"TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO WORK - A QUESTION OF JUSTICE"

Deliverable 4.3: Collected Volume

Work Package 4: Capabilities in context – educational programmes in a micro perspective

EU Collaborative Project "WorkAble": Making Capabilities Work (2009-2012)

Contents

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CHAPTER 1:

Editorial

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The Collaborative Research Project "Making Capabilities Work" (WorkAble), funded by the EU within the Seventh Framework Programme, was initiated in response to the way in which a high level of youth unemployment has become a stable feature throughout Europe.[1] This feature is impacting on all countries without exception—although varying in its degree. The situation is particularly dramatic when the youth unemployment rate is higher than that of all other employees. This has justifiably led to a public call for radical change—a call always expressed with concern but sometimes also with aggression. It is not unjustified to talk about a lost generation, and this description applies particularly to southern and eastern European countries. However, alongside the contemporary situation, what we are really dealing with here is fundamental questions of justice that even the EU is now beginning to address in its official papers and policy statements.

There are a host of reasons for these problem constellations facing job-seeking youth. They range from structural rifts as a result of the European fiscal crisis, across the traditional forms of employment and training for youth, up to the acquisition of insufficient knowledge at school. Although descriptions of the problem have now elicited an almost overwhelming mass of argumentative conflict analyses, these have not led to any improvements for the youth concerned. Indeed, one can take the opposite position and argue that their general situation has deteriorated even further. Against this background, all the different training initiatives merge into a far-reaching lack of any prospects for the group of vulnerable youth. The present project has particularly identified the following target groups: early school leavers, the young unemployed and young adults with no secondary

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education qualifications (and as part of a theoretical and contrastive sampling, unemployed young higher education graduates as well). The current educational and welfare regimes are broadly incapable of opening up new opportunities for these target groups by introducing the necessary innovations that would extend individual capabilities and provide the structural opportunities for their realization.

WorkAble has set itself the goal of performing a problem-oriented analysis of youth unemployment and acquiring the necessary knowledge for a broader clarification of what we need to know. On the one hand, it is performing analyses of longitudinal EU-SILC and other data, in combination with in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries. On the other hand, it is carrying out qualitative case studies in the following nine countries: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK (Scotland).

Each of these countries reveals substantial problems with its specific welfare systems, education systems, and labour market policies. These simultaneously mark the major approaches to handling the problems facing the vulnerable youth that the project is examining as they go through their transition from school to work. The first step in the in-depth analysis of the transition systems set up in these countries is to build up a comprehensive description of the forms of organization and the accompanying approaches to solve the problem. However, the focus of research is on a more far-reaching qualitative analysis of the activities in each of the nine countries that can be described as model projects. These should specify conditions more precisely. The empirical analysis is based on the Capability Approach, drawing particularly on the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. This proposes an alternative information base for judging life prospects. The question of a good or happy life is not conceived in the hedonistic-utilitarian tradition as an individual state of inner satisfaction, but as being part of a practical way of life. The Capability Approach analyses the specific interplay between subjects' characteristics, abilities, and needs in the sense of optimizing their agency through objective (social and political) givens and potentials within the framework of institutional and material conditions. Its goal is to make actors capable of conceiving a life that they can value for good reasons. Such capabilities or "real freedoms" cannot be reduced to individual traits, dispositions, or competencies, but point to the complex interplay of infrastructures, resources, rights, and capabilities. *Successful* relations of this kind will deliver the necessary knowledge on *appropriate* transition systems. The project is examining how far each model succeeds in extending the real scope for decision making and autonomy in those concerned rather than just getting the actors to engage in lifestyles and activities whose content is fixed in advance. It is only when this approach succeeds that new chances will open up for vulnerable youth to engage in social self-realization, to overcome both qualitatively and substantially the human capital approach with its fixation on an employability framework, and to become able to function within the increasingly flexibilized labour markets in line with their own wishes and with viable chances of success.

In the present project, the capability approach will be applied as an evaluative framework in which the application of indicators will follow central benchmarks, namely, the capabilities for education, work, and voice. The background to the Capability Approach is always formed by a justice theory framework directed towards what is particularly important for the population under study: namely, that all persons have the freedom to exploit alternatives to those possibilities of reproduction that have either been assigned to them or that they have chosen for themselves. It is only when this stage is achieved that the transition system can be assigned a quality in the sense of a more far-reaching definition of well-being that makes capabilities and the chances for their realization into the overarching content of the opportunities available to youth. The Capability Approach will also make it possible to develop an explicit normative framework that integrates the necessary dimensions of good and meaningful work, a broader understanding of education, and a democratization of social service organizations.

"Making Capabilities Work" is the first empirical project to pursue a justice theory perspective on a European level and thus be also to contribute to a fundamental change in the currently mostly insufficient attempts within the human capital approach to use the labour market to ensure desired lifestyle forms and a secure income for vulnerable youth.

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CHAPTER 2:

FROM THE LISBON STRATEGY TO EUROPE 2020 : the Statistical Landscape of the Education and Training objectives through the lens of the Capability Approach

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Abstract: The aim of this chapter is to bring together and comment official statistics and indicators that make up educational targets that are increasingly favoured in the European Union Policy context from the Lisbon Strategy to the Europe 2020 strategy. Focusing on the call for making young people more employable, the chapter relies on Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and in particular on his key idea of 'informational basis of judgement' to reveal the postulates behind the benchmarks that assess progress toward the Education and Training Strategy. Taking up this plea, the chapter starts out by giving a brief description of the Lisbon Strategy as well as the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this perspective, it reports what progress in education and training– or lack of it – has taken place. The subsequent section introduces the concepts of "capability" and "Informational basis of judgement" derived from Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) in order to shed light on the normative postulates underlying the benchmarks promoted by the European Commission . One main focus lies in addressing limitations of these indicators with the aim of providing a practical instrument with which to assess and compare education and training performance. The chapter concludes by offering some thoughts for an alternative set of indicators that employs insights from the capability approach drawn from the work of Amartya Sen.

Keywords: Europe 2020 Strategy, Educational Targets, Benchmarking, Employability, Capability Approach.

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1. Introduction

Severely hit by the unemployment, young Europeans are the first to experience the crisis. According to Eurostat data, more than 5 million young people in the EU are unemployed today. Between 2008 and 2010, this number increased by one million, which means that that one in five young people on the labour market cannot find a job (European Commission, 2011a). At the same time, the youth unemployment rate (at over 20%) is nearly three times higher than the rate for the adult active population. The extended effects of the crisis are deteriorating a situation that was already difficult for the young people. Hence, the youth long-term unemployment is on the rise: on average 28% of the young unemployed under 25 have been unemployed for more than 12 months. At the same time, the decrease in permanent jobs during the crisis has hit young people with a job disproportionally (European Commission, 2011a). However, the difficulties that young people are facing are not new, although the school-to-work process become increasingly time-consuming, complex and diversified (Gautié 1999, Serrano Pascual, 2000, 2004).

The extent of challenges and origins of youth unemployment vary from one Member State to another, but education and training has become, at the European policy-making level, as well as in most member states, one of the keys to enhancing employability. Since the 2000 Lisbon Council, the expectations raised by education and training have never been higher in European Union member countries: it is intended not only to protect youth by improving their employability, but also to give employers good returns on their productive investments as well as promoting employment and benefiting the community by boosting overall competition (Dayan & Eksl, 2007). Particularly influential was the discourse around the "knowledge economy" and its need for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. A decade ago, the fifteen Member States of the European Union set a strategic goal for the European Union "*to become the most dynamic and competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth, employment and social cohesion*" (conclusions of the European Council of March 2000). Education and training was above all a linchpin in the implementation of this strategy and recommendations towards expanding the use of these policies had become a priority on the agenda of the European Union. Central to this endeavour was the strategy of employability, which can be regarded as a general trend aimed at increasing readiness to acquire the qualities that are needed by the labour market (Bonvin and Farvaque 2005, Spohrer 2011).

As a matter of priority, progresses towards educational targets are measured through the lens of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC provides common objectives but leaves it up to each Member State to choose the ways and means of achieving them (Zeitlin and Pochet, 2005). In this context, the efforts of Member States are assessed by using performance indicators. Hence, the OMC is designed to achieve maximum impact on

quantitative results. Since the launch of the European Employment Strategy (ESS) or later in the frame of the flexicurity strategy, some authors have made use of Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and in particular on his key idea of 'informational basis of judgement' (Salais 2006, Bonvin et al. 2011; Vero et al. 2012) to reveal the postulates behind the decisions of those who designed the indicators at stake. In this chapter we shall discuss the limitations of the perspective developed in the "Education and Training" programmes whereby the development of skills may refer to "human capital" rather than to capabilities which emphasise people's real freedom to choose the life they have reasons to value (Sen, 1999). We also aim to demonstrate the weakness of the angle whereby education and training are viewed in terms of adaptation to labour market requirements rather than in terms of real possibilities to act.

Taking up this plea to highlight the postulates behind the decisions of those who designed education and training benchmarks, the chapter starts out by giving a brief description of the Lisbon Strategy as well as the Europe 2020 Strategy focusing on the educational targets. The discussion will be centred on progress made and gaps remaining according to the European Commission yardstick. The subsequent section introduces the concepts of capability and Informational basis of Judgement derived from Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) in order to illuminate how indicators shape the perception of reality and highlight how statistical issues are enmeshed with policy issues. The chapter concludes by offering some thoughts on the progress that educational indicators should measure from the standpoint of the CA.

