me to take further steps. "(F8)

However, some FORJADs, like some JADs, are reluctant to seek help because of their will to be autonomous and to act by themselves.

"Maybe I could not fully take advantage of my coach, perhaps I wanted to over-demonstrate that I could go on my own. In my life I have always lived a bit like that. (...) 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)

In addition, some young people show some distrust regarding the coaching methods that they consider as too intrusive. As a consequence, they insist in their speeches on their strategies to maintain distance with the coaches and to preserve their intimacy.

"There are certain things that the coaches can’t understand at 100%. Some areas should remain in the private sphere of the young. It is necessary to draw a balance between the private and professional life and this equilibrium is still unclear for the coaches." (F2)

In sum, the support offered by the coaches is generally appreciated, particularly because it leaves room for negotiation regarding the content and modalities of the follow-up, as well as the topics addressed. But the coaching must also ensure some independence to young people for whom it is important to maintain their autonomy in certain areas of their personal lives.

The coaches also play an important role in relation to employers. They act as intermediaries and/or mediators between the youngsters and their bosses. This task is however intrinsically ambivalent and potentially contradictory both from the point of view of the apprentices and from the one of the coaches themselves who are well aware of this situation. Indeed, they

have two functions that may be contradictory in certain occasions: on the one hand, they defend the FORJAD’s rights in front of his employer; on the other hand, his mission is also to adapt the youngster to the demands of his employer and more broadly to the requisites of the labour market. Combining these two missions is a delicate task, which has an important influence on the FORJADs’ capability.

Moreover, young people do not necessarily want to be presented as FORJADs to their bosses and in this sense, the intervention of the coach could be a source of stigma on the workplace. It is the case of this young woman, working in the metal sector:

“*- Did you ask your coach to come on your workplace?*
- No. It is not that I did not want my colleagues to know about it, but... I work in a male environment... It's hard enough.” (F4)

Nevertheless, the role of the coaches can be decisive with regard to the employers. Indeed, several forms of abuses have been mentioned. In these situations, the coaches can intervene as a kind of lawyers, defending apprentices’ working conditions and voicing their claims.

"It is true that, if she had not been there, if there had been no other authority or something like that, maybe my employer would have said “there is no one behind her, I can do what I want." (F13)

This quote suggests a hypothetical scenario, but several FORJADs experienced real situations of conflict or abuse on their workplace. In these contexts, the presence of the coach is a useful support that enables young people to defend their rights more efficiently. It may be hypothesised that the mere fact that the employer knows his apprentice is followed by a coach reduces significantly the likelihood of abuses.

Besides, the coaches can also act as a kind of “safety valve” that allows young people to release the tensions accumulated within the enterprise. As this young woman told us:

"If I was facing problems, I used to talk about it with my coach, or if I just needed to talk, I could also speak with her, be it about my work, my personal life, or simply if I wanted to let off steam and say what I thought." (F4)

The role played by the coaches is particularly important since the apprenticeship commissioners, who are in charge of supervising the smooth and lawful running of the apprenticeship period, very rarely intervene in the workplace and even tend to back the employers’ viewpoint in case a problem occurs. As illustrated by the speech of this young woman who had difficulties with her boss during her apprenticeship in hairdressing:

"I even talked about it when the commissioner was there. He answered that those kinds of things happen and that I had to go elsewhere and to find another hairdressing salon." (M12)

Or:

"In fact, I used to speak directly with my employer. I did not call the commissioner for these kinds of things because when I talked to him, he answered me that he was not able to do anything for me. He told me “Unfortunately the labour market is like that, I know, I have also been through this, but you must hold on, that is how the labour market works.” It was a shock for me." (M14)

Some young people also denounce the lack of impartiality of the commissioners, especially in certain sectors, where commissioners and employers know each other personally.

"I told it to the commissioner, she knew my situation but she was like that (signs of fear) with my boss. Moreover, she repeated to him all that I had told her. (...) After that, I decided not to tell her anything anymore because I could not trust her anymore." (M12).

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. As a matter of fact, the support received with regard to the schooling, personal and professional aspects can be negotiated in many respects, while the financial issues are more strictly regulated by legal and administrative provisions. Therefore, the FORJAD 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. Our investigation shows at least five dimensions where interpretations and practices clearly differ whether they emanate from the youngsters addressed by the programme or from the local and institutional actors in charge of its implementation:

1) the 'autonomy' dimension, which is both a criterion used by local actors for selecting the JADs allowed to enter the FORJAD programme and the official aim of the preparatory stages, which is (more or less genuinely) endorsed by the youngsters themselves to show they are capable of self-planning. On the one hand, autonomy is defined according to exogenous rules and leaves little space for the development of capabilities; on the other hand, it is very much in line with the idea of leading a life one has reason to value;

2) the notion of 'project' also has a different meaning whether it is used by local actors as a guarantee of the beneficiaries' responsible and precise engagement towards their future professional career or by the beneficiaries themselves as they refer to a fuzzier notion that comes close to a declaration of intention. The gap between these two notions points out the importance of time in order to build a genuine project or to develop the JADs' capability to aspire;

3) 'voice' options are mainly available for JADs in the framework of their relationship with local agents. In most cases, this margin of negotiation is allowed by the incompleteness of legal or administrative provisions. Where the law is complete, i.e. where it defines the contractual obligations in a precise and exhaustive way, JADs' capability for voice is not allowed to flourish to the same extent. By contrast, there is very little room for negotiation at the workplace, both because employers are in a dominant position and because youngsters have a rather instrumental relation to training that tends to diminish their involvement at work;

4) tools mobilised with regard to the 'demand and supply side' of the labour market are markedly different, since youngsters have to face contractual obligations and pressures while the employers' will is considered as non negotiable. As a matter of fact, while the behaviour and attitudes of JADs are at the core of the contract, those of the employer are simply absent from this document and seem to be considered as an external parameter out of reach of the FORJAD programme;

5) the 'role of the individual coaches' FORJADs are bound to cope with is ambivalent, insofar as they are called to endorse a twofold mission of mediation or advocacy of JADs' rights at the workplace, which may require a confrontation with the employer, and of compliance officer pushing the JADs towards increased adaptability to the employer's expectations in order to successfully complete his vocational training.

Hence, the ambivalence of the contract is tackled in two different ways according to the partners concerned. Whereas the institutional framework leaves the JADs some space for negotiation and some capability for voice, the relationship with the employers is one of compliance and loyalty. In the latter case, the contract boils down to something merely rhetorical; in the former case, there is some ambivalence which allows the youngster to get closer (though not 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 capability to aspire and become full citizens. Furthermore, this clearly requires departing from the early selection bias of the Swiss educational system. 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.

In light of these empirical findings, the following policy recommendations can be made.

1. The organisation and structure of the schooling system has a determining and sometimes even scarring effect on youths' trajectories. This is well illustrated by the Swiss educational system, characterised an early selection bias. In such a context, most inequalities draw their origins in an education system that selects pupils at early stages in their schooling paths at a moment where professional preferences are not yet constituted. This early selection produces long-lasting inequalities. By contrast,

we suggest that selection should take place at a later stage, and that numerous bridges should be set up between the various educational paths (vocational, general, academic) to allow youngsters with more difficult trajectories during compulsory schooling to develop their capability for education and for work on an equal footing with other youngsters.

2. Within the educational system, youths' voice about their educational choices appears more constrained if they are engaged in depreciated pathways as these are associated with limited available vocational and professional options, lack of access to information and attitudes of teachers often perceived as negative. We recommend that their voices should be given much more attention than is presently the case, especially during so-called "turning points". In this sense, it seems also important to reinforce vocational orientation and counselling in order to support and enhance youngsters' capacity to aspire.

3. Youths' difficulties are multiple and therefore successful interventions aiming at their social and professional (re-)insertion must be multidimensional, i.e. they have to take simultaneously in consideration not only employment issues but also social, personal, family, financial, housing and health matters.

4. Successful interventions and programmes towards young adults must be meaningful in the eyes of the beneficiaries. In most cases, this positive attitude is the result of the establishment of a trust relationship between the young person and the social worker and/or his or her coach. This moment, at the same time symbol of institutional trust, incarnation of social recognition and source of motivation for the beneficiaries, appears as a turning point determining retrospectively their success or their failure in the programme.

5. Employers should be addressed not only by incentives (to create apprenticeships, to avoid windfall effects, to respect the rules incumbent to a trainer, etc.) but also by obligations (e.g. to create apprenticeships if the productive entity is large enough) and sanctions (in the case of a failure to comply with the rules).

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CHAPTER 9: ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN SCOTLAND WORKABLE WP 4 UK CASESTUDY, FULL REPORT

Dr Emma Hollywood, Dr Valerie Egdell, Professor Ronald McQuaid

Abstract

The focus of the UK case study is on disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24, making the transition from unemployment to employment. The case-study examines two Third sector run programmes (Barnardo's Works and Get Into) running in Scotland that move away from primarily 'work-first' employment activation, to focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken with managers, project workers and young people on both programmes. A 'thematic content analysis' approach was taken to analyse the data using an analytical framework loosely based on Strauss and Corbin's (1998) three stage Grounded Theory analysis guidelines. The Capabilities Framework was then applied as a means of further analysing the data to understand how the programmes can be understood from a capabilities perspective, e.g. do the programmes enable disadvantaged young people to live the life they have reason to value.

The findings demonstrate that both programmes partly move away from a 'work-first' employment activation approach, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. Questions are raised about the voice (e.g. ability to effectively express their own opinions) of young people, as the findings demonstrated that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. The findings provide useful insights into what work young people find reason to value. However, 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. So while young people's choices may be developed through providing role models etc., it is still a choice shaped and restrained by the context of wider labour markets and education and training opportunities and the personal and social barriers that prevent young people from entering work.

1. Introduction

The focus of the United Kingdom (UK) case study is on disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24, making the transition from unemployment to employment. The case study examines how two Third sector programmes (Barnardo's Works and Get Into) running in Scotland are able to enhance young peoples' capabilities for work, voice and education. It specifically considers the different perspectives of: those managing the programmes; the project workers; and the young people themselves.

Barnardo's Works (run by the children's charity Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk/) is a paid work placement programme aimed at disadvantaged young people aged 16 -24 in Scotland, and is delivered across urban, semi-rural, and rural areas. The programme lasts six months and provides an induction period followed by supported work placement with an employer. In the majority of places that the programme operates there is no wage cost to the employer for the first half of the programme and in the last half of the programme *Barnardo's Works* supports 50% the wage cost. The programme offers placements in a variety of sectors, although some localities specialise in certain sectors. Aftercare, i.e. continuing support after the end of the programme, is provided to those young people who want it. Funding of the programme varies in each locality but mainly comes from: European funding, national government employment programmes, local authorities and charitable trusts etc.

Get Into (run by the national youth charity the Prince's Trust: www.princes-trust.org.uk/) is a voluntary programme that offers intensive training and work experience in specific sectors to those aged 16-25 who are unemployed. Young people on unemployment benefits can normally continue to receive these while on *Get Into* and the programme also covers some travel costs etc. Courses are run throughout the year in different areas with approximately 15 people accepted on each course. The length and structure of the courses varies by sector, with course length ranging from five to ten weeks (e.g. a five week course for retailing). External providers deliver some of the training. Optional six-month progression support provided by volunteers is currently being piloted in some areas. Funding varies between programmes but in the main come from: European funding, local authorities and charitable trusts and funds etc.

The findings demonstrate that both programmes partly move away from 'work-first' employment activation, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. Questions are raised about the voice of young people (e.g. the ability to effectively express their own opinions) as the findings demonstrated that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. The findings provide useful insights into what work young people find reason to value. However, 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. So while young people's choices may be developed through providing role models etc., it is still a choice shaped and restrained by the context of wider labour markets and education and training opportunities and the personal and social barriers that prevent young people from entering work.

2. Context

- Since the economic downturn starting around 2008, youth unemployment has become increasingly significant across the EU and for the Scottish, UK and other EU governments.
- It often those young people who are most vulnerable or disadvantaged that do not make successful transitions into the labour market
- UK employment activation policy has generally taken a 'work first' approach. These centralised and top-down approaches focus on placing individuals in work rather than promoting individuals' capabilities to choose the work that they have reason to value.

Since the economic downturn starting around 2008, youth unemployment has become increasingly significant across the EU. A number of reasons can be identified for the increase in youth unemployment including: the general contraction of the economy and labour market; reluctance of employers to take on new employees, especially young people who are perceived as lacking the necessary skills and experience; the relatively high numbers of young people in badly affected sectors such as construction; and the overall increase in competition for a decreasing number of jobs (McQuaid et al., 2010). These factors present problems for all young people trying to take the first steps in the labour market but of concern in the UK case study are those disadvantaged young people who face the greatest barriers to the labour market.

The issue of disengagement from the labour market is not new. Even in the context of better economic conditions a significant number of young people have entered into negative destinations; and it often those young people who are most vulnerable or disadvantaged (e.g. those who lack qualifications, those with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, and those living in poverty) that do not make successful transitions (Scottish Government 2009; Bynner & Parsons 2002). Unemployment can have a long lasting impact on a young person's future career prospects and earnings potential. Those who have been unemployed in their youth experience long-term negative impacts on their career development, earnings, wellbeing and health (Hammarström & Janlert 2002; Bell & Blanchflower 2010) and as shown for the UK in the Work Package 5 paper. These effects can be felt for many years with individuals experiencing the 'scar of youth unemployment' when they are in their 40s (Gregg & Tominey 2004). Further, it has been argued that young people, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, can become trapped in 'poor jobs' or 'poor work' throughout adulthood (Green & Owen 2006; MacDonald 2011).

The organisations examined for the case study sit within the wider UK unemployment and employability policy context. At a general level, for all age groups, the UK policy on unemployment and employability since 1997 has been driven by the view that work remains the best route out of poverty for most people. The focus of the previous Labour administration was on dealing with poverty through work, in particular, by promoting supply side measures through skills development with focus on a 'work first' approach to employment activation policy (DWP 2007; Lindsay, McQuaid, Dutton 2007). However, even with the economic downturn and the change in UK government, employment remains a key goal rather than any other form of activity such as caring or voluntary work (HM Government 2010). These centralised and top-down approaches focus on placing individuals

in work rather than promoting individuals' capabilities to choose the work that they have reason to value, potentially denying individuals the voice and autonomy to make choices and shape futures (for further information about the policy and institutional context of the UK case study see McQuaid and Hollywood, 2011).

3. Main Research Questions

The research questions are based on the common question framework (formulated by the Edinburgh Napier team and adopted by all the project partners) constructed around the four inter-related factors seen, in the context of this research, as contributing to a young person's capabilities for work: resources; empowerment; individual conversion factors; and external conversion factors.

Bonvin and Moachan (2008) argue that activation programmes that fulfil the ideals of the Capability Approach empower beneficiaries to lead the life they choose. In the context of our case study we used the Capability Approach to analyse the degree to which the programmes gave the young people the capability to 'lead a life they have reason to value'.

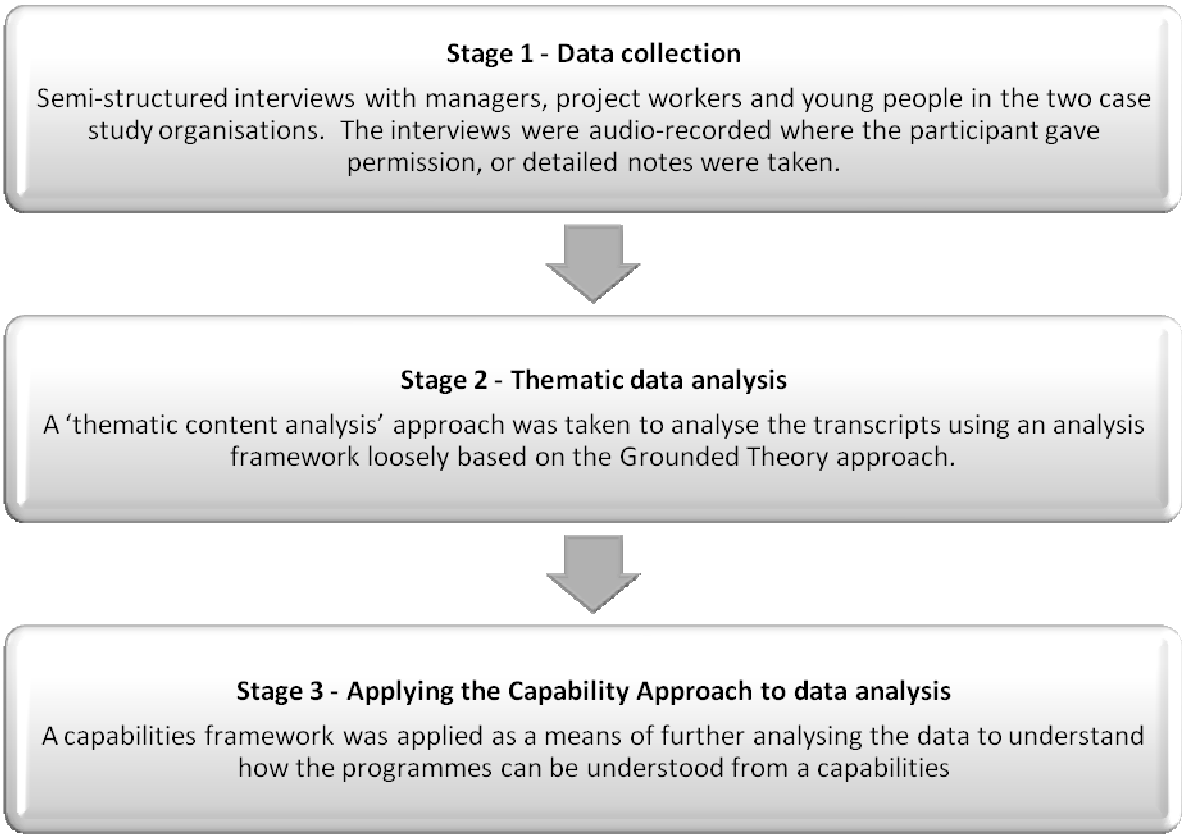
The UK case study addressed the following questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which conversion factors and capabilities does the programme seek to enhance?
- Are sufficient resources available to young people to enhance capabilities?
- Which factors facilitate the conversion of resources into capabilities?
- How are resources translated into capabilities?
- Which factors play an important role in the transition from unemployment to employment?
- What capabilities can be developed by the programme? And how are these capabilities enhanced by the programme?
- How are young people best supported in developing their capability for work?
- How do external factors impact on the availability of resources, commodities or opportunities?
- Have the young people been sufficiently empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery, implementation and evaluation of the programme?

4. Research Methods

In order to answer the research questions, a three-stage qualitative research methodology was adopted.



The first stage involved semi-structured interviews with managers, project workers and young people in the two case study organisations. In *Barnardo's Works*, interviews were conducted with 18 staff (five service managers, eight project workers, three employee liaison officers, two representatives from head office) and 22 young people (aged between 16 and 25; and 16 male and six female) at different stages of the programme based in five different regional offices. In the *Get Into* case a total five staff were interviewed (four project workers and one representative from head office), as well as five young people (three female and two male aged between 17 and 20 years) both when they were at the start of the programme and then on completion of the programme (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Interview Participants

BARNARDO'S WORKS		
STAFF PARTICIPANTS		
Staff Participant	**Number**	
Service Manager	5	
Project worker	8	
Employee Liaison	3	
Head office	2	
YOUNG PERSON PARTICIPANTS		
Young person participant	**Age**	**Programme stage**
Young male	24	Finished programme
Young male	22	Finished programme
Young male	21	Finished programme
Young female	18	Placement
Young male	19	Placement
Young female	17	Placement
Young male	25	Placement
Young male	18	Induction period
Young male	17	Induction period
Young male	24	Induction period
Young male	18	Induction period
Young female	20	Induction period
Young male	20	Placement
Young male	22	Placement
Young female	18	Finished programme
2 young females and 5 young males (group interview)	16-17	Induction period
GET INTO		
STAFF PARTICIPANTS		
Staff Participant	**Number**	
Project worker	4	
Head office	1	
YOUNG PERSON PARTICIPANTS		
Young person participant	**Age**	**Programme stage**
Young female	17	Interviewed in first week and on completion
Young male	17	Interviewed in first week and on completion
Young male	20	Interviewed in first week and on completion
Young female	19	Interviewed in first week and on completion
Young female	17	Interviewed in first week and on completion

Verbal consent was taken from all of the participants who were told that they could withdraw from the interview/research at any point. An interview guide was used to ensure that key areas were addressed but interviewees were free to expand on issues important to them. The interviews were audio-recorded where the participant gave permission, or detailed notes were taken. All the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim.

In the second stage a 'thematic content analysis' approach was taken to analyse the transcripts (Green & Thorogood 2004) using an analysis framework loosely based on Strauss and Corbin's (1998) Grounded Theory approach. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9 was used in the analysis. Data from both case studies were analysed separately. All the research team were involved in data analysis and regular meetings were held to discuss

emerging themes to ensure 'investigator triangulation' (Denzin 1970). The interview data was closely read line by line and then open coding was used to construct simple, short and focused codes that described themes in the data. Axial coding then reassembled the data linking categories to subcategories using spider diagram and memos to assist the process. Finally selective coding refined the analysis further to the selection of core categories (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

In the third stage, using these core categories the Capabilities Framework, as developed in the common questions, was then applied as a means of further analysing the data to understand how the programmes can be understood from a capabilities perspective e.g. do the programmes enable disadvantaged young people to live the life they have reason to value.

5. Empirical Findings

This section examines the empirical findings (using the perspectives of both programme staff and young people) from the two case studies addressing three core areas (as well as subthemes, specific to the individual case study, within these core areas):

1. programme aims
2. how the programmes provide young people with the capabilities for work, voice and education
3. outcomes and resources

The section examines: the capabilities for work, voice and education; those conversion factors that enable (or do not enable) the young people to have these capabilities for work; and evidence of the capability for voice and choice.

5.1 Findings – Barnardo's Works

KEY FINDINGS – BARNARDO'S WORKS

- The programme gives disadvantaged young people paid work experience (some of the 'pay may be in the form of certain welfare benefits initially, but later it is pay from the employer and/or Barnardo's Works).
- Core to the approach taken on the programme is not only achieving hard outcomes (such as entering a job), but also addressing those soft outcomes/capabilities (e.g. improved confidence and self-belief), which are important conversion factors for ensuring future sustainable employment.
- The programme supports young people in all aspects of their lives, and not just addressing issues of employment/unemployment in isolation of the wider contexts of young people's lives.
- The staff participants spoke of the need to work with the 'right' young people: those who were ready to be on the programme and those who would benefit most from the opportunities offered by the programme.
- The skills of the staff are central in shaping the way that they engage with the young people. Few of the staff had employability services backgrounds, coming instead from social work, youth work and community education.

- The programme workers offer support and encouragement to the young people that were not necessarily available elsewhere.
- The programme provides a supportive environment where young people can find out what they want to do. Often the aspirations of young people are limited. One important aspect of the programme is that it helps young people identify what they want to do and to form aspirations for the future.
- While giving young people choice in the placements they engage with, it must be remembered that the programme operates in the wider labour market context and therefore there are constraints, because of these external conversion factors, in the choices young people have.
- The programme helps young people to be independent, resilient and have access to sustainable opportunities. In this way the programme helps set young people up for the future.

5.1.1 Programme Aims

This section examines those capabilities that *Barnardo's Works* seeks to enhance; the young people that the programme works with and the barriers, or lack of conversion factors, that they might face; and the differences between *Barnardo's Works* and other employability programmes.

The aim of *Barnardo's Works* is to help disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24, to gain access to employment opportunities and training. The programme works with *"young people who wouldn't have the opportunity elsewhere"* (Service manager). Core to the approach taken on the programme is not only achieving hard outcomes such as employment and qualifications, but also addressing those soft outcomes/capabilities such as confidence and self-belief, which were seen by the project workers as important conversion factors for ensuring future sustainable employment.

5.1.1.a (Lack of) conversion factors

Young Male BW-A
Young Male BW-A is 18 years old and is on the induction phase of *Barnardo's Works*. He has been given a second chance on the programme having been previously removed from it because of his behaviour. He left school, with some SCQF[61] Level 3-5 qualifications, at 16 because of he kept on getting into fights. He attended college for a short while but was asked to leave when he assaulted a teacher. As a result of his behaviour he did not receive much advice from school about what he could do when he left. He has never worked. He joined the programme because he was not having success in applying for jobs. He hopes to get a placement in a specific sector that he is interested in, and eventually a full time job. He values the structure that the programme has given to his day and feels a lot better about himself.