2. From the Lisbon Strategy to Europe 2020: progress made and gaps remaining

The inclusion of young people on the labour market has become a matter of growing importance on the agenda of the European Union, notably through the Education and Training Programme in order to fulfil the objective of a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This link is confirmed by many documents, as seen for example in calls from the European Commission "Europe's future depends largely on its young people" (European Commission, 2011b, p.2). This section attempts first to spell out the main benchmarks that are put forward in the frame of the European Commission's 2020 strategy (2010). Second, it examines on the one hand the extent to which the "Education and Training" program for the Lisbon Strategy has been achieved or could be achieved. On the other hand, it analyses how far member states are from the benchmarks endorsed in the frame of the "Education and Training 2020" strategy.

2.1 Setting benchmarks for cooperation in Education and Training

As in other policy areas, the open method of coordination (OMC) was the approach endorsed to tackle the education and training policy, whereby each member state is responsible for determining how to implement Education and Training Policies. By this means, cooperation is put into action by developing target-oriented regulation while also incorporating two already existing intergovernmental processes (namely the Copenhagen Process for vocational education and training and the Bologna process on higher education).

In 2001, following agreement within the Council of Education Ministers, the European Union's Education and Training 2010 work programme was launched in the frame of the Lisbon Strategy. Member states and Commission working in this way agreed on indicators and benchmarks to monitor progress through evidence-based policy making. In this framework, the council in 2003 adopted five benchmarks, to be attained by 2010, to underpin this work of policy exchange (cf. Figure 1). The Education and Training 2010 programme (ET 2010) was supposed to deliver its first results by 2010. The cooperation was renewed in 2009 – when the assessment highlights that the Member States struggle to answer the challenge of the five European Benchmarks for 2010.

Hence, in May 2009, the council agreed an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and training to be achieved by 2020 (known as ET 2020). Figure 1 reveals the benchmarks that underpin both strategic frameworks for European Cooperation in education and Training policy. There is by and large continuity with the earlier set of benchmarks. However, there will be new benchmarks on early school education and tertiary attainment among the young adult population; a broadening of the benchmarks on early school leaving and adult participation in lifelong learning with an increase in the target level of the latter. The 2010 benchmark on increasing the completion rate of upper secondary education has been discontinued on the basis of that it is closely linked to the maintain benchmark of early school leaving. The focus on early childhood education is the major innovation in ET2020: Besides, the focus on medium-level educational achievement (at least 85% of the upper-secondary education level) has been removed in favour of an objective focussed on high skills.

Figure 1 – Education and Training 2010-2020 strategic framework benchmarks

ET 2010 for the Lisbon Strategy	ET 2020 For Europe 2020
1. To reduce the percentage of early school leavers to no more than 10%	1. The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%
2. To ensure that at least 85% of young (20-24 year olds) people complete upper secondary education	2. The share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary education attainment should be at least 40%
3. To cut the percentage of low-achieving pupils in reading by at least 20%	3. The share of low-achieving 15-year olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%
4. To increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (MST) by at least 15%, and to decrease the gender imbalance in these subjects	4. At least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age of starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education
5. To have 12,5% of adults (25-64) participate in lifelong learning	5. An average of a least 15% of adults (25-64) should participate in lifelong learning.

Source: European Commission (2011c)

2.2 Progress made by ET 2010 is not what was expected

Figure 2 focus on the progress EU-27 has made in meeting ET 2010 strategic benchmarks, showing that despite further advances the EU performance fell short of targets. As the figure below illustrates, the share of university graduates in mathematics, science and technology actually is the only target out of five benchmarks to have already fulfilled ET 2010 objectives. As for the share of early school leavers, the EU-27 rate declined by 3.2 % to still stand at 14.4% in 2010 (European Commission, 2011b). Even if the average EU-27 union seems to be nearing the target, it should be noted that progress has been slow over the past decade (European Commission 2011c). In relation to the target of upper secondary attainment, EU-27 performance came to 78.9% of young people (aged 20-24) that have completed secondary level of education instead of the target of 85%. Despite the results related to lifelong learning participation have not ended up with the intended objective of 12.5%, the target level has increased to 15% over the next decade. Perhaps, the most obvious failure to reach the benchmark is the share of low performers in reading. The rate has been widened for 2020 to include also performances in mathematics and science which is expected to fall to about 15%.

Figure 2- progress made toward meeting the five benchmarks for 2010

Progress made towards meeting the 5 benchmarks for 2010 (2000-2010)

In this chart the starting point (in 2000) is set at zero and the 2010 benchmark at 100. The results achieved each year are measured against the 2020 benchmark (= 100). The diagonal line shows the progress required, i.e. an additional 1/10 (10%) of progress towards the benchmark has to be achieved each year to reach the benchmark. If a line stays below this diagonal line, progress is not sufficient; if it is above the diagonal line progress is stronger than what is needed to achieve the benchmark. If the line declines, the problem is getting worse. In the case of lifelong learning, it should be kept in mind that there have been many breaks in the time series, which tend to overstate the progress made, especially in 2003. Therefore the 2002-2003 line on LLL participation is dotted. or low achievers in reading (data from the PISA survey) there comparable results for 18 EU countries for only two data points, 2000, 2006 and 2009.

Source: European Commission 2011 SEC(2011) 526

- Early school leavers
- Upper secondary
- Low achievers in reading
- MST graduates
- Lifelong learning participation
- Progress required

2.3 The Europe 2020 Strategy: which educational targets are to be addressed in priority?

Of the five targets that the Education and Training 2020 program outline (Figure 1), the first two deserve close attention as these are integral part of the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010a): 1) the share of early school leavers should be reduced from 15% to 10% by 2020; 2) at least the share of 30-34 year olds should have a tertiary degree or an equivalent qualification). Of course, it is too early to assess the progress in achieving both targets. However, looking at figures in 2010 would help to draw how far we still have to go to achieve the goals. This section focused on the path ahead and examines the limitations of both indicators.

How long is the way to attain the target of 10% of early school leavers?

In relation to early school leaving (ESL), what progress has been made across member states and what still needs to be done? Figure 3 illustrates the rate of early school leavers in the 27 member states and Switzerland i.e. the percentage of the population aged 18-24 having attained at most lower education and not involved in further education or training[2].

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[2] At EU level ESL rates are defined by the proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training. Early school leavers are therefore those who have

In 2010, using the definition mentioned by the European Commission (2003), statistics from the 2010 Labour Force Survey highlights huge differences among member states ranging from fewer than 5% in Czek Republic to more than 36% in Malta. A set of countries have already reached the 10% target, including the post-communist countries of Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Lithuania as well as Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland. Other member states, notably the Netherlands, Finland, Ireland, Hungary, Denmark, Belgium, Germany and France are nearing the target. However, the four Mediterranean countries of Malta, Portugal, Spain and Italy can be regarded as the four main underperformers. In Malta over 36% of students leave school with at most a lower secondary degree. The various performances of member states can not be entirely laid at particular institutional frameworks of the education systems or at the number of years of compulsory schooling

However, Eurostat emphasizes that the early school leavers' rates have to be interpreted carefully and it focuses on the need for improving the quality of data. Because of an heterogeneous application of certain concepts, the comparability remains rather restricted. As mentioned by Eurostat, it remains problematic and its quality raised some doubts: in term of reliability, it receives indeed only the poor mark C (Teedman H., Verdier E. coord., 2010). Comparability across countries is achieved in the European Labour Force Survey (LFS) through various regulations ensuring harmonisation of concepts, definitions and methodologies for all EU Member States, EFTA and candidate countries. However the results might lack comparability across countries due to the heterogeneity of the implementation of the concepts of participation in education and training in the Labour Force Survey. The chapter devoted exclusively to this European indicator details for each country the risks of measurement, such as some problems experienced with United Kingdom : *"The United Kingdom classifies the first vocational trainings which last less than two years on level 3 of the ISCED [International Standard Classification of Education] whereas they should be logically on level 2 […] On this point, the international agencies correct or not these British statistics"* (CERC, 2008, p. 18)". These problems may disturb a comparative discussion.

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only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years (ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short5), and include those who have only a pre-vocational or vocational education which did not lead to an upper secondary certification. In this perspective, the data on early school leavers are collected annually via the Labour Force Survey

Figure 3: Europe 2020 headline targets on education ; early school leavers[3]

Rates of Early school leavers in EU-27 and Switzerland

Source : Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2010
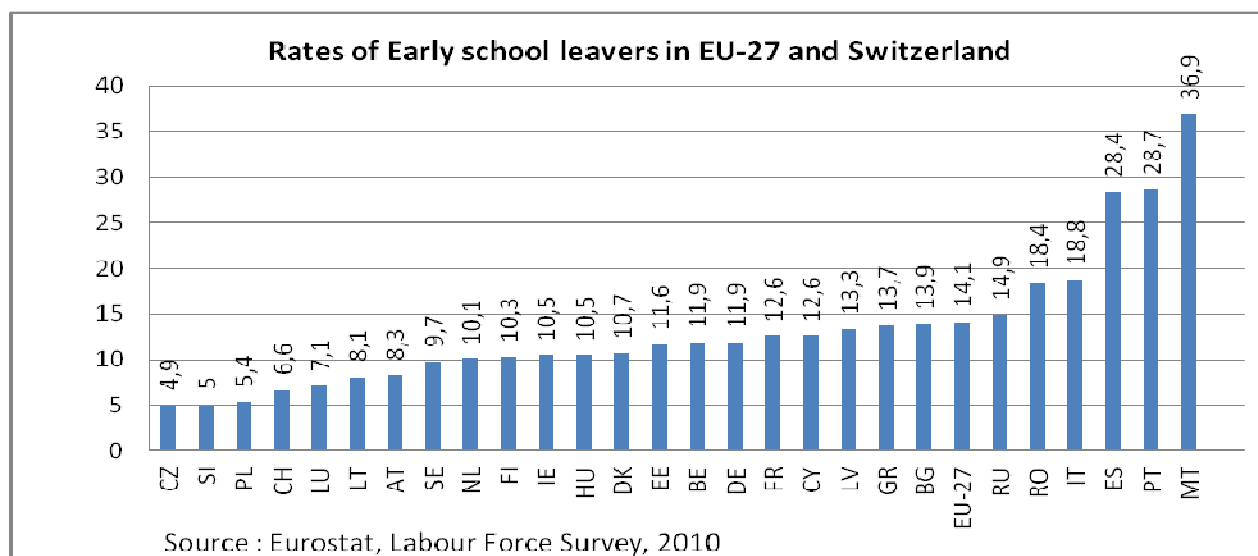
How long is the way to attain the target of 40% of tertiary graduation?