The staff participants identified some of the conversion factors that the young people lacked. Our analysis indicated that these could be seen as those individual and external

[61] The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) describes the level of each qualification. SCQF Level 1 is the lowest level of qualification and SCQF Level 12 is the highest. See http://www.scqf.org.uk/features/Framework.htm for more details. Level 5 is Intermediate 2 level, usually taken a year or two before the school leaving level (Highers).

conversion factors that impact on a young person's capability for work. The staff stressed that it was hard to identify 'typical' barriers as many young people faced multiple issues; although there were some common and often deep rooted, issues faced by the young people (see table 9.2).

Table 9.2: Conversion factors that the young people in Barnardo's Works typically lacked

	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
	Lack of coping mechanisms
	Substance misuse
	Youth offending backgrounds
	ALSO lack of/few qualifications; care leavers; family problems; housing problems; literacy and numeracy support needs; mental health problems; physical health problems; young parents; debt etc.
External Conversion Factors	Lack of advice from school
	ALSO housing; external labour market; welfare changes etc.

The programme staff stressed that it was often difficult to identify all the barriers faced by the young people when they first engaged with the programme. The transition from unemployment to employment could also create barriers with young people having to manage the move from benefits to wages, as well, *"issues that* [they had] *maybe put to the back of their minds in terms of worrying about"* (Project worker).

In addressing the lack of conversion factors for work, the programme supports young people in all aspects of their lives, and not just addressing issues of employment/unemployment in isolation of the wider contexts of young people's lives. It is perceived that this approach is necessary in order to give young people a realistic chance at finding employment. This can be seen as very much in line with the Capability Approach, which acknowledges that individuals are socially and culturally situated and embedded; and this shapes what they are able to do and to be.

> *"we have to have the conversation that probably, yeah, you could* [do the] *job but you're not going to keep it because there is all this stuff happening in your life. So 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)

The type of support offered to young people therefore goes beyond providing training to enable them to do certain types of work or achieve other hard outcomes. The programme staff spoke of the support they provided with often taken-for-granted, basic employability issues (e.g. helping young people to wake-up in the morning, helping pay for travel, planning travel routes to work, attending health care appointments) that were central in enabling young people to attend their work placements.

> *"We would phone them at 6 o'clock in the morning for the first week or whatever, or if they don't answer then we will drive to their house, and we will buy them an alarm clock, we will do all sorts of things which is just really pragmatic stuff"* (Head office)

As such, from a Capability Approach perspective the programme unpacks the difference between outcomes and functionings, by taking an approach that recognises that by focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the process that leads to that functioning.

5.1.1.b Working With The 'Right' Young People

In order to take part in the programme the young people have to meet a number of both external and individual criteria. Due to the conditions of some of the programme funding young people had to be unemployed for a minimum amount of time. Some of the staff felt that this was very constraining and meant that in some cases it would be easier to address barriers if they had been able to work with the young people earlier when the barriers were not so deeply engrained as *"prevention is much better than treating really"* (Service manager).

The staff participants spoke of the need to work with the 'right' young people: those who were ready to be on the programme and those who would benefit most from the opportunity offered by the programme. The staff also spoke of how the young people needed to be able to cope with work/be 'job ready' e.g. able to manage the routine of work, be willing to work, be enthusiastic. Otherwise it was seen that the programme would be 'setting the young people up to fail'. If the staff did not feel that the young person was 'job ready' they would be referred to another service; although 'job readiness' as defined by *Barnardo's Works* was at a much lower level than in other employability programmes.

> *"We have also got to assess, people call it 'job ready', we call it not necessarily as job ready as other people would see, but enough there to work with. We wouldn't want to set them up to fail if their problems were so bad we wouldn't be able to get them into a proper work routine"* (Project worker)

5.1.1.c Comparisons with other employability services

The quotation above regarding varying definitions of 'job ready' highlights the differentiation made by the staff between *Barnardo's Works* and other employability type programmes. Many of these difference centred around *Barnardo's Works'* focus on capabilities and other employability programmes' focus on 'work first' approaches. *Barnardo's Works* acknowledged that young people's experiences of unemployment/employment are socially and culturally situated and embedded, and therefore unemployment cannot be tackled in isolation of the other issues in a young person's life.

> *"*[Other employability programmes] *are not interested in the underlying problems – they are just unemployed. If they are not ready you have got to work out what to do with them"* (Project worker)

Barnardo's Works was also focused on ensuring the sustainability of job outcomes; and unlike other employability programmes did not solely look at outcomes as a measure of success. As such the programme took into account the processes that lead to this functioning e.g. increasing self-confidence.

> *"A lot of services are focused on getting young people into jobs but I think our focus is on not only getting young people into but making them employable and keeping them in those jobs"* (Service manager)

Additionally *Barnardo's Works*, in order to ensure the sustainability of employment, acknowledged that young people often lacked the conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities. In order to achieve these aims programme staff built positive relationships with the young people so they felt comfortable in making choices.

> *"I do not want us to be a job broker…We might have to do some of that paper work behind the scenes, but as far as the young person is concerned I want them to be comfortable here, to be themselves"* (Service manager)

5.1.2 Providing young people with the capabilities for work, voice and education

This section examines how the programme gives young people the capability for work and how it provides the conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities. The programme offers creative and supportive environments for young people to find out what they want to do, get the skills and experience to enable them to have sustainable future employment and helps them to address the barriers to employment that they may face. The remainder of this section presents what we see as the conversion factors that give the young people the capability for work, namely: engaging with young people; support and encouragement and identifying aspirations.

5.1.2.a Engaging with young people

Our analysis indicated that successfully engaging with the young people was important to their success in the programme. As mentioned previously the staff often found it difficult to identify the conversion factors that the young people lacked. One young person commented that: *"I don't like talking to other people if it is my business, I hate it"* (Young male). Therefore staff used a number of informal and formal tools (e.g. assessment forms, interviews, speaking to other professionals who know the young person) to identify the needs and aspirations of the young people. The project workers reported that they learned things about the young people that other professionals had never previously uncovered.

There are a number of reasons the project workers were able to engage with the young people so effectively. The young people reported that the project workers *"actually listened"* (Young male) and wanted to get to know them and identify the type of work that would suit them best. The skills of the staff (or capabilities) were central in shaping the way that they engaged with the young people. Few of the staff came from employability services backgrounds, coming instead from social work, youth work and community education (and it must be remembered that this programme dealt with some of the most disadvantaged young people, who may not be typical of all young people seeking work). These skills sets and approaches to engaging young people are what differentiate young people's experiences with *Barnardo's Works* and many employability services.

> *"I think it is really important actually. I think the fact that our project workers have got a range of different experiences is really, really valuable"* (Service manager)

The project workers were also described as having tenacity when engaging with the young people. They would take great efforts to remain in touch with the young people and if young people were experiencing a period of extreme strain project workers would make sure that they were contactable at all times. Young people were also given second chances on the programme with one staff member commenting that: *"you have to do quite a lot to get kicked out of one of our programmes"* (Head office). These factors concerning the engagement with the young people was again was seen to differentiate the programme from many other employability services.

5.1.2.b Support and encouragement

Young Female BW-B
Young Female BW-B is 19 years old and has completed *Barnardo's Works*. She is now in full time employment with her placement provider as an administrator. She enjoyed school but left at 15 (having got some SCQF Level 3-5 qualifications) because all her friends were also leaving. She now regrets leaving school so early. She did not have any ambition when she was school (and did not seek any guidance) and cites this as being a result of the environment she lived in. Her mother made her seek employment when she left school although she left this job after a couple of months. She then took part in a series of training and work experience courses. She joined *Barnardo's Works* as she felt she should get a job rather than carry on doing courses. Programme staff continue to keep in touch and she really values this help. She also values her employer's support. She would like to remain with her current employer and gain some qualifications.

As mentioned previously a lack of support and encouragement was one of the potential individual conversion factors that the young people could lack. The programme workers therefore offered support and encouragement to the young people that were not necessarily available elsewhere. 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.

"Just coming in at the end of the day if there's not somebody to ask them how was your day, we'll give them a call at the end of the day and ask how things have gone" (Project worker)

The supportiveness of the employers was also important when programme staff were deciding who to approach for placements. As such the programme was ensuring that there were appropriate external conversion factors (i.e. attitude of employers and workplace conditions) available for the young people to succeed. There could also be reluctance amongst some employers to make placements available especially if they thought they were being asked to *"take a chance on a young person"* (Project worker) when they could advertise the job and receive a high number of (probably higher calibre) applications because of rising unemployment. The staff stressed that: employers needed to offer a nurturing environment; 'buy into' *Barnardo's Works'* ethos (but while also realising that employers needed to prioritise business demands); be aware that the young people faced barriers; and be aware that the programme was a learning process for the young people and therefore they were "*not going to get a polished article from day one"* (Employer liaison officer). Many of the young people spoke of the importance for them to be in friendly workplaces. Young people were also provided with a mentor in the workplace and the

project workers and employer liaison worker kept in regular contact to support both the young person and the employer.

> *"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)

It must be acknowledged that some of the young people did have support from their family and peers and one staff member outlined how *"if they've got positive influences from their family and their peer group of friends that also encourages them to do well in the workplace"* (Employer liaison officer). Some of the young people also outlined the important role that their families and friends had made in encouraging them to engage in the programme, address some of the barriers that may arise during the transitions from unemployment to work and in enabling them to attend their work placement.

> *"They're on my back, they think it's good because they all, all my mates work or are at college and that, they think it's cool"* (Young male)

> *"My mum is helping me out because it is a big jump from 2 weeks to a monthly pay, which is understandable, which if my mum is helping me out that is a good thing"* (Young male)

5.1.2.c Identifying and enabling aspirations

Young Female BW-C
Young Female BW-C is 17 years old and is on *Barnardo's Works*. She is on a work placement as an administrator. She enjoyed school but struggled. When she was at school she changed her mind about what she wanted to do; but she was in contact with a careers adviser. She left school when she was 15, having achieved some SCQF Level 3-5 qualifications, because she wanted a job so she could start to save and help her family out. She thought that it would be easy to find work. She joined a couple of employability services and completed a retail work placement. She joined *Barnardo's Works* because they were quick in finding her a job and she felt that they offered better experience than the other employability services she had been with. She had never considered working in administration prior to joining the programme but is now also doing a qualification in administration. She feels a lot more confident since being on the programme and her family are very proud of her. Once she finishes the programme she hopes to complete her qualification and to continue working for her current employer.

Central to the Capability Approach is having the freedom to do what is considered valuable. The programme provides a supportive environment where young people can find out what they want to do. During the interviews the young people were asked about what they had wanted to do when they left school. Many said that they had not known what they wanted to do or that they had kept on changing their minds. This is an important issue in relation to the Capability Approach. The Capability Approach puts a great emphasis on freedom and choice, but often young people do not know what they want to do, with some young people citing that they had been *"changing* [their] *mind a lot for a long time"* (Young male). They also may lack the role models and encouragement to help them develop their aspirations. As was noted previously some of the young people reported a lack of guidance regarding their options from school and encouragement from their social network.

> *"I never had any ambition when I was a school because of where I live and the environment I was in at the time; I never really had any ambitions"* (Young female)

One of the important aspects of the programme is that it helped young people identify what they wanted to do and to form aspirations for the future. Through the programme young people were encouraged to think about what kind of work placements they went on.

> *"it's quite refreshing to have somewhere where you can sit down and you can think about what you actually want to do and what you can do and what you can't do"* (Young male)

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 tailoring the support that the young person received. In this way the young people found out what they wanted to do, as well as what they did not want to. This flexibility also took into account that beneficiaries require different amounts of resources to enable them to have the capacity to act; and that there is often more than one approach to deal with problems.

> *"What we don't want to do is put a young person into the wrong placement because either they don't get on with the employer or the employer doesn't get on with them, or they don't suit the job or they don't want to do the job. And we've had young people who have taken up to 7 months to get the right placement and that may involve 3 different starts and three different types of placements. And absolutely the flexibility is there"* (Service manager)

While the young people were given choice in the placements they engaged with, the programme staff were also keen to challenge some of the young people's aspirations by questioning them about their motivations etc. in order to broaden their horizons.

> *"It's the important part about helping young people understand how little they know about what their potential options are. That's one of the first stages"* (Head office)

It was felt that the aspirations that the young people had were often very narrow, shaped by a lack of exposure to the world of work (e.g. living in second/third generation workless families or only knowing people working in a limited range of occupations) and as a result the young people did not realise that they had a range options open to them. The gendered nature of the aspirations of the young people was cited by some of the staff with the young women often only wanting to work in traditionally female occupations and young men often only wanting to work in traditionally male occupations.