The new target for tertiary attainment levels among the young adult population to be met by 2020 is the following: at least 40% of 30-34 year olds should hold a university degree. The new focus on this objective as a headline target of Europe 2020 raised questions as to how far are member-states from the goal of attaining this target?

Member states experience different challenge with regard to this benchmark as the distance to the target differs widely across member states. Figure 4 shows that some countries have already attained the objective and are in some case above target including Ireland, the Nordic countries, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Switzerland, France or the United Kingdom. Most of them have also seen this rate progress considerably in the last seven years (Etui, 2011). The largest European economy (Germany), however, is far from fulfilling the benchmark with a further increase of 12% and a long way still lays ahead for some others countries like Romania, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Malta or Portugal, Austria. All these countries are far below the 20% objective, i.e. only about half way to reaching the target. According to Roth and Thum (2011, p.2), the objective of doubling the number of tertiary graduates in just one decade seems to be so ambitious that "realistically this will not

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[3] Early leavers from education and training refers to persons aged 18 to 24 fulfilling the following two conditions: first, the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short, second, respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding no answers to the questions "highest level of education or training attained" and "participation to education and training". Both the numerators and the denominators come from the EU Labour Force Survey.

be possible for any of these countries without a severe deterioration in the quality of such education". Meanwhile, Cedefop (2010) forecasts quite positive progress towards this headline and argues that the crisis may encourage more students to further their educational path due to lack of employment opportunities. Regardless of the benefits of such an arrangement in terms of personal development, it is by no means a given that more education will increase labour market opportunities and go ahead to the intended greater economic spinoffs. Besides, while some focuses very much on higher education for a knowledge-based economy (Cedefop, 2010) and more generally knowledge-driven growth, it may be argued that the link is not a straightforward one since there is not necessarily an obvious correlation between the two. The low link between the share of graduates aged 30-34 and the total added value of the knowledge-intensive sector seems to be confirmed by the evaluations made by Theodoropoulos (2010). While this outcome does not support the conclusion that there is no relationship between theses two indicators, it is clear from the foregoing that several factors play a decisive role, and it is important to stress that that other factors may include the quality – and not just the quantity – of graduates alongside with adequate levels of investments. Hence, following ETUI (2011), the quantitative benchmark of 40% is somewhat weak without adding additional benchmark for the quality of education.

Figure 4: Share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary education attainment[4]

Source: Eurostat. Labour Force Survey. 2010

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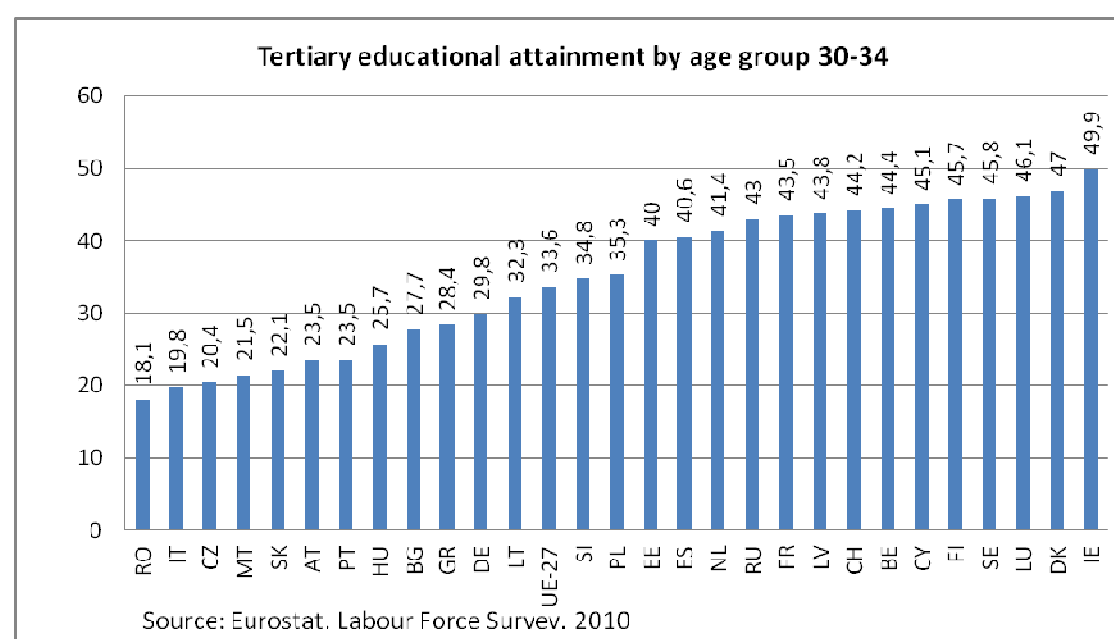
[4] The share of the population aged 30-34 years who have successfully completed university or university-like (tertiary-level) education with an education level ISCED 1997 (International Standard Classification of Education) of 5-6. This indicator measures the Europe 2020 strategy's headline target to increase the share of the 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40% in 2020

3. The normative assumptions behind the strategic framework for Education and Training 2020

Our purpose is here to examine the normative assumptions behind the educational benchmarks endorsed at the European policy-making level. What reasoning do they hold and what values do they reveal? How useful are they in enhancing our way of understanding the problems and obstacles that young people meet during their qualification and entry on the labour market? How effective are they in improving our concrete knowledge of these barriers, in making visible their real freedom to choose the life they has reason to value, i.e. their capabilities? Drawing on an epistemological analysis founded on Amartya Sen's capability approach and in particular on his key idea of 'informational basis' of judgement, this section identifies the normative thread of the indicators promoted in the educational field by the European commission, which gives employability precedence over capability.

3.1 The normative thread of quantitative indicators

Indicators are often pictured as neutral or scientific tools insofar they are "evidence-based". Although indicators can provide valuable information, they also have limitations: they are inextricably rooted in a number of implicit normative choices and selections, embedded with values. In consequence, what is measured is what matters, what is cared about. Clearly not all indicators are similar. What they have in common is simplifying complex situations.

The work of Amartya Sen enables us to grasp the normative thread of quantitative indicators thanks in particular to the key idea of 'informational base of judgement" (IBJ). This "*identifies the information on which the judgment is directly dependent and – no less important – asserts that the truth or falsehood of any other information cannot directly influence the correctness of the judgment. The informational basis of judgement in justice thus determines the factual territory over which considerations of justice would directly apply*" (Sen 1990:11).

By giving Member States an incentive to improve their score in the ranking list of benchmarks and quantitative objectives, performance indicators establish priorities. Hence, what is be measured through the use of benchmarks is also what will be achieved in practice and what is not measured will therefore more likely to be overlooked. These indicators are therefore merely revealing the priorities of the education and training policy. Indeed, the decision to focus on certain data and to exclude others significantly impacts on the very content of public policies and on the way to define their efficient implementation (Salais, 2006; Bonvin et al. 2011; Vero et al. 2012). With the indicators, emphasis is also placed on the relationship between description and prescription. Describing situations means making choices and attracting the attention of public decision-makers and public opinion to the

issues regarded as most important. Devising indicators is not merely aimed at describing what exists or analysing practices; it is first and foremost a policy move connected with a prescriptive dimension.

It is therefore necessary to ask ourselves about the normative and informational foundations of the educational indicators through the lens of Sen's epistemological principles. Our intention, then, is to shed light on the normative logic underlying these indicators.

3.2 A wider perspective behind educational targets: raising the employment rate to 75%

Figure 5 shows the headline targets in the five distinct areas that the European commission's 2020 has put forward: 1) Employment: (2) research innovation; (3) climate change and energy; (4) education; (5) poverty. Employment has been placed at the core of the Europe 2020 strategy and as mentioned in the figure 2, education is put forward as a fundamental driver of employment. The rationale that underpins educational benchmarks is that more education will better meet labour market needs.

Figure 5 – EU headline targets for Europe 2020

Area	Target
1. Employment 2. Research innovation 3. Climate change and energy 4. Education 5. Poverty	1. 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed 2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D 3. The "20/20/20"[5] climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right) 4. The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree. 5. 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty

Source: Europe 2020

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[5] The "20/20/20" target sums up what Europe is expected to achieve by 2020 on the climate/ energy side,.
- A reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions of at least 20% below 1990 levels
- 20% of EU energy consumption to come from renewable resources
- A 20% reduction in primary energy use compared with projected levels, to be achieved by improving energy efficiency.

By drawing on the Europe Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the emphasis on raising educational outcomes is line with the desire to raise employment rates which lies at the core of the European Strategy and more particularly to guidelines 7 'Increasing labour market participation of women and men, reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality'. Educational indicators are prompted by the need to increase rate in the short and middle term as it is clearly stated in January 2011 in a communication entitled "Tackling early school leavers: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 agenda" which mentions: "*Reducing Early School leaving is a gateway to reaching other Europe 2020 targets. By impacting directly on the employability of young people, it contributes to increasing integration into the labour market and so to the achievement of the headline target of 75% employment rate for men and women aged 20 to 64*" (European Commission, 2011b, p.2). Increasing the proportion of 30-34 year olds having completed tertiary to at least 40 % follows the same logic: "measures taken in the education and training sector will contribute to [...] increasing employment rates" (European Council, 2011 p.2)

Hence, as a matter of priority, the ultimate objective of educational policies is to maximise the employment rate at the macro level, as mentioned in figure 5. Rogowski et al. (2011:) reminds us how announcing a rising employment rate is much more satisfactory in terms of communication than undertaking far-reaching action that truly improves educational conditions as well as employment situation but fails to grab media headlines. Such a priority contributes to place employment quality on the back burner and enforce acceptance of the idea that a poor-quality job is worth more than no job at all. In actual fact, from a synchronic perspective, employment quality at a given point in time appears to be a central issue, whereas from a dynamic angle a bad job may be justified because it can represent a springboard towards lasting integration into the workforce.

In addition, by focusing on the increase of the employment rate, the general theme of the Europe 2020 strategy is to improve the supply side of the employment equation via education and training development. Its message is rather one-sided, centring on the supply of work from individuals, i.e on employability, leaving demand of work in the blind spot. Although the development of employability is a notion which has itself been subject to numerous definitions (Gazier 1990; Bonvin and Farvaque 2006), employability is in fact mainly used as a category of economic policy aiming at worker's adaptability. In close correlation with that, employability is aimed at fostering an individual's ability to gain or maintain employment by stressing the responsibility of the youth to participate in education and training. This one-sided focus on responsibility is ambiguous insofar as it encourages the individual's freedom of action; but it means at the same time that young adults themselves may now have to shoulder the blame for not undergoing education, improving their skills and gaining an employment.

As a matter of priority, the ultimate objective of educational policies is twofold: first maximising the employment rate at the macro level and second reaccelerating the reintegration into the labour market at the micro level without taking account the person's specific circumstances (i.e. his or her physical, psychological or other ability to work, to balance work and family life, etc.). This strategy is aimed at fostering young people's employability by stressing the responsibility of the individual to participate in education and employment. This indicator therefore views education from the angle of adapting to labour market requirements. Its message is rather one-sided, centring on the supply of work from individuals leaving demand for work to the initiative of companies, framed by a policy of deregulation. This focus bears the danger of increasing employment precariousness rather than enhancing young adult's capability for work.

Like other watchwords at the European level, "employability" seems to have acquired the status of magical concept that appears to provide universal solutions. Policies on inclusion to the labour market that promote "employability" suggest individual adaptability and up-skilling as the cure for persisting exclusion. This discourse goes alongside the promotion of the "human capital" mindset which stressing the responsibility of individual to participate to education and employment. The subsequent section will outline the "human capital" approach against the capability approach.

3.3 Human capital mindset against the capability approach

There are many ways to measure progress toward education and there is no consensus as to which indicator is the best. The choice of indicator depends on data availability and also on forms of education-employment relationship considered important. According to Robert Salais, 'the upheaval introduced by the capability approach relates to the choice of the yardstick by which collective action (policies, legislation, and procedures) should be devised, implemented and assessed. For Sen, the only ethically legitimate reference point for collective action is the person, and specifically his situation as regards the amount of real freedom he possesses to choose and conduct the life he wishes to lead' (Salais, 2005: 10). This perspective sets out an ambitious way forward for public policy-making, which is not merely about enhancing people's adaptability to labour market requirements, i.e. their employability, but first and foremost about promoting their real freedom to choose the work they have reason to lead, i.e. their capability for work (Bonvin, Farvaque 2005). Collective action is therefore expected to develop opportunities for people while acknowledging their free choice with regard to ways of living or being.

Insisting on real freedom means, on the one hand, going beyond an approach based on educational rights and resources. One cannot take for granted that educational resources and rights provision (targeting early school leavers or aiming at increasing the access to tertiary education, etc.) lead to increased capabilities. Thus, the age of starting compulsory education, the right of access to tertiary education, or a lifelong learning right is an

important resource for the development of young's capabilities. But it is not, however, enough to ensure their capability for work. Among the factors which influence the exercise of this freedom, the role that educational and employment institution plays (in terms attractiveness and accessibility of educational paths together with quality and the ability to match labour market opportunities), companies' recruitment policies, the vulnerability of jobs to the vagaries of the economy, etc. are central. These factors of conversion of resources into capabilities may be individual, institutional or social. The opportunity dimension of freedom is here crucial. Insisting on real freedom means, on the other hand, making the distinction between what young adults do (functionings) and they are really free to do (capabilities). A same functioning can result from the availability or the absence of real freedoms. For example, gaining employment can either be imposed; or it can be discussed with the employment agency as a part of a broader range of options and finally chosen as the best available option. Although the outcome may be the same, the process in question is very different. From a capability perspective, freedom is not only a matter of opportunity, but also of process that may be assessed into a synchronic and dynamic perspective.

By contrast, the aim of the European normative foundations is to increase the returns from human-capital investment by stressing on the responsibility of the individual. All too often, especially in the European reasoning, variability in outcomes is said to be due to inherently individual properties. The issue as to whether to conditions are actually met in order that young adults can exercise their responsibility is a blind spot. According to that reasoning, education is a profitable form of investment for the individual and for society that creates gains in productivity, thereby increasing wages and consequently individual employability. However, the relationship between Education → Productivity → Wages relies on neoclassical hypotheses[6]. The problem with this theoretical picture is quite simply that it does not match the reality. Certainly part of the success of the unequal inclusion is due to individual factors like the human capital. Other inequalities, however, although related to the person, are due to objective social or institutional factors. These factors should be included in public action and its assessment through indicators. However, as it stands the ultimate objective of educational policies is twofold: first maximising the employment rate at the macro level and second reaccelerating the reintegration into the labour market at the micro level without taking account the person's specific circumstances (i.e. his or her physical, psychological or other ability to work, to balance work and family life, etc.). This orientation certainly meets the economic requirements of responsiveness and flexibility, but it neglects the temporal and social factors shaping young's pathways, as well as their personal preferences and choices at the core of the capability approach.

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[6] The neo-classical hypothesis is the following: In the frame of a "pure and perfect" competitive logic, individuals are paid at the marginal productivity which means that wage differentials (and hence employability) refer to productivity differentials (however non observable), which themselves are coming (hypothetically) from differences the accumulation of human capital (Poulain, 2001).

The capability approach draws our attention to two different but complementary ways of looking at education: (1) on the one hand, as a good in itself, i.e. aims worth pursuing for their own sake, and (2) on the other hand, as a means of gaining access to new possibilities and developing one's potential (Lambert and al. 2012). In the first one, the focus is on young educational rights and the processes whereby these rights are converted into educational accomplishments (individual, familial, organisational and institutional factors leading to education success) and the measurement of these educational accomplishments. In the second instance, the focus is on the achievements made possible by learning and training, especially as far as youth's capability for work is concerned.

In the first instance, contrary to what European union indicators favours (rate of early school leavers, share of tertiary educational attainment), capability approach places emphasis on the issue of converting resources into accomplishments as well as the real freedom to choose (Sen, 2009). Although the European commission advocates that "the reason why young people leave education and training prematurely are highly individual" (European Commission, 2011), policy-makers need to be mindful of the fact that the phenomenon of early school leaving is a matter of accumulation which entails a wide range of conversion factors causing obstruction or enhancement of . Identifying these factors is paramount to enhance the capabilities of young adults that are particularly hit hard by the economic downturn. These factors may be individual, organizational, institutional or social. For instance, evidence of the influence of social and cultural background on students' educational results is provided both by data from the Bologna Process and from the PISA 2009 (OECD 2010, ETUI). Data shows that the educational level of parents has a clear influence on the tertiary enrolment of their children's (Eurostat, 2010). This amounts that, alongside with a lack of opportunities, family background plays a role not only in terms of financial support alone but also in relation to social, cultural, geographical aspects.

In the second instance, contrary to what European Union prescribes through the employment rate, i.e. the adaptability to labour market requirements, the capability approach places as much importance on training as a key to enhancing people's possibilities to exercise a job they have reasons to value. Hence, not only is the phenomenon of early school leaving problematic because of the waste of potentially valuable human capital which ought to contribute to the achievement of full employment; it constitutes a present and future priority also because the young people who drop out school are victims of social situations which cause them to run higher risks of achieving a wide range of capabilities. Moving over to a capability approach-inspired vision would entail a number of developments. First the employment quality issue would need to be integrated into a synchronic and dynamic perspective, referring back to '*an analysis of the scope of working and living possibilities offered by inclusion in employment*' (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004: 287). Moreover, by contrast with the normative foundations of the European perspective, the CA emphasizes how the main question is not whether workers are more flexible or adaptable.

Rather, it is whether the conditions are properly met (or are guaranteed) for young adults to possess real freedom to learn, to aspire, to voice one's concerns and to work. According to capability approach such real freedom is a precondition of an active inclusion of young people.