> *"They tend to go for a lot of the traditional things, so boys construction and girls will say you know hairdressing or carer; they go for very traditional routes"* (Employer liaison officer)

While giving young people choice in the placements they engaged with, it must be remembered that the programme operates in the wider labour market context and therefore there were constraints, because of these external conversion factors, in the choices young people had.

> *"We work with aspirations and 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 staff 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 responsibility). However, project workers also thought laterally to help young people achieve their aspirations. For example, project workers suggested jobs that used similar skills or had similar characteristics; identified jobs that could act as stepping-stones to the young person's aspiration; and stressed how important experience would be on the young person's CV.

Choice could also be restricted to the way in which the different projects found placements. Some projects got the placements first and then tried to identify appropriate young people to fill these placements. One project was trying to take another approach in the future of getting a young person referred to them and then trying to find a suitable placement.

> *"We got the job first and then we tried to find the young person. Whereas we would rather actually find the young person first and then try and find the job to meet their needs as such"* (Project worker)

5.1.3 Outcomes and Resources

This final section examines the outcomes and resources that the programme provides: the hard and soft skills that the young people acquire and the ways in which the programme provides young people with the resources to succeed in the future. We see the important capabilities for work as being: work education and building resilience.

Young Male BW-D
Young Male BW-D is 19 years old and is on *Barnardo's Works*. He is over halfway through his work placement with a trades-person. He left school aged 16 having achieved some SCQF Level 3-5 qualifications. He did not like school finding it very frustrating. He did not know what he wanted to do when he left school and did not speak to the school careers adviser. When he left school he was in work for a short period, but did not enjoy it. He then joined another employability service. He joined *Barnardo's Works* because he was told that he could get a job through the programme. As part of his work placement he attends college every few weeks. He enjoys this as he is learning things that he needs to know for his work. His project worker keeps in regular contact to see how he is getting on. Being on the programme has helped his social life as he now has the money to go out with his friends. He hopes to stay with his current employer but also would like to make a name for himself as a trades-person.

5.1.3.a Work education

As demonstrated earlier many of the young people on the programme lack work experience and therefore do not understand what working entails. The programme therefore aims to develop these internal and external conversion factors by providing young people with work education so that they understand the norms of the workplace, what employers will expect from them as an employee, how to deal with issues in the workplace, and how to independently fill in application forms and write CVs.

> *"*[We] *focus quite heavily on employability skills and what the employer is going to be looking for, what does a good employee look like, what does a bad employee look like... try to get the young people to start thinking about what the employers will be observing when they go into the workplace"* (Employer liaison officer)

One of the staff participants outlined that the provision of this work education was enabled by making the work placements 'as realistic as possible' e.g. with young people working full time and being treated like other employees.

> *"...what we don't do is tasters; we don't say...work for a week and see how you like it. The young person starts work, they're at work, they're working 37 to 40 hours and that's it, and they're treated as an employee"* (Service manager)

The programme often works with young people from families where there may be generations of worklessness. Therefore the work education also helps young people see the value of work. Some of the young people mentioned the rewards they had experienced as a result of working e.g. having more money to socialise and having a routine, purpose and structure to their day.

> *"I've got things to look forward to now sort of thing and I've got a routine of doing things now. Before it was just waking up and doing nothing. I wouldn't go back to it"* (Young female)

5.1.3.b Building resilience

As shown previously the programme creates a supportive environment where young people can find out what they want to do in terms of employment. Additionally the programme helps young people to be independent, resilient and have access to sustainable opportunities. In this way the programme helps set young people up for the future.

> *"I would say that the young people we're supporting aren't very resilient at the start of the programme... What we try and do is overcome those barriers of young people to help them become independent and build their resilience"* (Service manager)

One staff participant spoke of how they wanted the young people to be independent of their support by the end of the programme and therefore stressed to the young people that the aim of the programme was to ensure that they would not need the help of professionals in the future.

> *"I always say to people at some point I will never see you again and you need to know that at day one, because you will not need to see me and that's what I am aiming for is that you can tell me to go and you'll never need to meet another worker in your life"* (Service manager)

The programme provides young people with qualifications. As some of the young people the programme works with have few or none of this type of individual conversion factor, this can be very important in developing their sense of achievement. Acquiring qualifications was also important in helping to ensure that young people would find it easier to find work in the future. One young person commented on how he saw his qualification as providing a stepping-stone to better paid employment in the future.

"With Barnardo's Works they got me things like my CSCS card[62]*, my forklift license and my emergency first aid and things like that which to me, most people I know think it's only a forklift, its only this, but if you think about it the more I have got, the better the job I get and well maybe not now but in a year or two and all the rest of it, I can end out getting better pay and things like that"* (Young male)

While the programme does not guarantee the young people a job at the end of their placement, some staff participants highlighted that very often the young person remained in employment with their work placement provider at the end of the programme. When approaching employers one staff participant spoke of how they wanted the young people *"to go into organisations where* [there was] *potential for employment rather than just work experience"* (Employer liaison officer).

Even for those young people who were not able to remain with their work placement provider at the end of the programme the staff spoke of how the programme provided a stepping stone as it was easier for young people to find work now that they had experience. Post programme support was provided to young people who wanted it to help with job searching and applying for jobs. Staff participants described how employers also were provided with post-programme support, getting in touch with programme staff if they needed advice on how to deal with issues that a young person who was previously on the programme might face.

5.2 Findings – Get Into

KEY FINDINGS – *GET INTO*

- *Get Into* supports young people, by providing them with skills and experience, to find a job rather than giving them a job. It mainly provides training and work experience to young people.
- Core to the approach is that in order to effectively support the young people into employment there is a need to develop those individual and external conversion factors that may help young people achieve sustainable employment.
- The sectors addressed are those where there are jobs available. The programme therefore acknowledges the importance of external conversion factors in young people's unemployment/employment experiences; as well as the way in which these impose restrictions on the choices that young people can make.
- Rising youth unemployment is increasing demand for the programme and young people with higher secondary school qualifications are now experiencing long-term unemployment and wanting to take part on the programme.
- Getting the recruitment right was seen as vital to the success of the programme because there could be up to 300 applicants for 12-15 places.
- Young people need to demonstrate that they are suited to the programme and sector, have a genuine interest in the sector and are 'ready' for the programme. Young people had to be in a position where the programme would make a positive difference.

- Staff do not have the resources, e.g. time, to provide the extensive levels of support needed to address deep rooted barriers. Therefore the programme works in partnership

[62] The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) was set up to improve quality and reduce accidents in the construction industry. CSCS cards are often required by employers as proof of occupational competence. See http://www.cscs.uk.com/ for more information.

with specialist organisation. Stability and encouragement outside the programme are important in helping the young people to succeed on the programme.

- The programme helps to change other behaviours and attitudes in order to achieve future sustainable employment. For many of the young people being on the programme is their first experience of work, so they develop a range of work related individual capabilities/functionings.

5.2.1 Programme Aims

This section examines *Get Into*, the young people that the programme works with and the barriers, or lack of conversion factors that they might face; those capabilities that the programme seeks to enhance; and the impact of the wider labour market on the programme.

The aim of *Get Into* is to support disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24, who face barriers to employment to gain experience and qualifications in a specific sector. The young people that the programme works with are those who would not have the skills, experience or qualifications to find employment that they have reason to value without some support.

> *"The philosophy is to just give them the opportunity that they deserve, the opportunity that they're definitely not going to get based on where they are at the moment with their personal-interpersonal skills, their grades, you know they're not going to be able to pass an interview, they're probably not even going to make it to interview"* (Project worker)

Providing a voice to young people underpins the development of the programme as it was set up in response to research, conducted by the organisation with the young people that they engaged with, that showed that while there were programmes helping young people with personal development e.g. developing communication skills, there was no structure in place to help young people get into employment.

5.2.1.a (Lack of) conversion factors

Core to the approach is that in order to effectively support the young people into employment there is a need to develop those individual and external conversion factors that may help young people achieve sustainable employment (table 9.3). This recognises that it is not only outcomes that are important (e.g. getting a job) but there is also a need to recognise the important role that factors such as health, well-being, family or education play in influencing outcomes.

Table 9.3: Conversion factors that the young people in Get Into typically lacked

	Factor
Individual Conversion Factors	Negative experiences of school
	Lack of encouragement from family and peers
	Lack of aspirations/young people not knowing what they want to do
	Lack of self-belief
	Lack of confidence
	Feeling disempowered
External Conversion Factors	Lack of careers advice from school
	Lack of (sustainable) job opportunities

5.2.1.b Working in specific sectors

Get Into gives young people skills, training and experience in order to enable them to work in particular sectors. The programme does not give young people jobs but provides them with the resources to find employment. It also enables young people to choose a job that they have reason to value by providing them with *"a safe environment to...make that decision, is* [the job] *for them"* (Project worker). The sectors addressed by the programme are those identified to be of interest to young people but also sectors where there are jobs available. The programme therefore acknowledges the importance of external conversion factors such as labour market factors, recruitment factors and employment policy factors, in young people's unemployment/employment experiences; as well as the way in which these impose restrictions on the choices that young people can make.

> *"It drives everything that we do these external factors – whether the jobs are there, what sector the jobs are in"* (Project worker)

The programme provides young people with the skills and qualifications relevant for that particular sector. One project worker stressed that while they provided the young people with skills that would make them stand out from other job applicants, e.g. knowing the terminology used in the sector, understanding the wider context of the sector, they needed to ensure that they did not overwhelm the young people with information, otherwise they would become disengaged.

5.2.1.c Impact of the labour market

The staff outlined the impact of the wider labour market external conversion factors on the programme. 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.

Rising youth unemployment was also having an effect on demand for the programme and the type of young people the programme was engaging with. One project worker outlined that they were increasing *"programme sizes because* [they had] *more young people...asking for help"* (Project worker). The type of young people wanting to engage with the programme was also changing because of rising youth unemployment.

> *"We work with a range of client groups, from hardest to reach to those who have been marginalised and those who have made some progress through the learning journey. It's a real mix of young people, but we still have a responsibility to ensure the young person is right for the programme and that they are capable of completing the programme"* (Personal Correspondence, Communications and Marketing Team, the Prince's Trust)[63]

The economic downturn was also having an impact on the programme's aim to enable young people to find employment. Project workers described the increased competition for posts and the lack of sustainable and long-term opportunities in certain sectors.

> *"…it has really affected us and it's becoming increasingly difficult to get young people into those jobs that we want them to go into…there's a lot of competition"* (Project worker)

5.2.2 Providing young people with the capabilities for work, voice and education

This section examines how the programme provides young people with the capability for work: the factors that the participants thought contributed to the success of the programme and the issues that might compromise a young person's chances of successfully completing the programme.

5.2.2.a Young people's suitability for the programme

Programme staff described how young people needed to be suited to the way the programme is run and appreciate the opportunity that the programme offers. Young people needed to be able to be challenged, be enthusiastic and determined, and be willing and committed to the programme.

> *"They have to be right for it, in terms of they have to be willing and committed to work and training and what we're offering"* (Head office)

The narratives of the staff participants showed that they thought that the young people needed to appreciate the opportunity offered by the programme. Young people needed to want to work and appreciate the value of work in order that they could make the most of the programme. The fact that the programme is voluntary was seen as key in making young people appreciate the opportunity, as they were aware of the competition for places, which motivated them.

> *"If you have a mandatory* [programme] *there's no way the motivation is going to be the same"* (Project worker)

Young people also 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 work in. This genuine interest, alongside enthusiasm, willingness to work and certain social skills was vital in contributing to the success of the programme.

[63] Did not participate in the interviews

> *"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)

This interest is gauged in the rigorous and multistage recruitment process. Getting the recruitment right was seen as vital to the success of the programme because there could be up to 300 applicants for 12-15 places. Recruitment could *"take the best part of two and half, three months"* (Project worker). Giving a place to a young person who then dropped out of the programme was seen as *"wasting everybody's time"* (Head office).

A genuine interest can be hard to gauge (hence the need for a multistage process) as young people may be saying that they want to work in a sector that they might not necessarily be interested in because they do not want to compromise the chance of getting on a programme that may help them get a job. As such the economic climate of rising youth unemployment can be seen as compromising young people's abilities to make the choice to engage in work that they value.