4 Conclusion: Towards more capability-friendly indicators

It is surely essential and highly desirable to avoid a stance in which education and training are considered solely from the standpoint of the need to meet economic and employment targets (as it is the case in the Europe 2020 strategy and its target of 75% employment rate in all EU member states), and in which policies designed to achieve social integration of young people look no further than the adaptation to the labour market. Rather, performance should be evaluated in terms of capability for work.

The shift of focus may be modest, but it really has wide-ranging implications when designing, implementing and assessing employability policies. The first conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that it is important to guarantee that measures that affect supply (in terms of education and training, vocational guidance, etc.) should be complemented by demand-driven educational and training programs. As mentioned by Bonvin and Orton (2009), what is suggested is not an unconditional respect of the beneficiaries' freedom to choose, but the opportunity opened to them as well as to youth representatives, to take an active part in the design and implementation of employability strategies and to make their voice heard. From the CA, this possibility to voice one concern should be evaluated. Secondly, no matter how relevant the individual action statement may be, without support of adequate conversion factors, it runs the risk of having an adverse impact. With regard to this issue, it is also important to ensure that measures which support and encourage young people to take starter employment are combined with programmes to improve the quality of life (decent living conditions, economic independence, etc.). As a result, this implies that public action is to be also assessed along these additional dimensions in the frame of a situated approach, i.e. an approach centred on the role that institutions play in specific situations (Salais et al. 2011). Thirdly, employability policies should give equal weight to the quality and quantity of jobs. The European commission does signal in its 2011 work programme an intention to devote more attention to the issue of employment quality. However, headline indicators of the Europe 2020 allow no scope for measuring how policies can affect the quality of employment while it is a core yardstick against which public action is to be assessed when moving over to a capability approach-inspired vision.

In such a perspective, it is important to look at a comprehensive set of dimension, which entails to combine data from different sources and levels, by supplementing information from an administrative register by surveys and other types of sources. In order to translate this perspective into an analytical tool that can be used for employability assessment, we may suggest, for example, to supplement surveys on Education, training, guidance or employment paths at the individual level by information received from households, employment agencies, educational institutions, firms and even by macroeconomic information that may inform on 'net increases' or 'net destruction' of employments, etc. The role of linked data in advancing understanding of labour markets is well-established (Bryson, Forth and Barber, 2006). For example, linked employer employee surveys are empirical tools that may contribute to improved freedom measures (Lambert and Vero, 2012). Of course, substantive knowledge of the longitudinal pathway is also essential. The most part of European indicators has been limited to information spaces that are static with the exception of some transition indicators (Bonvin and al. 2011; Vero and al. 2012). But educational outcomes, school-to-work transition as well as employability policies would be best understood in an evolutionary perspective. The capability approach calls for an understanding of the educational outcomes that are attached to the individual pathway. The availability of longitudinal data on school-to-work transition would make it possible to adopt dynamic indicators. Focusing on the need of individualised follow-up is a way of coming to grips with the reality of long-standing, complex and diversified processes of school-to-work transition. These ideas, which are still struggling to take shape in European circles, call for an overhaul project of European surveys and indicators in favour of the development of real freedom of action for all young European.

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CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN OPERATIONALISING THE CAPABILITY APPROACH IN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: an example of cross-country research on youth unemployment in the EU

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Abstract: This paper considers the experiences from nine in-depth case studies (undertaken as part of the "WorkAble" project) 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. It considers two key issues related to using the Capability Approach as a central conceptual guide in the design of in-depth qualitative research. First, how to operationalise the Capability Approach in the methodology, an issue around which there is considerable debate in the literature in particular how to measure capabilities and which capabilities to measure. Second, how to conduct research that is comparable, but is also adaptable to the particular social and institutional contexts of the nine different nations. Specific issues related to the operationalisation of the Capability Approach, encountered when conducting the cross-country in-depth case studies, are highlighted; and debates from the capabilities literature discussed.

Keywords: Capability Approach; operationalisation; youth unemployment; cross-country research

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1. Introduction

This paper outlines the methodological issues that were faced in carrying out in-depth qualitative case-studies across different countries, as part of the "WorkAble" project. The case studies formed a central part of WorkAble and aimed 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 learning and for work. Nine in-depth case studies (Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Sweden) were undertaken as part of WorkAble which examined 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. The key target groups for the case studies were early school leavers; unemployed young people; 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 higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job. Each of the case studies differed in their approach and focus but had the common aim in operationalising the Capability Approach (CA) through their research. The results of each of the case studies are presented later in this volume, what we wish to discuss in this paper are the methodological challenges that were presented and addressed in operationalising the CA.

With the CA forming the central conceptual starting point of WorkAble, the integration of capabilities in the methodology in the case studies was seen as fundamental in our approach. However, implementing CA in the methodology raised a number of issues. A central concern was how to operationalise the CA in the methodology, in particular how to measure capabilities and which capabilities to measure (see for example Nussbaum 2000; Robeyns 2003, 2005a, 2006; Alkire 2007; Anand et al. 2009a, 2009b). A further question was how to conduct research that was comparable but also adaptable to the particular social and institutional contexts of the nine individual nations.

The remainder of this paper outlines how we addressed these two key issues. The following sections outline the broader debates on operationalising the CA; how a common methodological framework for the case studies was developed; an outline of the case studies; the methodological approaches used and how effective they were; and a discussion and conclusions section which reflects on the methodological approaches used in general and how effective they were in putting the CA into practice.

2. Issues in operationalising the Capability Approach

It has been widely stated that Sen has not outlined in detail how the CA might be applied in empirical research, with Robeyns (2008) arguing that it is *"radically underspecified"* (p. 3), while Zimmerman (2006) states Sen's concept of agency *"remains sociologically unspecified"* (p. 474). Within the literature, key debates have been around how to measure capability and which capabilities to measure. These issues do not however, mean that the CA has not been applied in empirical research. A wide range of studies in different disciplines have been carried out using the CA, many of which using quantitative and/or qualitative techniques (see for example, Anand et al. 2005, 2009a; Atzmüller 2009; Galster et al. 2009; Gascoigne and Whiteside 2009; Green and Orton 2009; Mah 2009; Monteleone and Mozzana 2009; Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009; Zimmerman 2006).

Core in the CA are a person's functionings (what they do) and their capabilities (their freedom to realise specific functionings) (Sen 1985; Robeyns 2005b, 2006). One of the key problems in applying the CA in empirical research is how to actually measure capabilities, rather than just the functionings. Miquel and Lopez (2011) state that there is the danger of looking solely at functionings (what people do) rather than directly observing capabilities – it is possible to observe outcomes of individuals but it is more difficult to observe the options and freedoms they have to make them. A further issue, and one that is identified by Zimmerman (2006), is how to make capabilities the object of inquiry and how to evaluate freedom and opportunity for choice. Therefore, in measuring capabilities we are looking at the opportunity to achieve something (such as work or education) rather than the actual outcome (for example a job or qualification).

As a result of this under-specification, questions can be asked differently depending on which way the CA has been applied and Robeyns (2006) argues that three theoretical specifications need to be made when using the CA: *"the choice of whether to focus on functionings, capabilities or both; the selection of the relevant capabilities; and the decision whether or not trade-offs and indexing are necessary, and if so how to determine the weights"* (p. 373). When choosing whether to focus on functionings or capabilities, or both, consideration needs to be paid to whether one is imposing ideas about what people have reason to value when focusing on functionings, but large datasets may not have much information on capabilities sets (Robeyns 2006). Anand et al. (2005) address these issues by using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) to identify questions they see as representing both capabilities and functionings.

It is however, Robeyns' (2006) second specification of selecting relevant capabilities that is of particular significance here. There have been debates within the CA literature dealing on the one side with the question about whether to have a basic list of central human

capabilities that a just society would support, or on the other side to have a public debate about the most important capabilities, i.e. not to specify a particular list of capabilities. Nussbaum (2000) proposed a list of ten core capabilities: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment. This list has been used by many to address a wide range of topics: Anand et al. (2005) operationalise the list using the British Household Panel Survey; Pyles and Banerjee (2010) apply the list to examine the experiences of low-income women survivors of gender-based violence; Andresen and Fegter (2011) engage with Nussbaum's list in a study on how children living in poverty define a 'good life'; and Lloyd-Sherlock (2002) uses Nussbaum's approach when examining the condition of older people in developing countries.

Nussbaum (2003) argues for the need to define a set of capabilities which are most important to social justice, as Sen is too vague in this perspective. While this list is open ended, and therefore abstract, to leave room for interpretation, it provides something to benchmark against As a point of departure it may make sense to start with that list and to configure it according to the purpose of the research question and thus the subject of the actual research. Or to put it in Nussbaum's (2011) words: *"Much depends on our purpose. On the one hand, if our intention is simply comparative, all sorts of capabilities suggest interesting comparisons across nations and regions, and there is no reason to prescribe in advance: new problems may suggest new comparisons"* (p. 29). By contrast, Sen has maintained that a set of core capabilities need not be defined, rather that capabilities should be selected in reference to the purpose of the study. Robeyns (2003, 2005a) suggests that the disjuncture between Sen and Nussbaum regarding a list of central capabilities is a result of Sen viewing the CA as a general framework whereas Nussbaum aims at normative theory building. As such Alkire (2007) argues against the production of a single list of dimensions as analysis is context specific. In emphasising the lack of need for a list of core capabilities, Robeyns (2005a) also highlights that the CA is used for different goals; it is impossible to understand what all people in the world have reason to value; and the process by which the capabilities list is selected needs to be legitimate and biases addressed.