> *"I think it can in the initial stages of the recruitment it can be difficult to establish whether is this young person telling me this because that's what their Job Centre advisor told me to say sort of thing"* (Project worker)

As well demonstrating that they were suited to the programme and sector and had a genuine interest in the sector, young people also needed to be 'ready' for the programme. The programmes ranged in length from five to ten weeks and the staff participants outlined that the young people had to be in a position where the programme would make a positive difference. They did not want to set the young people up to fail and wanted to give places to young people who would benefit the most from the programme

> *"If we are picking the right people and they come in, the programme can make a massive difference in the 5 weeks. The turnaround is really quick"* (Project worker)

The barriers (lack of conversion factors) experienced by the young people could compromise their readiness as it was not always possible to deal with deep-rooted issues in a few weeks. However, it was sometimes difficult identify the conversion factors that the young people lacked. The project workers were not necessarily given detailed information about the young people by referring agencies. Additionally the young people themselves were also not always willing to disclose barriers to the project workers, as they did not want to compromise their chances of getting on the programme.

5.2.2.b Stability and encouragement

Young Female GI-A

Young Female GI-A is 17 years old and is on *Get Into*. She left school at 16 and did not get any qualifications. She did not like school and was bullied. She changed her mind about what she wanted to do when she left school. She did not receive any careers advice at school but did after leaving school. She went on a college course after leaving school and participated in another employability course. She joined *Get Into* to get work experience, to meet new people and because she was interested in a particular sector. Her family and friends are supportive. She enjoyed her work placement and has been offered a position with her placement provider. She is hoping to take part in work related training.

The staff participants were asked to outline the reasons why a young person might not successfully complete the programme. The main reason given was that external factors/personal issues, often beyond the control of the young person, might make it difficult for the young people to complete the programme for example, lack of support from family and peers, housing issues, chaotic lifestyles, lack of stability in their lives. One project worker outlined that they couldn't put the young people "*into a bubble when they start the course"* (Project worker).

The importance of stability and encouragement outside the programme in enabling young people to successfully complete the programme highlights limitations of the influence the staff can have in addressing some of the barriers faced by the young people. The young people had to take ownership of their programme experience and as such were empowered to have autonomy and a voice. However, the staff also did not have the resources, e.g. time, to provide the extensive levels of support needed to address deep-rooted barriers. *"This means that it is essential that the Trust work in partnership with other specialist organisations to signpost young people to the right places to get help… Sometimes we need to look at the wider available services and help young people to access those"* (Personal Correspondence, Communications and Marketing Team, the Prince's Trust)[64].

5.2.3 Outcomes and resources

This final section examines the programme outcomes as well as the resources that the programme provides to the young people e.g. skills, encouragement and understanding of the workplace.

Young Female GI-B
Young Female GI-B is 17 years old and is on *Get Into*. She left school at 17, with SCQF Level 6 qualifications, having reached the final year. She enjoyed school but did not think she would be able to find a job in the subject areas that she liked. She did not receive any advice about looking for work in other areas. When she left school she applied for a college course and was put on the reserve list; she also looked for jobs. She joined *Get Into* to get experience in a particular sector and to build her confidence. She was not offered a job by her placement provider at the end of the programme and she is now distributing her CV to try and get a job in the same sector.

Get Into supports young people, by providing them with skills and experience, to find a job rather than giving them a job. As such the programme aims to set young people up for the future by providing them with the skills to find long term employment: *"we're trying to help them to do is help them build careers rather than get jobs and hopefully they realise that"* (Project worker)

Therefore, from a capabilities perspective *Get Into* seeks to provide beneficiaries with the skills and knowledge to increase their capacity to transform resources into capabilities. The programme also provides support and encouragement to the young people. As highlighted earlier the young people had not always received encouragement or guidance before, with one project worker commenting that: *"quite often the feedback that I will get is nobody told*

[64] Did not participate in the interviews

me I could do that, nobody had said to me before" (Project worker). This encouragement is vital is developing the horizons of the young people, making them aware of what they could achieve if they had the support and motivation and empowering them to make informed choices.

> *"getting that motivation, getting the self belief back, showing them what it's like to do something as well and giving them that purpose. You know it's not just about sitting about, people do believe in you and you know go and do this"* (Project worker)

Young Male GI-C

Young Male GI-C is 17 years old and is on *Get Into*. He left school at 15 (with no qualifications), something he now regrets. At school he did not receive any advice on how to achieve his aspiration to be a mechanic; although on leaving school he went straight to college to study mechanics and earned £70 per week by doing so. The money motivated him to leave school. After he finished his college course he had a range of jobs. He joined *Get Into* as he was keen to get experience in a particular sector (not mechanics) and to get a job in that sector. He values the routine; purpose and maturity that the programme has given him; which he feels are especially important for his girlfriend and daughter. He has also distanced himself from some of his friends who he views as 'trouble makers'. He enjoyed his work placement and has been offered a position with his placement provider.

As well broadening the young people's horizons the programme helps to change other behaviours and attitudes in order to achieve future sustainable employment. For many of the young people being on the programme is their first experience of work so they develop a range of work related individual capabilities such as professionalism, time keeping, team work, how to learn and move on from mistakes made in the workplace.

> *"For some of them it might be their first job, so knowing exactly how to behave"* (Project worker)

The programme also aims to help young people understand the value of work and to have realistic expectations of work. This is particularly relevant as the young people may experience a drop in income as they make the transition from benefits to wages, so there is no financial gain (in the short term) from finding paid employment. The programme therefore seeks to encourage feelings of the enjoyment of working.

> *"It's about the enjoyment they get out of actually being in a job and feeling like they're doing something worthwhile and feeling part of something instead of sitting at home"* (Project worker)

As highlighted earlier it is stressed that the young people have to take ownership of their experience in having to demonstrate a genuine interest in the programme. As such the programme tries to develop the young people's independence and resilience. So while the young people may not have autonomy or a voice in the programme delivery and implementation e.g. structure or the sectors the programme engages with; the programme does empower them by stressing that they have ownership of their experience. At the time of the interviews post programme support was only just being piloted. Six-month progression support provided by volunteers was offered to young people. Young people were encouraged to take responsibility for making contact with their progression mentors although not all decided to take up this support.

6. Analytical Review

CAPABILITY FOR VOICE (AND CHOICE)

- Questions need to be asked about the voice of young people as the findings demonstrate that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live.
- The programmes help young people to have voice and voicing what they want to learn and get out of the programme.
- 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 and by the skills and experience of the young people themselves. It is not always clear how much voice the young people have in terms of being able to challenge their working conditions and roles.
- Both programmes move away from 'work-first' employment activation, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. However there is less evidence that they involve young people fully in the development and implementation of the programme.

CAPABILITY FOR WORK

- The programmes acknowledge that simply providing placements/experience will not necessarily enable disadvantaged young people to sustain employment in the future. Rather unemployment cannot be taken in isolation from housing, health etc. This approach takes the stance that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the process that leads to that functioning.
- To a certain extent, the programmes also address external conversion factors when developing young people's capability for work. Employers engaged with the programmes are being asked to provide placements/experience to applicants they would not previously have considered.
- There is an element of giving young people future choices as they are getting experience and some of the young people are seeing this first job as a stepping-stone to something they aspire to.
- Young people are able to reflect on what work 'is' in terms of: learning what employers expect of them; what work they are 'able to do' by learning about the job opportunities available to them; and what work they 'value'.

CAPABILITY FOR EDUCATION

- The programmes support disadvantaged young people who would not have the skills, experience or qualifications to find employment without some help. As such the capability for voice and work are inextricably linked with the capability for education.
- For many of the young people being on the programme is their first experience of work and therefore it helps them develop a range of work related individual capabilities/functionings: e.g. professionalism, time keeping.
- The programmes provide young people with qualifications and skills to help them stand out from other job applicants.

This section presents an analytical review of the empirical findings from both case studies from a Capability Approach perspective. It presents a summary of the findings and the capabilities enhanced by the programmes; discusses the degree to which the programmes can be seen as having a capabilities perspective; examines the potential of the programmes

in offering a capabilities perspective on employment activation; looks at the degree to which young people are empowered; before finally considering the limitations of the programmes from a capabilities perspective.

6.1 Capability for Voice (and Choice)

Questions need to be asked about the voice of young people as the findings demonstrate that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. At the start of the programmes the young people are often not equipped to have voice because of a lack of social skills, confidence and role models. Young people may not have considered what they wanted to do when they left school; they may not have had support and encouragement from family, friends and school; and they may lack social skills and confidence. Many young people may have very narrow horizons in terms of what type of employment they aspire to, shaped by gender stereotypes and a lack of role models.

Barnardo's Works especially seeks to open up new ideas and possibilities by giving young people choice. As such the programme supports the young people to develop the capability to aspire by allowing them to make informed choice and giving them voice in terms of selection of their placement experience. In *Get Into* there is less emphasis on young people having the freedom to shape their programme experience because the programme is set up to provide experience in specific sectors. However, by providing experience of the sector the programme does enable young people to make future choices as the experience allows them to decide whether they enjoy working in a particular sector. So the programmes are helping young people to have voice and voicing what they want to learn and get out of the programme.

Enabling unemployed youth to have voice and choice in the selection of placements etc. cannot be achieved without taking into account the importance of the external context of: local labour market conditions, funding issues and the wider policy environment etc. The staff participants cited that there are limitations to the choices that the young people have in terms of their employment options. A lack of positions in manual occupations was commonly cited by programme staff in *Barnardo's Works*; and *Get Into* in the main only provided experience in sectors where there were the most opportunities for future employment. More generally the young people who the programmes work with do not necessarily have unlimited choice because of a lack of qualification, experience and skills. So 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 and by the skills and experience of the young people themselves. Also it is not always clear how much voice the young people have in terms of being able to challenge their working conditions and roles, for instance their knowledge about employment rights etc.

Both programmes move away from 'work-first' employment activation, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. It is in this context that both programmes enable young people to make informed choices and have voice about what they would like to do and take ownership of their experiences. Although both programmes differ from mainstream employability programmes by taking holistic approach to youth activation, there

is less evidence that they involve young people fully in the development and implementation of the programme. However, this might be due to the short timescales they are in contact with each young person and constraints imposed by funders in terms of what they can and cannot do in the programme.

6.2 Capability for Work

One of the main focuses of both the programmes is to develop young people's individual conversion factors[65]. The programmes acknowledge that simply providing placements/experience will not necessarily enable disadvantaged young people to sustain employment in the future. Rather unemployment cannot be taken in isolation from external factors such as housing and health. Therefore core to the approach taken on the programmes is not only achieving hard outcomes such as experience, employment and qualifications, but also addressing those soft outcomes/capabilities such as confidence and self-belief, as well as helping to address housing and health issues, which were seen as important for ensuring future sustainable employment. The programmes also acknowledge the importance of the support from young people's social networks (family and peers) in the shaping whether young people are likely to succeed on the programmes. The young people themselves cite the importance of family and peer support. Often one of the barriers that the young people presented with was this lack of encouragement. As such the programme does not take an 'individual' approach, rather acknowledging that young people are embedded with communities and social networks. This approach takes the stance that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the process that leads to that functioning or lack of functioning.

In terms of young people having the capability for work it is not only the individual conversion factors outlined above that play a role, but also on the broader social, economic, environmental and political context in which they are made. As was previously outlined there are limitations to the choices that the young people have in terms of their employment options and as such the young people often have to have adaptive preferences or make 'realistic' choices. Despite this, to a certain extent, the programmes also address external conversion factors when developing young people's capability for work. While the programmes have to operate within, and are restricted by, the context of the wider labour market (thus constraining the capability for voice and choice); they also seek to address some of the barriers that young people may face in the labour market by providing access to local employers. Prior to the programme the young people would not necessarily reach the interview stage of the job application process because of their lack of qualifications and/or experience. Therefore employers engaged with the programmes are being asked to provide placements/experience to applicants they would not previously have considered. As such it can be argued that some of the employers' preconceptions about disadvantaged youth as potential employees are being changed.

The programmes also provide young people with experience and skills to add to their (often previously short) CVs and develop their aspirations in terms of what work they want to do now and in the future. There is therefore an element of giving young people future choices

[65] In both programmes young people must possess some essential attributes e.g. willingness to work, social skills, and responsibility; although these can also be developed through the programmes to a certain extent.

as they are getting experience and some of the young people are seeing this first job as a stepping-stone to something they aspire to. The idea of a 'career perspective' might be relevant here as the programmes are enabling young people to build up a trajectory.

The empirical findings provide some important insights into what work young people have reason to value. Young people are able to reflect on what work 'is' in terms of learning what employers expect of them, how to behave at work, and how to deal with issues in the workplace etc. Young people are also enabled to reflect on what work they are 'able to do' through e.g. being given a choice in *Barnardo's Works* of the placements they might want to undertake, as well as having their horizons broadened in terms of the job opportunities available to them. Another dimension in terms of what work young people have reason value is what the young people's narratives reveal about what they enjoyed most about their placements. The friendliness of colleagues was commonly cited rather than the job role itself. Staff participants also highlighted that because of the economic climate young people just wanted 'any' job, therefore not necessarily reflecting on sectors, conditions etc.

6.3 Capability for Education

The ability to exercise freedom may be dependent on the education a young person has received. The young people of concern in the case study often had negative experiences of school and may not have taken up career advice opportunities, or have been offered them. Many of the young people felt the education system had failed them. Many left school with few or no qualifications. Project workers reported that the education system was not adequately equipped to deal with the many problems faced by disadvantaged young and there was too much focus on academic achievement. As such the programmes in the UK case study support disadvantaged young people who would not have the skills, experience or qualifications to find employment that they have reason to value without some support. Therefore, the capability for voice and work are inextricably linked with the capability for education. From the perspective of the UK case study we see education as encompassing two issues: education in terms of understanding what work is and education in terms of acquiring job specific skills and qualifications.

For many of the young people being on the programme is their first experience of work and they may also be from families where there may be generations of worklessness, so they lack role models and sources of information about the workplace. The programmes therefore help the young people develop a range of work related individual capabilities such as professionalism, time keeping, team work, how to learn and move on from mistakes made in the workplace, understanding the norms of the workplace, and what employers will expect from them as an employee.

Barnardo's Works provides young people with qualifications. As some of the young people may never have previously got any qualifications, this can be very important in developing their sense of achievement. Acquiring qualifications was also important in helping to ensure that young people would find it easier to find work in the future. One young person commented on how he saw his qualification as providing a stepping-stone to better paid employment in the future. *Get Into* also gives young people skills, training and experience in order to enable them to work in particular sectors. The programme provides young people

with skills that would make them stand out from other job applicants, e.g. knowing the terminology used in the sector, understanding the wider context of the sector.

6.4 Limitations of the Programmes

There are however some limitations to the programmes from a capabilities perspective:

- **Limitations in influencing external conversion factors e.g. weak local labour markets, vacancy characteristics, recruitment factors**.

- **Lack of resources e.g. time and expertise**: The programmes are relatively short and therefore it may be difficult to address deep-rooted barriers. This affects the extent to which internal conversion factors are directly addressed by the programme.

- **Voice and Empowerment**: Although both programmes differed from mainstream employability programmes by taking a more holistic approach to youth activation, there was less evidence that they involved young people fully in the development and implementation of the programme. However, this might be due to the short timescales they are in contact with each young person and constraints imposed by funders in terms of what they can and cannot do in the programme.

- **Limitations imposed by financial resources**: Both programmes were highly reliant on external funding sources (such as EU funding; government funding etc.) which put a number of constraints on their ability make long term plans for the programmes. Although both programmes were successful and benefited from being operated by large third sector organisations they still faced uncertainty due to wider context of public spending cuts and other cuts in funding in the UK. In addition, changes to UK welfare system and the introduction of the UK government's Work Programme for the long term unemployed were seen as having potential impacts in how the programmes may operate in the future.

7. Conclusions

- Both programmes partly move away from 'work-first' employment activation, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value.

- Questions are raised about the voice of young people as the findings demonstrated that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. It is in this context that both programmes enable young people to make informed choices about what they would like to do.
- 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; and so while young people's 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 programmes take the approach that unemployment cannot be taken in isolation from housing, health, family relationships. The programmes broadly take a capabilities perspective on youth unemployment by framing unemployment in terms of impacts on wellbeing and quality of life.

The UK case study examined two, Third sector run, programmes that support disadvantaged young people in the transition from unemployment to employment from the perspectives of those managing the programmes, the project workers and the young people themselves.

The empirical findings have demonstrated that both programmes partly move away from 'work-first' employment activation, focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value. Questions are raised about the voice (e.g. ability to effectively express their own opinions) of young people as the findings demonstrated that young people's aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. Both programmes enable young people to make informed choices about what they would like to do by providing insights into the realities of certain occupations/sectors, role models and encouragement. Young people are encouraged to take ownership of their experiences on the programmes. As such the programmes take the approach that the more you can give voice and choice to the young people the more successful the programme.

The findings provide useful insights into what work young people find reason to value. However, enabling disadvantaged youth to choose the work that they have reason to value cannot be achieved without taking into account the importance of the external context; and so while young people's choices may be developed through providing role models it is still a choice shaped and restrained by the context of wider labour markets and education and training opportunities.

The programmes also engage with individual and external conversion factors by addressing wider personal, social and structural barriers that prevent young people from entering work. The programmes identify and develop positive capabilities (resilience, resourcefulness, commitment, motivation, self belief). While young people must possess some essential attributes, such as willingness to work, the programmes acknowledge that simply providing placements will not necessarily enable disadvantaged young people to sustain employment

in the future. Rather unemployment cannot be taken in isolation from housing, health, family relationships. This approach highlights the difference between outcomes and functionings; in particular that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the process that leads to that functioning. However, a lack of staff time can make it difficult to address deep-rooted barriers and the extent to which conversion factors can be addressed by the programmes.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the UK case studies broadly take a capabilities perspective on youth unemployment by framing unemployment in terms of impacts on wellbeing and quality of life. They take a 'capabilities-friendly' approach to employment activation by taking a long-term perspective, based on promoting individuals' freedom to choose the work and learning that they value; and acknowledging both individual and collective responsibilities to act to promote capabilities for work and learning (Bonvin & Farvaque 2007).

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CHAPTER 10: CAPABILITIES FOR EDUCATION, WORK AND VOICE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF "THE LESS EMPLOYABLE". WORKABLE WP 4 SWED CASESTUDY, FULL REPORT

Dr Gunilla Bergström

Introduction

Higher levels of education are significantly associated with economic and societal prosperity as well as human well-being. Therefore strategies promoting an overall increased level of education within the population can be regarded as a means for economic growth as well as an investment in human capital (Lindberg 2009; McMahon 2009; OECD 2011) In line with these arguments, the average level of education has risen significantly in advanced nations in recent decades (e.g. Barro & Lee 2001). So also in Sweden, where there has been an extensive and rapid expansion of higher education since the beginning of the 1990s. The result is a redoubling of the number of full time students since 1990; in 2010, there were roughly 321 000 full time students compared to about 143 000 in 1990/1991 (National Agency for Higher Education 2011a). The share of the Swedish population with tertiary education is also slightly higher (33 %) compared to the average among the OECD countries (30 %) (OECD 2011, p 40).

However, the benefits of higher education are not unchallenged. During the last decade, the utility aspect has been put to the front at the expense of pure educational values (Garrick & Rhodes 2000). From 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 & Thålin 2009; Nordin et al 2010; Sahlén 2010). The critique is based on the view that there is a considerable size of over education, or vertical mismatch, on the Swedish labour market and that university graduates within this group are overrepresented among those experiencing that their work is unqualified compared to their educational level (e.g. Sahlén 2010, Almerud et al 2011).

The "utility agenda" 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). Employability was introduced internationally during the 1990s, but in the Swedish educational context, it was more broadly established during the Bologna-reform in 2006 (Löfgren Martinsson 2008; RiR 2009; Hasselberg 2009). As a policy concept employability is emotionally charged and ideological (Brown et.al. 2002; Berglund 2009). It

creates new conditions and raises new demands since central actors - politicians, employers, education providers and students - incorporates it within their view of what outcomes to expect from higher education (Morley 2001; Brown et. al. 2002). However, employability is by no means an unambiguous concept – there are several 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; employability in terms of possession of relevant achievements.

It could be argued that 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 (Dahlen 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 and there are voices raised calling for a closer connection between labour market needs and education. Carrying the matter to its extreme, the consequence suggested is that educations not obviously in demand in the labour market should not be offered or that the size of study allowance should be reduced for "unprofitable" educations (Fölster et al 2011). Still, many of those educations attract a lot of students.

In the present study the experiences of "less employable" graduates are dealt with from a capability perspective (see Sen 1992, 1999), focusing on whether they appreciate their education as a capability enhancing experience and if not, what aspects they define as constraining. 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[66]. To some extent, the study sets out from the assumption that a qualified job is a central motive for young people's choice to enter higher education and since this specific group of graduates seems to face some trouble in this respect, the study will pay attention to what constraining factors they have experienced. However, 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.

Commonly, the CA is used for evaluation of welfare institutions specifically aiming at preventing marginalisation and social exclusion. The context of the present study does not quite fit into that description. Still, the CA is a useful tool in further exploring people's expectations and their possibilities to realise those expectations in general. 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. Following the CA, the proper aim of (welfare) institutions is to expand the scopes and scales of the

[66] The 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 three and four years previous the time for each investigation constitute the sample.

people's capabilities rather than forcing them into predefined beings and doings (Sen 1999). In line with that, it could be argued that the evaluation of higher education should focus on the extent to which it contributes to expand young people's *possible* actions and states rather than employability demonstrated by the graduates actually obtaining a job. Although "not obtaining a job" is the core principle defining the target group of the study, the focus of the study is on young graduates' experiences of capabilities and constraints.

The distinction between resources and capabilities and the importance of conversion factors are of great importance 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).

Research questions

Focusing on a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being and doings, the main issue at stake is whether the "less employable" perceive their education as an experience enhancing their possibilities to lead a life they have reason to value. More specifically, the questions raised are: What were their expectations when they entered university; were their motives related to future job opportunities or other values? Was their decision to enter higher education considered and based on aspects they had reason to value? 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 come up to their expectations or not? If not – what is missing and what could have been done differently?

Methods

In order to explore the questions raised, capabilities for education, work and voice will be the focal dimensions attended to. To reveal the perspective of the less employable require an understanding of relevant resources available to them as well as the uncovering of their personal experiences concerning the ability to convert these resources into freedoms and opportunities. The methods used to meet these requirements are document analyses and interviews. Above that, university employees and labour market representatives were interviewed in order to understand the perspective of education providers as well as employers. The main interviewees (less employable young graduates) will be thoroughly described in the following section, whereas the university employees and labour market representatives included in the study will be shortly presented under the heading "Data collection and analysis" below.

The target group

Although education generally means improved labour market prospects and reduced risks for unemployment (OECD 2011, Jusek 2011: National Agency for Higher Education 2009a; 2010a), the labour market of young academics seems to be quite heterogeneous. For most fields of education, the opportunities vary considerably between periods of recession and upward trends, whereas some are generally insensitive. However, within the insensitive group, there are categories that are generally spared from unemployment, whereas some are facing difficulties even during good times; the labour market opportunities for graduates within the health sector seems to be quite good no matter what the state of the market, whereas the situation is the other way around for those with a degree within the arts subjects for instance (Wennström 2009).

Another dividing line is between the three different *types of exams* available within the Swedish higher education system. There are vocationally oriented programmes, leading to an occupational exam, e.g. engineer, nurse and teacher. Above that, many faculties and departments offer general programmes within specific disciplines, such as political science, design, computer science, geography etc. Finally, the students may also design an individual exam composed by a number of single courses of his/her choice. In terms of labour market opportunities (here defined by employment rates, jobs corresponding to educational level/field of education and the time span between exam and the first job) vocationally oriented programmes are generally advantageous compared to general programmes and exams put together by single courses (National Agency for Higher Education 2010b)[67].

Young graduates with individually composed exams within the humanities, as well as within the social sciences are among the categories traditionally hit by less favourable labour market options. Those graduates are both overrepresented among those experiencing a weak labour market attachment, having a job not requiring higher education, or a job within the "wrong" field (National Statistics Sweden 2010; National Agency for Higher Education 2010b). Several studies also show that students within these disciplines are among those most worried about their future, they have lower expectations regarding their future job chances and they are more dubious concerning the value of their skills on the labour market (SSCO 2009; Jusek 2009, 2011). Still, these facts seem to have no obvious impact on young people's choices; the less favourable educations attract many students and recalling one of the central questions asked; why do they choose such a precarious life path?

The sample for the present study was selected using following procedure; all students who completed an individually composed bachelor's degree, either within the humanities or the social sciences, at one of the bigger universities in the country during the period of 2007 and 2009 were selected from the university register. A small inquiry, asking questions about their working situation since graduation was sent to everyone who was under the age of 31 years. In the inquiry, the respondents were requested to declare whether or not they agreed on taking part in a subsequent study further exploring their whereabouts after exam. 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

[67] The analyses referred to do not distinguish between general programmes and exams composed by single courses, probably because the establishment of programs is a quite recent trend.

on taking part in the subsequent study were contacted. Finally two male and seven female graduates aged between the age of 26 and 30 were interviewed.