It is against this background that guidance has been provided to produce capabilities lists that are context specific. Alkire (2007), with reference to research on chronic poverty, suggests a mixed methods approach, combining fixed core dimensions and participatory methods to assess their relevance to research subjects, should be used when selecting capabilities. Vizard and Burchardt have set out a methodological framework for developing a capability list to monitor and report on the equality and human rights position of individuals and groups in England, Scotland and Wales (Vizard and Burchardt 2007; Vizard 2010). This framework involves: (1) derivation of a core capability list from the international human rights framework; and (2) supplementation and refinement of the core list through

democratic deliberation and debate (Vizard and Burchardt 2007; Vizard, 2010). Robeyns (2003) also proposes a five stage methodology to select capabilities appropriate for different uses of the CA: (1) the list needs to be explicit, discussed, and defended; (2) the method used to generate the list needs to be justified; (3) the list should be context specific/sensitive to the context; (4) lists to be applied empirically or used to drive policy should be generated in two stages: drawing up an 'ideal' list and then a more 'pragmatic' list; and (5) lists should include all important elements. In reflecting on how lists are drawn up these proposed methods highlight some of the biases that may be present. For example, it has been argued that policies and programmes guided by a CA always promote a certain perfectionist ideal of human good i.e. certain capabilities such as health are innately good (Deneulin 2002). As such there is a need to be reflexive in one's approach.

Quantitative applications of the CA have often been used (Zimmerman 2006). The main analytical techniques have been, as Robeyns (2008) outlines, descriptive statistics, fuzzy sets theory, factor analysis, principal component analysis and structural equation modelling. There is also a tradition of qualitative empirical research using CA and it has been widely suggested that the use of qualitative methods add value to the CA as an analytical method. For example, Zimmermann (2006) argues that qualitative approaches have much to contribute when examining the complexity of social issues and uncovering individual assumptions and expectations, and that a qualitative development of the CA could help realise the full analytical potential of Sen's work. Furthermore, in placing the individual at the centre of his approach Sen emphasises the role of individual agency (Sen 1993). This focus on the individual suggests a strong role for qualitative approaches that are most suitable for uncovering individual motivations, attitudes and deeper levels of understanding. Indeed, Carpenter (2009) states that the CA places the individual or 'whole person' at the centre of social analysis thus suggesting the utility of a qualitative approach, that can be ideally suited to providing the depth of information necessary for identifying the contexts for action and forming choices (Miquel and Lopez 2011). However, it must be noted that while some have criticised the CA for being individualistic (Dean 2009) others have highlighted that it does take into account the wider context, and that capabilities are interdependent (Iversen 2003). As such the CA is seen to be ethically individualistic (each person is taken into account), but not ontologically individualistic as it acknowledges that capabilities and functionings are not independent of others (Robeyns, 2003). As such the experiences of individuals are embedded within wider contexts.

The case studies presented here primarily use qualitative methods as they are most suitable for revealing the complex and in-depth issues that young people face in making transitions from school that may not be captured from the analysis of secondary data sets. The CA has been previously used in qualitative studies of employment and unemployment. The 'Activation policies and organisational innovation in the capability perspective' special issue of the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy (Volume 29, Issue 11/12) presents

a wide range of papers all from a capability perspective: employment policies in the UK between 1870-1914 (Mah 2009), as well as more recent policies (Green and Orton 2009); labour market re-activation in major shipyards in Sweden (Gascoigne and Whiteside 2009); local institution building in active labour market policies in Austria (Atzmüller 2009); activation of the unemployed in Poland (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009); Swiss integrated employment policies (Galster et al. 2009); and integrated employment policies for disabled people in Italy (Monteleone and Mozzana 2009). Elsewhere, the CA has also previously been used to analyse active labour market policies and social integration policies for marginalised young people (Bonvin and Moachon 2008). Although we strongly advocate a qualitative approach for the WorkAble case studies that does not mean we do not recognise the value of quantitative approaches in operationalising the CA. Quantitative studies seek to answer different questions, such as the effects and associations of different factors across the population of young people as a whole, which our case studies cannot fully answer.

3. Common methodological framework

The aim of the case studies was to capture the wide range of capabilities and functioning that a young person may have in making their transitions (while acknowledging that in practice it is often easier to capture functionings than to reveal an individual's capabilities). Therefore the case studies not only seek to understand the skills, qualifications and educational and work experiences of the young person, but also aimed to identify the full range of capabilities and functionings the young person has. We therefore used the CA as a broad analytical framework for the design and analysis of our case studies; following the statement by Robeyns that *"the capability approach is not a theory that can explain poverty, inequality or well-being; instead, it provides concepts and a framework that can help to conceptualize and evaluate these phenomena"* (Robeyns 2008, p. 3). Consequently when using the CA the supplementation of additional social theories is often required as the CA cannot explain inequality but does provide a way in which to understand it (Robeyns 2005b, 2006).

Carrying out the research across nine different countries presented the issue of how to conduct case studies that were comparable but also adaptable to the particular social and institutional contexts of the individual nations. This was addressed by the development of a 'common question framework', which provided the means of implementing the CA in the methodology and a way of producing results that were meaningful and comparable.

3.1   Common question framework

The aim of the common framework was to provide a robust means of carrying out a cross country analysis of the various programmes covered by the research, and to highlight how the CA could be used to conceptualise the barriers faced by young people in making the transition to work and or education and training, as well as providing a consistent framework that could be used to identify those skills and competencies they need to lead the life that they have reason to value.

Following extensive discussion between partners, the question framework was thus constructed around the four inter-related factors of resources; empowerment; individual conversion factors and external conversion factors which were identified as contributing to a young person's capabilities and functionings. This 'framework' of common questions was used by each partner as a starting point in carrying out their individual case studies. This meant that there was some basis of comparison even though the case studies were very different. It was acknowledged that in order to make comparisons between case studies, similarities and differences between countries need to be embedded in the social, cultural and historical context as transitions between education and work, for example, may vary because of this (Jobert, 1996; Corden, 2001). In addition it was decided through group discussion between partners at a workshop that the research should focus on the development of three capabilities in particular: voice, work and education.   These capabilities were selected as most relevant to the wider purposes of the study.

Outlined below in Table 1 are the types of information that the common framework sought to identify. The common question framework (Table 1) was not purely instrumental rather the aim was to embrace the CA by seeking to identify the range of capabilities that the case study programmes sought to enhance. Therefore, the aim was to examine the process for the individual, their freedoms or opportunities, rather than only focusing on observed choices, outcomes or achieved functionings.

Table 1: Common Question Framework

Resources: Here we wanted to identify what resources were available for the programmes; if there were enough resources for the programmes to enable beneficiaries to have the capacity to act; and what resources do individual beneficiaries bring with them to the programme. For this part of the framework we wanted to take into account that people require different amounts of resources to achieve the same goal, and that there is often more than one approach to deal with problems. Furthermore, we sought to acknowledge that individuals with the same capabilities sets are likely to have different functionings as they will have different conceptions of what they have reason to value (Robeyns 2005b).
Empowerment: The CA focuses on the freedom of individuals to make choices (Sen, 1985, 1998) and as such we wanted to examine whether the young people were sufficiently empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the programme and how much choice do they have in this process and in the selection of alternatives. This recognises that in order for young people to realise their capabilities they need to be empowered to make informed choices that are right for them. Therefore they should be adequately empowered to achieve their capabilities and lead the life they choose to live. For example young people could be constrained by having to comply with administrative expectations of a programme, or a wider benefits regime. As such young people are not empowered if they are coerced to participate (Bonvin and Moachon, 2008).
Individual conversion factors: Here the case studies sought to identify whether young people have the necessary conversion factors to transform resources into capabilities (Robeyns 2005b; Bonvin and Moachon, 2008); identify the range of individual capabilities/functionings (such as skills and knowledge) that young people are able to achieve; and in particular to identify the individual characteristics that make it possible (or not) to convert resources into capabilities/functionings, such as health, gender, education, family, individual/household social status, training, qualifications etc.
External conversion factors: Here the case studies sought to identify the role of external, social and structural factors that may affect the conversion of resources into capabilities/functionings (Robeyns 2005b) such as social stratification, geography, labour market conditions, labour market segregation, discrimination and the legal framework (including welfare legislation) as well as "workfare policies" in general and the possibilities/restrictions that are related to the (specific) programmes dealing with the target group of this research in particular. As such it is recognised that individuals are affected by the institutions that surround them (Bonvin and Orton, 2009).

4. The case studies

The aim of the case studies were 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 education, for voice and for work. The case studies focus on both the following 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 main criterion for selection was those programmes that used new or innovative approaches in addressing the issues faced by young people making the transition from education or unemployment to work or further training; although the transitions of young people with less favourable labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme were also studied. Different groups of young people were considered (although it must be noted that these groups often overlap): early school leavers; unemployed young people; 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 (see Table 2). In analysing both those young people who lack qualifications and higher education graduates, the case studies consider the uncertainty about which skills are needed for young people to be able to flourish and become capable citizens who are able to choose the life that they have reason to value.

Table 2: Case study descriptions

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

In addition the case studies cover a broad range of European countries, both geographically and in terms of different welfare, education and employment traditions: the social-democratic (Sweden, Denmark); liberal (Switzerland, UK); conservative (Germany, France, Austria); Mediterranean (Italy); and transitional (Poland) welfare regimes[7]. The countries also cover a range of educational regimes: strong focus on vocational pathways (Austria, Germany, Switzerland); focus on a strong public based system of education that tries to impart general as well as vocational skills (Denmark and Sweden); strong focus on general (academic) skills and firm-based skill strategies (France, Italy and UK); education systems in transition states (Poland). The programmes/initiatives of concern in the case studies are provided by organisations across the public, private and third sectors that focus on the implementation of national policies aiming to overcome common European problems of youth unemployment. The rationale for considering case studies from a range of different contexts is in order to assess whether the skills needed in national labour markets, and the problems connected to a 'skills mismatch' between young peoples' and employers' expectations, are associated with different educational and welfare regimes. This approach opens up the opportunity to learn from each other at the local and regional levels within different countries.