Concepts

Capability for education, work and voice are the three dimensions framing the study.

Education is partly looked at as an end in itself, but it is also viewed as a means for other ends, such as better job opportunities or the state of being well educated (which might not be clearly distinguished from education as an end).

Work is mainly viewed as an end since it is expected to be defined as a valuable outcome by the young graduates. This might not be true, but there are several studies suggesting that the utility aspect tend to overshadow pure educational/personal values also among students (e.g. National Agency for Higher Education 2009b). If so, it could be questioned to what extent the less employable graduates had enough information about the labour market in order to make well informed educational choices that enhance their capability to lead a life they have reason to value. Studies showing that a large share of the less fortunate graduates would have chosen a different education if they had the opportunity to do so, further support this idea (Almerud et al 2011). At the same time, there are studies pointing in the opposite direction. Pure educational values still seem to be important since students are quite pleased with their education, despite documented hardships concerning access to the labour market (Jusek 2011; SSCO 2009). Therefore, it might very well be the case that young people are informed, but that their choices are governed by pure interest. Employment in a so called atypical job might be a part of young people's conceptions of reality and therefore, taking on a job not requiring higher education might be perceived as something acceptable and even expected. However, it is important to bear in mind that our preferences and choices are deeply shaped by the structures of opportunities available to us. We tend to adjust our hopes to our probabilities and such adapted preferences might limit individual aspirations and hopes for the future and in turn, it could be suggested that our agency and well-being are diminished rather than enhanced (Nussbaum 2000; 111 ff).

Following the discussion above, being able and having the opportunity to form a conception of what one values, which in turn is a precondition for generating informed and considered decision is crucial (Nussbaum 2000; 79). This ability is defined as an aspect of capability for voice, which on a general level 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 & 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 less employable, the service and measures provided to unemployed and the regulations framing these measures is a relevant "social work context". Nevertheless, the main focus regarding capability for voice will foremost be the student's and young graduate's possibilities to voice their opinion and to what extent their opinions are taken into account within the higher education system, on the labour market and within the politics of education and work.

Data collection and analysis

Resources for education, work and voice were defined by various formal rights, measures and possibilities available for everyone on a general level. Capabilities for education and work depend heavily on the way that the system for higher education is organized and the connection between higher education and the labour market. Hence, based on various policy documents, acts and investigations, the study includes an account for formal rights to education and the availability of measures provided by the higher education system aiming at enhancing young graduates possibilities to get a job. In order to reveal how these resources are put into practice, university employees at different levels were interviewed. The choice of interviewees was based on the way that the university included in the study is organized. The actual operations of higher education institutions in general are clearly framed by national politics. Based on national rules and regulations, the management at the different institutions lay down the overall guiding principles. These principles are then further concretized at next level, which in the present study means faculty level, where the strategies for implementing the guidelines at each department are formulated. In line with this structure, one university management representative and three civil servants with responsibility for educational planning, including employability issues[68], at faculty level were interviewed. With the purpose of exploring a crucial resource related to capability for work, as well as the purpose of grasping an overall picture of what issues young graduates facing trouble in getting a job raise, a career advisor employed at the university was also interviewed.

From a capability perspective, the view of labour market representatives constitutes an important conversion factor when focusing the education to work transition. Therefore, the labour market perspective concerning the target group and the value of their education was revealed by interviewing four employers, four officials at the employment office and one union representative.[69]

According to Bohman (1996) the extent to which citizens or groups of citizens are able to bring out their concerns on the political agenda is an important indicator for assessing the capability for voice. Collective actors such as trade unions or other interest groups are regarded as crucial for creating a genuinely public space. In line with that, resources enabling students and graduates to voice their opinion and to make it count within public policy process were defined by the availability of organisations representing their interests and the extent to which the organisations proposals have a real impact. Both scientific studies and public discussions have served as a basis for this assessment. Questions about students influence have also been raised in the interviews with university representatives. The interviewees experiences of capabilities for voice in their encounter with the higher education system, the labour market and the employment office are also taken into account.

[68] In one of the documents where the strategies at faculty level are drawn up, enhanced "employability" is explicitly pointed out as a crucial aim of the Bologna reform that all educations at the faculty shall take into account.

[69] Interviews 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 labor market of Sociologist – conditions and conceptions" (2011), internal document; dept. of Sociology and Work Science, Gothenburg University.

Interviews

To understand peoples' sense of capability requires the uncovering of significant experiences, motives, expectations, notions and emotions – dimensions of the social reality preferably studied by qualitative methods (Flick 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Since *subjective* experiences are the main interest, the methodological approach used could roughly be sorted into the phenomenological tradition. More specifically, the study sets out from an emotionalist point of view, a view of which primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into peoples' subjective experiences (Gubrium & Holstein 1997; Silverman 2006: 123). Commonly, the main way to generate this kind of data is through the use of unstructured, open ended interviews (Silverman 2006:118), which is the tool used in the present study. The unstructured (or focused) interview allows for a qualitative depth because the conversation can be based on ideas and meanings that are close to the interviewees themselves, which in turn enables the researcher to understand the meanings that the interviewees ascribe to different phenomena (May 1997).

The keynote for achieving rich data is active listening and that the interviewer allows the interviewee the freedom to talk and ascribe meanings while bearing in mind the broader aims of the project (Noaks & Wincup 2004: 80). With the purpose of being able to give full attention to the respondent and the situation, all the interviews were recorded. The use of recorder is not favoured by everyone. For instance, it has been argued that it might have inhibitory effects on the respondents (May 1997). This did not seem to be the case and my impression is that the benefits overweighed possible disadvantages in this specific case. Above that, it was also important not to reduce data, but to have the opportunity to precise reproductions of the respondent's stories in order to establish a solid ground for analysis and conclusions.

Establishing trust is a crucial condition for successful in depth interviews - especially when the subject of interest relates to experiences that might be understood as some kind of failure (such as difficulties in the transition between education and work). Several theorists argue that the key note is to obtain rapport with respondents. Reason and Rowan for instance, state that "humanistic" depth interviews in which interviewee and interviewer become peers or even companions is in favour since both the type of knowledge gained and the validity of the analysis are based on deep understanding (1981 205-206; see also Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Similarly, Burgess (1980) entitles the unstructured interview as a conversation and sees it as giving greater depth than other research techniques because it is based on a sustained relationship between the informant and the researcher.

My overall impression is that most of the interviews did evolve in this direction and in line with Oakley (1990) who states that similar experiences opens up for trust and dialogue, I partly attribute this to the fact that the interviewer (I) and the respondents have a lot in common such as educational background, experiences of a precarious labour market situation.

The empirical data consists of interview prints and the technique used to give the material analytic meaning can be defined as coding (Glaser & Strauss 2006). The categorization was based on the purpose of the study, which means that the overall categories, capabilities for

education, work and voice were predefined. Each interview-text was first roughly categorised along these core dimensions. Since one important aim of the study was to explore possible constraints in the transition between education and work, the presence or absences of conversion factors play a significant role. Consequently, the subsequent analytic process following upon the first categorisation was to create sub-headings under each category defining different kinds of conversion factors.

Validity and reliability

To some extent, the study is retrospective since it is based on what the respondents said on being invited to look back at their past, i.e. some experiences of their experiences are only seen upon reflection. This might raise some questions about reliability of the data and the validity of my claim to access the interviewees lived experience and sense of capability at that point of time - memory simply tends to rewrite the history. Capturing the whole phase, and the change, requires a longitudinal approach – an approach not possible within the framework of the present project. To strengthen this particular weakness of the study, the stories told by the interviewees has been related to previous research touching upon the same phenomenon.

That the relationship between the respondent and the interviewer evolves into something resembling friendship has also been argued to endanger the requirement for objectivity, which generally is regarded as a prerequisite for scientific validity. One way to enhance objectivity in emotionalist inspired studies is to describe the research process in order to create transparency and a possibility for readers to judge the credibility of the results and the conclusions made by the researcher (Svensson & Ahrne 2011: 27). Another way to enhance validity is to pay attention to contradictions in the material and to avoid resorting to "anectdotalism" (Silverman 2006: 47), which refers to when researchers reports appeal to a few telling examples of some apparent phenomenon, without any attempt to analyse less clear or contradictory data.

Results and analysis

The presentation below is introduced by reviewing the young graduate's situation at the time for the interviews. Thereafter, resources for education, work and voice that were available to them will be presented, followed by an analysis of their capabilities and along with that, an account for conversion factors and constraints. For the purpose of readability, the graduates have been given the following feign names; Tomas, Karin, Anna, Lisa, Louise, Erik, Sara, Eva and Maria.

After graduation

At the time for the interviews, Karin was unemployed and in search for a job. Anna and Erik were employed in qualified jobs more or less corresponding to their educations whereas Maria had an employment in an unqualified job. Tomas, Lisa, Louise, Sara and Eva were studying at the moment although they also worked to some extent in order to earn their living.

Except for Anna and Erik, all the interviewees were in some kind of transitional phase. Karin's goal was to get an employment in a 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 an employment.

Maria had experienced periods of unemployment mixed with a couple trainee jobs, mainly organised and supported by the employment office. At the time for the interview 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 were 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. Their educations were characterized by high demands on individual initiatives and responsibility. Consequently, their thoughts were mainly circling around issues related to their studies rather than the approaching working life. 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 programme.

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). The Swedish higher education system 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 both regarding content (variety of subjects), form (vocational programmes, general programmes, single courses) and organisation (distance learning, 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 in the context of the study are closely related to educational resources. On a general level, having an academic exam is definitely a resources 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). Several studies, mainly conducted by student organisations, unions and other interest groups try to point out the reasons behind those differences. In sum, unequal availability of elements such as labour market contacts during the time of study and qualified career and study counselling are the main reasons put

forward (Jusek 2009; 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. employers' knowledge about what the education means, what skills and competences the education provides, is assumed to be insufficient (Jusek 2011; Schoug 2008). The measure proposed is a closer connection between education and the labour market, but unlike the utility agenda reviewed in the introduction, the "connection" referred to is not an adjustment of the educational supply to short-sighted labour market demands, but connections in terms of more labour market contacts during the time of study together with more and better career and study counselling.

At both faculties included in the study there are labour market connections for single course students available by a work place located practice course that is offered. The aim of the course is the enhancement of graduates' possibilities to enter the labour market and the initiative has been favourably received by both students and teachers. One of the university employees at faculty level state that students often experience difficulties in formulating their knowledge in terms of skills in demand on the labour market and that their educational identity might be hard to connect to the labour market. Here, the practice course mentioned serves several purposes; students are provided with real experiences of transforming their educational knowledge into practical work and they are also provided with important social connections to employers.

Information about future labour market options associated with different educations could also be regarded as a resource for work since it gives students a possibility to make well informed educational choices. To supply students with this kind of information falls under the study counsellor assignment, a service available at every department at the university investigated. There is also a special unit for career advice (Career Centre), providing all kinds of career counselling and assistance related to the transition between education and work. Finally, access to support from the employment office is a resource for work that is available for everyone in search for a job.

Capability for voice is generally defined as the freedom to voice one's opinion and to make it count within the public policy process and quite in line with Bohman's (1996) argument on the importance of collective actors for creating a genuinely public space, there are several interest groups, unions and the like, acting on the behalf of students and graduates interests. The situation of the "less employable" has been highlighted by these collective actors and, as reviewed above, the lack of practical elements, information and qualified guidance has been pointed out as something putting some educational categories in an unfavourable situation when it comes to labour market opportunities. The politics of higher education seems to take these arguments into account. A significant political initiative was taken in 2009 when the Swedish National Audit Office was assigned to scrutinize the *measures promoting employability*[70] taken by the authorities concerned (RiR 2009).The examination confirmed that that there are great differences in terms of labour market connections depending on what education one studies. It was also concluded that the labour

[70] The Audit Office does not explicitly define employability, but state that enhanced employability through better development and career opportunities on the labor market are probably important motives behind people's choice to apply for higher education.

market related information directed to prospective students were undeveloped and insufficient.

Another example of resources for voice is that all seats of learning are obliged to carry out follow- ups on students' views on their education in general, including aspects such as labour market relevance, as a part of the quality assessment of higher education (National Agency for Higher Education 2011).