5. The methodological approaches

Central to the operationalisation of the CA in the case studies was drawing out the perspectives of the young people in order to take their choice of pathways into account. While focusing on individual accounts, the aim of the case studies was to consider how these perspectives, preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or enabled not only by economic 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.

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[7] With respect to the welfare regimes one has to add that one side effect of this study could be to show how far the welfare regimes (and therefore especially the educational sphere) have already changed due to common European policy recommendations, i.e. to focus on work and economic matters rather than to concentrate on social issues.

5.1   Overview of methodological approaches

The case studies were addressed primarily with research interviews (group and individual) with young people and other stakeholders (e.g. programme managers and staff; policy makers) to gauge a wide variety of individual insights and perceptions, and gain understandings of complex relationships. Partners also used other methods 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 were most commonly used.

Table 3: Overview of the methodological approaches

CASE STUDY	Germany	Poland	Switzerland	Sweden	Austria	Italy	Denmark	France	UK
Methods adopted									
Interviews	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Documentary analysis	X		X	X		X	X	X	
Group interviews					X	X	X	X	X
Focus group					X				
Participant observation						X			
Statistical analysis		X							
Triangulation	X	X				X	X		
Participants									
Policy makers		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Employment Service				X					
Programme workers /deliverers	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Programme beneficiaries/ young people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other		X		X					

Details of the methodological approaches adopted by each case study are outlined below (and are summarised in Table 4 in the appendix).

Germany: The case study collected data through: problem centred interviews with young persons; expert interviews with case managers; and documentary analysis. The analysis was based on the assumptions of Grounded Theory. Sequential analysis (word by word, line by line) and a broader case and field-oriented perspective were used with a 'coding paradigm' of conditions, context, strategies (action/interaction) and consequences. The CA was used as a permanent evaluative background although, as Grounded Theory demands, the focus was on 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.

Poland: The case study draws on: documentary and statistical data analysis to provide context; and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Three pronged coding was used to analyse the data: descriptive coding (information about gender, exact or approximate age of the speaker and his/her role in the programme); topic coding (passages from the interviews were ordered according to specific topics brought up by the interviewees); and analytical coding (how the interviewee addresses a particular topic).

Italy: Interviews and group interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries; as well as participant observation in various phases of the project activities and documentary analysis were used to collect data in this case study. The data was analysed using the common questions as a framework. In particular conversion factors and the link between resources and rights and capabilities, i.e. the freedom to choose the life one has reason to value, were focused upon. Moreover, attention was paid to the relationship between institutional and the individual dimension.

France: The method used for the case studies is based on documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews with regional public authorities (regional council, regional representatives of the ministry of education, etc.); local operators (head teachers/ heads of school, teachers, guidance counsellors); and pupils/students (individual face to face, small groups of 3-5 pupils, larger class group >10). The case study takes a comparative approach in studying two regional action plans concerning school dropout. Coding, using the capabilities for voice, education and work as a framework, was used to analyse the data.

Denmark: A mixed method design was adopted to face the different perspectives resulting from the different participants within the process of four Basic Vocational Education and Training Programmes (EGU) located in different parts of Denmark, in terms of geography and urbanisation. Interviews with young adults, counsellors/teachers, managers and one internship-teacher were conducted in order to give data on the realisation of capabilities with respect to the common framework of capabilities for voice, education and work within

the everyday education and working life. These interviews have been contextualized related to the outcome of documentary analysis. The framework of the CA not only helped to learn about the different dimensions of voice, education and work but also to identify an order between these dimensions according to (inter)national education and labour policies: thus emphasising the relation between the individual and the socio-economic order.

Austria: Explorative and expert interviews were carried out with the managers at the case study programme as well as with trainers and social pedagogues. Two group discussions with the apprentices took place (containing role plays, small group discussion, brainstorming rounds and associative methods using pin boards and prompt cards). Based on the results of the group discussions, a guideline for the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the apprentices was designed. The data was analysed using the common question framework with a focus on the capabilities for: work and education, choice and voice and how they are formed and restricted or supported.

Switzerland: Documentary analysis to provide context and semi-directed in-depth interviews with policy-makers, field social workers and young people (both before entering the programme and during its implementation) involved in the programme were used in this case study. The data was analysed with a focus on the young people's capability for voice as a condition to the enhancement of their capability for work and education. Specific attention was paid to three dimensions of the capability for voice: the topics of the voice (subjects voiced - or not); the resources of the voice (resources needed for the young people to use their voice); the modalities of the voice (loyalty, negotiation, conflict, apathy, etc.).

UK: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers (including policy makers for the organisations), project workers and young people in two case study organisations. A 'thematic content analysis' approach was taken to analyse the transcripts using an analysis framework loosely based on Grounded Theory approach to uncover core categories in the data. 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.

Sweden: Data was collected using unstructured in-depth interviews with: a group of young graduates with weak labour market attachment; university employees at management and faculty level, a careers advisor; employers; union representatives; and staff at the employment office; and analysis of policy and documents concerned with enhancing young graduates' abilities to find work. Data was analysed using coding with the categorisation based on voice, education and work. An important aim of the study was to explore possible constraints in the transition between education and work. Consequently, the subsequent analytic process following upon the first categorisation was to create sub-headings under each category defining the absence or presence of different conversion factors.

5.3   Reflections on methodological approaches

The WorkAble partners were asked to reflect on their methodological approaches and the issues they had in applying them.   Issues raised concerned themes about conducting qualitative research in general but also about applying the CA in practice.

Access:

The level of access afforded to data and participants was an issue for some of the partners. For the Polish case study methodological and data triangulation was difficult due to a refusal to grant access to information (e.g. financial aid for poor families, data on the budget of the programme). In the Danish case study there was a time delay caused by the required official approval process concerning research in educational institutions. Research in Denmark has to be accepted by Datatilsynet (National Supervision of Data Collection, Storing and Using). The application took two months to process and during that period no data collection could take place.

For other partners access sometimes became an issue because of the conditions placed on the researcher by the gatekeepers (i.e. the case study organisations). As the Austrian team noted they depended a lot on the cooperation with the case study organisations, although at times the conditions placed on them in terms of the timing of the interviews, presented difficulties. The young people started work at 7.15am and therefore found it difficult to concentrate in interviews which were timetabled by the case study organisation to be held late in the working day.

In the UK case study, for some of the interviews with the young people, programme staff asked that audio recordings were not taken and that a staff member was present while the interview was taking place. This made it hard to accurately record all that the young people said and there is an issue as to whether the presence of a staff member might have made the young people less willing to be open up with the researchers (although alternatively it might also have made some feel more comfortable as there was someone present that they knew). The Swedish team highlighted that central for achieving rich data is active listening and therefore they took audio recordings so to give full attention to the respondent and the situation. They note that the use of a recorder is not favoured by everyone and might inhibit individuals (May 1997). However, they provide the opportunity for exact reproductions of the interview, which helps with analysis and the drawing of conclusions.

Engaging the young people:

Some partners outlined the issues they faced when engaging with the young people during data collection. There is a need for reflexivity to consider the role of the researcher in the

voice young people had during the interviews. For example, gender can affect the information disclosed (England, 1994) and the importance of commonality has also been highlighted with the argument that similar experiences opens up for trust and dialogue (Finch 1984, 1993; Oakley 1990). In the research we therefore needed to consider whether the young people felt unable to put forward their ideas because they were intimidated by the research process or because they could not relate to the researcher? The Swedish team highlighted that they felt that their common experiences in terms of educational background with the young people was an asset.

Problems were encountered if the young people perceived the researchers as part of the 'establishment'. The Austrian team outlined how it was not easy to develop a common language and trust between the young people and themselves, exacerbated by the times constraints of the research. Similarly, the UK team considered issues such as clothing and dress to help develop trust with the young people. A service manager in one of the UK case study organisations mentioned that they considered their dress to be important when engaging with the young people as they could find people dressed very formally to be intimidating:

> *"I say to the* [project workers] *don't wear suits if you are with the young people because there's a time and a place for when you need to be dressed appropriately but there's also a time and a place for working with young people that it's about us making them feel comfortable with the situation"* (Service manager, UK case study)

Young people's voice:

It was sometimes difficult to have prolonged discussions and gain in-depth insights from the young people. The Austrian team found that during group interviews that strong group dynamics regularly limited the discussion and it was difficult for quieter individuals to participate. The concept of voice was also sometimes too abstract for the young people to grasp and they were not used to being asked what they would like to change about their lives. The Italian team also found that young people were not used to having voice and therefore it was difficult to engage them in the interview process. Young people in the German case study found it difficult to respond to open questions and it was difficult to get access to young people's set of relevancies (i.e. what they value). The German team reflected that the institutional focus is on the functioning for work (in terms of the labour market). Voice does not play a major role, either in terms of a functioning (what do you want now), or in terms of a capability (how do we secure the individual and social conditions of making your voice count). Likewise, education is mainly conceived in 'narrow' functionalistic terms, by the professionals as well as by the young people themselves.