Capability for voice also refers to the ability and opportunity to form a conception of the good (Nussbaum 2000, p79). Availability of information about labour market options associated with different educations has already been defined as an important resource in this respect. This kind of information serves as a necessary resource for young peoples' ability to make a conception of the good and to make educational choices in line with this conception. The preconditions for this looks good: that students should be given access to study 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 is regulated by law (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. The unit for career advice mentioned above (Career Centre) is an additional resource creating opportunities to form a conception of the good and to make decisions in line with that conception. The service provided by the employment office could also be regarded as resources in this respect since their support is supposed to help those in search for work to match their competences with employers looking for labour.

Capabilities for education

Capability can be defined as "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being" (Sen 1993, p 30). For the group of young people interviewed, to study at the university was indeed a valuable act and their stories suggest that there were no obvious obstacles restricting their freedoms to participate. On the contrary, the opportunity to participate was more or less taken for granted. That the Swedish higher education system is open to everyone, that it is free of charge, and that there is a fairly generous state governed allowance system available, certainly explain much of this. However, as Nussbaum (2000: p 111 ff) points out, our subjective preferences and choices are shaped by material as well as cultural circumstances. Our understanding of what opportunities there are available to us is deeply shaped by the social context and therefore, that all interviewees were brought up in an education friendly atmosphere, could be regarded as an important conversion factor (see also Robeyns 2005, p 99). Furthermore, a history of good experiences from school and a sense of being an "easy learner" are common features within the group of interviewees that also constitute significant conversion factors since it creates 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 state that their choices were driven by interest, the results indicate a strong sense freedom to study based on personal preferences.

> "*I have absolutely only studied out of personal interests and I've always been convinced that if you do something you are committed to, it will pay off in one way or the other".* (Louise)

Capabilities 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 unconsciously regarded as a given consequence of education.

> "*Well, I had no thoughts about what I could do with it [the education]). That was something that came to me gradually, like whoops! – maybe one has to think about that"* (Lisa)

Crucial to the capability approach is the process for people to come to decision about what they have reason to value (Sen 1992, p 81) and in 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. However, for most of the interviewees, this expectation was not met and therefore, in terms of capability for work, the interviewees freedoms to actually enjoy the lives that they have reason to value was not obviously enhanced by their education. The focal question then is why this is the case: what resources or conversion factors are missing? The interviewees stories are dominated by constraints related either to the education provider or the labour market. The role of social networks and the employment office are also mentioned.

Constraints related to the education provider

In line with previous research (Jusek 2009; 2011; Gemmel et al 2010; RiR 2009; SSCO 2009) difficulties in entering the labour market were primarily explained by shortcomings of the educational system in providing measures facilitating the graduates' 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 for the interviewees' studies 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 express a strong critique against that it was offered first at master level and that it was poorly organized 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 apparently have to find a proper employer and settle the agreements for the practice, and the lack of structure and support from the education provider seems to have jeopardized 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.

Lack of information might be viewed as a central constraint 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 recognize that their future working life was an issue for her/him. The interviewees either had no knowledge about the existence of the Career Centre or thought their service was designed for vocationally oriented categories of graduates. Bearing the support in mind that after all is within reach, the interviewees state 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 'd heard about it a long time ago, maybe I'd 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. This information ought to be more involved at department level.* (Louise*)*

This suggestion is quite in line with the view of the career adviser interviewed. Her view is 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 think that they are the only ones feeling that way and they are ashamed about their ignorance. In order to reduce those negative experiences and to enhance the students' possibilities to get a job, the adviser advocates that some of the service that Career Centre provides should be included *in* education instead. Since the Centre is located in a separate building with no geographic or organisational connection to a specific faculty or department, the adviser highlight the 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 is thereby heavily dependent on whether the counsellors are committed to the issue and on whether the counsellors are heard by their colleagues. According to the adviser at Career Centre, that 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 put many students in an unfavourable situation – especially those who do not follow a coherent 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 utilization of higher education. He regards himself as "spared" since he escaped these kinds of elements during his time of study. Yet, it should be noted that Erik is the only interviewee describing the transition between education and work as completely unproblematic. Concurrently with his university studies, he continuously had some kind of assignment in different non-profit organizations. At the time for the interview, he held a qualified job in one of these organisations and instead of referring to educational merits, Erik relates his own smooth transition between education and work to his long history of voluntary commitment within such organisations. One of the

university employees at faculty level express 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 arts and humanities for instance, resist being imputed a commercial way of thinking about education. Many 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.

Constraints related to the labour market

Other aspects constraining the opportunity to convert the academic exam into capability for work were experiences of ignorance and resistance on the part of the labour market. A common notion expressed by the graduates is that their educations are not in demand on the labour market 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 – in a recruitment context, concepts equivalent to their studied disciplines does not occur and this is experienced as something constraining the possibilities to market themselves as someone having the right qualifications.

> "W*hen you have a general exam, it's not that easy to write the words, or to convert it to something that fits into what the labour market demands. It's 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 do not have knowledge about what some educations account for and thus cannot "decipher" what skills and competences the job seeker has. This is particularly true for exams composed of single courses where the subjects do not clearly correspond to relatively established occupations. This also applies to recently establish vocational programs, which may have a clear vocational focus, but that is not yet known on the labour market. Consequently, the less known education a person has the greater demands on the ability to market both the education and oneself.

Various aspects of personal characteristics are also brought up 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 the adviser at Career Centre. This is connected to a general surplus of job seekers with adequate or more than enough 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. However, the present study indicates that the phenomenon has the opposite consequence since employers tend to transfer a perceived ambiguity or vagueness of the less known educations on the individual. Since the education is not perceived as having a clear direction towards a specific professional field, it is assumed that individuals who have chosen this kind of education 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 vocationally oriented education.

When talking about individuals who have put together a general education package without a clear professional profile, one of the employment office employees state that:

> *"There's always a fear that these academics will fixate too much on problems or new ideas, that they'll call everything into question and that they won't be productive".*

One of the other employment office representatives also refer to individual properties and believes that the rather few graduates who do not get a job quickly after exam have a different approach to life in general. His interpretation is that they are less determined and have few thoughts on the future world of work while studying.

Social networks

The importance of social networks for job opportunities is also highlighted, preferably by the graduates. A common idea is that social networks are becoming increasingly significant. This is not necessarily viewed as a positive development – far from it! Louise named the phenomenon "the recommendation society" and she is quite upset since being nice and attending to the social network seems to be more important than being educated:

> "Y*ou have studied for five years and you're damned good and skilled and then you realize that people get the job just because they're 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 an authority assigned to match available competence with labour market demands. However, the confidence in the service offered by the office is very low among the graduates in the study. A majority has 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 characterized 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 categorized 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)

Capabilities 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 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 power of the students is also confirmed by the university management representative interviewed who confirms that several of the resources that actually are in place (practice course, services provided by Career Centre) are measures taken by the universities at least partly in order to meet the students' requirements.

Still, to be able to convert resources 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 active agents and agency here means that each person is a dignified and responsible human being who critically reflects and makes worthwhile life choices from alternatives that are available to her (Walker & Unterhalter 2009, p 15). Available alternatives were not known to the graduates interviewed, but it could be argued that it is the individual's responsibility to seek relevant information. However, 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 forward 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 naivety or an unconscious 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 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 categorized 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. Maria tried to make her needs clear to the staff at the office but her efforts where fruitless.

> *"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 & 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 service 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 such as personal growth, a widening intellectual horizon, ability for critical and analytic thinking, are aspects put forward when talking about the positive meanings 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. Based on the interviews it could be argued that an important resource missing is *well organised, high quality work place practice* provided by the higher education system. Above that, the obstacles mainly originate in a lack of conversion factors, either associated with the education system or the labour market. *Information and knowledge* is an overall significant aspect. Looking at the education system, a focal constrain is the student's lack of knowledge about available resources. Looking at the labour market, there seems to be a *mutual confusion of languages* between the labour market on the one side and the academic world on the other. Employers as well as the employment office cannot "decipher" skills and competences acquired by less known educations, and at the same time, graduates with those educations face difficulties in defining their competences in a way that correspond to what the labour market demands. The increased importance of social networks and personal

characteristics for job opportunities, in combination with a tendency on the labour market to transfer a perceived vagueness in the education onto the individuals, accentuate the significance of the mutual lack of understanding. Finally, *age* is defined as a constraining factor in different respects. The graduates refer to age when explaining why their choices and actions were guided by pure lust instead of strategic thinking taking future labour market opportunities into consideration. Age is also an aspect defining the resources provided by the employment office with no real possibilities to negotiate and adjust the content with reference to individual needs.

The overall impression is that the conditions concerning capabilities for education are good, but there are several constraints preventing students and graduates to convert various resources that actually are in place into capabilities for work, and to some extent into capabilities for voice. The question then is what to do? Who ought to shoulder the responsibility and in what way?

Policy implications

If expanding people's capabilities is a goal, a crucial objective is to come up with suggestions how to remove obstacles to those freedoms (Walker & Unterhalter 2009, p2). Based on the present study there are several initiatives that could be taken in order to reduce the identified obstacles.

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 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. point out what kind of labour market relevant 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 courses 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" needs 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.

Given the importance of labor 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 interviewed graduates experience a general lack of connection between their education and working life of two interrelated kinds. First, the view is that the education includes too few and/or poorly organized 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-organized labour market connections, such as work place located practice, are initiatives potentially attending to these problems. Since it is argued that job opportunities increasingly depend on personal characteristics and private social networks, well organised work place 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 embraced by less favourable conditions in these respects.

Both the young graduates' perceptions as well as statements put forward by labour market representatives indicate that the labour market is characterized 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 those education. Consequently, the current study suggests that employers as well as employment office representatives need an increased knowledge and appreciation of these educations. It also seems necessary to combat negative attitudes towards specific groups of academics. A move towards a greater understanding and appreciation of less known and less vocationally oriented educations as well as a change of attitude towards the individuals with a degree in those educations would not only enhance the capability for work for a group of disadvantaged graduates - it would also make possible a labour market utilization of a seemingly underestimated formation of knowledge. New forms of communication and cooperation between the higher education system and the labour market would be important prerequisites for such development.

Conclusions

Setting out from the capability approach, the aim of the study was to analyse the meaning of educational choices and experiences for the young graduates real freedoms to lead the life they have reason to value. However, it is obvious that the interviewees' views of a valuable life changed over time, which point to a key weakness of the CA. The suggestions offered in the present study - more information, supportive structures and increased knowledge on the part of the labour market – will not solve the problem of changing opinions and desires. The graduates themselves refer to being young and naive when explaining why they did not consider future job opportunities when entering university. Debaters suggesting that labour market demands should govern the supply of higher education would probably argue that such governance would be the most reasonable solution since it would lift off a heavy responsibility that the current higher education system put on young people. Nevertheless, the young graduates' choices were based on what they had reason to value at that point in time and since they state that "it was worth it", a governing of educational options based on short-sighted labour market demands would clearly have circumscribed their capabilities for education, choice and personal growth.

Furthermore, educational choices based on job opportunities could have counterproductive effects since the competition on educations with high employment rates will increase, and young people with low grades will be the ones lacking the opportunity to enter those educations. A subsequent consequence would be an increased competition on jobs within occupations connected to these educations. In sum, the result could be that peoples'

capabilities for education as well as work would be circumscribed, and the constraints would preferably hit groups of young people who already are disadvantaged when it comes to education and labour market prospects.

Finally, realizing the capability for everyone to be educated requires institutional conditions making the studies accessible and affordable. The wide accessibility, along with the fairly generous study allowance system, demonstrate that the Swedish educational system involve capability enhancing conditions. Nevertheless, a possible consequence of mass higher education is that the society will be less meritocratic. Concurrently with larger shares of highly educated citizens, employers might look at other criteria when hiring someone for a job. With reference to the "recommendation society", where social networks and personal qualities tend to overshadow education and other formal merits, the interviewees in the study highlighted obstacles concerning capability for work related to this phenomenon. If a society built on elite universities reproduces social injustice by excluding young people of lower social strata from higher education, the recommendation society entails a risk for a new kind of injustice; young people with the "right" social network (which most likely coincide with other capability enhancing conditions such as a favourable socioeconomic background) "afford" to choose an education based on their personal preferences since they have access to desirable jobs anyway, whereas young people lacking the right connections will be forced to compete with the masses in applying for educations statistically associated with good job opportunities in order to enter into the competition on the few jobs still appointed on formal merits. As highlighted in the policy implications above, well organised labour market connections provided by the universities and colleges could serve as an equalising factor in this respect, giving the less fortunate access to the "right" social networks.

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