Experiences from the UK case study found that the young people were often shy, especially at the start of the programmes, when compared to those who were interviewed some

months later at the end of the programmes. The interviews were sometimes used by the programme staff as a way in which to help develop the confidence of the young people (although the young people's participation was voluntary). This highlights issues about the lack of voice because of low confidence etc. that young people might have and how the UK case study organisations, in this instance, enabled young people to overcome this barrier. Equally this reluctance to engage fully in the interviews can also be interpreted as an articulation of voice, with the young people not wanting to discuss the difficulties they face in their life with a stranger. This raises questions as to whether it would have been better to have tried to have spent time before the interviews with the young people in order to build trust, rather than conducting 'one off' interviews.

The choice of the research methods used in the case studies can also make it difficult for young people to have voice in the research process. For the Swiss team it was difficult for some young people to give a linear and chronologic description of their scholar/familial/professional trajectory and thus, it was sometimes hard to identify clear causalities and to reconstruct their trajectories. The use of Calendar and Time Diary methods could have been useful in order to reconstruct the young people's trajectories. The Danish team outlined that they had to rethink their research design when they discovered the young people participating in their case study had difficulties in reading, understanding and answering the questionnaire due to dyslexia, learning difficulties, etc. In some cases staff were able to help the young people by reading the questions aloud, discussing possible answers etc., although in others there were no the staff available to help with this. This raises the question about choosing research methods that accommodate different response/communication modes, thus increasing the opportunity for young people to have voice. The Danish team found it hard to carry out pure autobiographical interviews especially because of the severe concentration problems of some of the young people.

While the case studies employed some innovative methods with the young people (e.g. the Austrian team designed their group discussions interactively with role plays, small group discussions, brainstorming rounds and associative methods) in the main they employed traditional one-to-one or group discussion techniques. Hazel (1995) and Punch (2002) suggest some innovative techniques to use when engaging young people in research such as using vignettes and photographs to encourage discussion. The Austrian team also outlined that in future more time and/or participatory methods could help to get more and a better access to youngsters' aspirations and their daily way of dealing with (institutional) requirements. The CA seeks to explore the individuals' aspirations, personal situation, into everyday practices of developing capabilities and as such may be more suited to participatory methods.

Applying the CA:

Some partners commented on issues about applying the CA in practice. The Swedish case study was retrospective since it was based on what the respondents said on being invited to look back at their past. They found that the CA is difficult to apply if the study is aimed at covering experiences during a quite long period of time as what people have reason to value changes over time and the change is perhaps especially pronounced during early adulthood. Capturing the whole phase and the change would require a longitudinal approach, which was not possible within the framework of the study. The Polish case study also looked at young people's experiences over time, but because of the timing of the project were not be able to gather data when students graduated from the programme. They have thus been forced to search for indications of what might provoke difficulties in future. Therefore they concentrate on the factors which work in favour of creation of capabilities without being able to uncover this in practice.

For the French team the main difficulty came out from their own capacity to catch precisely what is really meant by the capability for voice, education and work. It is certainly not a coincidence if the capability for voice, the more often described and in some way evident capability, was the easiest one to question. They were able to describe some indicators of the presence/absence of this capability or the overlapping content of different capabilities like voice and education dealing both in a broad sense with education and human development. It was more difficult to do the same exercise for the two other capabilities. In fact they would say that giving priority to an inductive methodology – i.e. trying to define more precisely what is intended by these three capabilities on the basis of empirical material – resulted in some difficulties in organising their analysis and building integrated conclusions on the three capabilities and their relationships. On reflection they felt that it would have been easier to interpret their empirical material if they had disaggregated each of the capabilities in a series of indicators instead of trying to identify them afterwards. In other words, it is more a question of operationalising the CA than a matter of the CA in itself.

6. Conclusion and lessons for future applications of the Capability Approach

What then does our research tell us about applying the Capabilities Approach? Alkire (2008) states that it can be difficult to assess if research using the CA, is a more effective methodology in addressing social problems than research using other methods. The case

studies might not provide a 'blue print' for effective CA methods, but they do highlight where this approach can work to provide useful insights and how it might be improved.

This paper has examined in detail some of the methodological issues involved in applying the CA across nine case study countries in the EU. Implementing the CA in the research raised a number of methodological issues namely, how to operationalise the CA in empirical research and how to develop a research framework that allows for comparison across the case studies. In terms of operationalising the CA we identified from the literature some of the key issues such as the lack of specification from Sen on how to carry out empirical research using the CA (Zimmerman 2006; Robeyns 2008); debates around which capabilities to use (and whether there should be a definitive list of capabilities) (Nussbaum 2000; Robeyns 2003, 2005a; Alkire 2007); and importance of understanding the differences between measuring capabilities and functionings (Robeyns 2005b, 2006; Miquel and Lopez 2011). In the case of our research rather than using a prescribed list we chose to focus on those capabilities that were relevant to the purpose of the study – namely the capability for voice, work and education. In addition, our aim for the methodology was to find a way of identifying capabilities, that is the freedom or opportunity to achieve something rather than focusing on the outcome itself.

As a starting point for this process a common question framework was designed that was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of the CA and also provided a means of carrying out cross country, comparative, case study research. The case studies themselves varied in their aims and scope with some looking at early school leavers, others the young unemployed, and in one case young university graduates. A range of qualitative methods were employed including in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation and documentary analysis. In reflecting on our methodological approaches a number of important messages were identified in relation to carrying out research using the CA. There were practical issues such as getting access to young people, which proved difficult in some cases. This highlights a more general issue in gaining access to vulnerable groups for research purposes. One of the key strengths of the CA is in understanding and identifying the issues faced by vulnerable groups in society and thus suggests that in applying the CA empirically consideration should be given to how easy it will be gather data on such groups. In relation to this issue, it was also difficult in some cases to engage with the young people themselves as there was a potential lack of trust with the researchers.

It is difficult to make firm conclusions as to the extent the case studies have been able to capture the essential features of the CA. While the case studies have highlighted and examined the contexts (i.e. conversion factors) in which capabilities might be formed and realised, it is arguably more difficult to make definite conclusions as to the extent to which they have revealed the capabilities themselves. This draws attention to the difficulties that have been cited previously that while it is possible to observe functionings it is harder to

appraise the options and freedoms available to an individual (Miquel and Lopez 2011). For example, it can be hard to assess through questioning what young people value if this is something they have never considered before, for instance, because they have never had the opportunity to voice this before.

Of particular relevance to the CA, was the issue of capturing the voice of young people. In the course of the case studies it was demonstrated that many young people did not have the confidence to 'voice' or articulate their opinions or experiences. In many cases this may have been due to a poor educational background – indeed some young people had difficulty reading or were dyslexic; and others were reluctant to go over painful or difficult experiences from their past. This highlights the need for researchers to consider in more detail their methodological approaches in relation to the particular group being studied and to fully assess the suitability of their research methods. More general issues were also raised in applying the CA such as the use of retrospective questions about past decisions since what individual have reason to value can change over time, especially for young people. In other case studies the short contact time with the young people meant that is was difficult to gauge the effectiveness and long-term impact of interventions on their capabilities.

It has been shown that the case studies combined with the theoretical framework of the CA provide a tool that gives a deeper insight into the related societal dimensions of education, vocation, work and the striving for (further) human development. On the one hand this relatedness provides the opportunity to gain more understanding and new knowledge about intertwined processes within educational/vocational training programmes. On the other hand this high complex relationship makes it difficult to point out one methodological 'best way' of approaching these issues - partly due to socio-cultural, inter-national and national, as well as regional, differences that have to be brought down to the least common denominator. However, facing the common European challenges concerning unemployment of young adults, it seems to be an effective way of identifying and emphasising common problematic issues through carrying out in-depth studies that make it possible to put the results – not to say triangulate – together with data gathered by different research methods.

Appendix - Table 4: Case study methodologies

	Method	Rationale	Analysis
Germany	Problem centred interviews with young persons	How do young people experience, interpret and cope with the transition and the current measure	Grounded theory with the Capability Approach used as a permanent evaluative background
	Expert interviews with case managers	Knowledge and patterns of interpretation about the measures, every day practices, profiles and images of the clients	
	Documentary analysis (mainly political and professional concepts)	Context	
Poland	Documentary and statistical data analysis	Case selection and during the case study, documents and quantitative information were also used for the purpose of triangulation	Three-pronged coding: descriptive coding; topic coding; and analytical coding
	Semi-structured in-depth interviews with policy makers, programme deliverers, programme beneficiaries etc.	Understand the complex relationships between actors and to take into account cognitive dimension, which is crucial for improvement of capabilities of participants	
Italy	Interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries	Understand the level of the organisational processes and the one of the interactions; as well as focusing on beneficiaries' points of view	Using the common questions as a framework
	Group interviews with policy makers, project leaders, social workers and beneficiaries		
	Participant observation		
	Documentary analysis		
France	Documentary analysis	Comprehensive analysis of the impact of the public action in terms of capability enhancement. It aims at understanding the effects of policy implementation on the student's behaviour, the practices of teachers and the cognitive resources framing the policy maker's ability to cooperate.	Coding, using the capabilities for voice, education and work as a framework
	Semi structured interviews with regional public authorities; and with local operators		
	Individual face-to-face interviews with Pupils / students and small group interviews of 3-5 Pupils / students		
	Class group interviews >10 Pupils / students		
Denmark	Documentary and analysis	These methodological approaches have been adopted to contextualize the interviews.	Analytical coding and using the common framework for the capabilities for voice, education and work
	Semi-structured, theme-oriented interviews were conducted with policy makers, managers, teachers; EGU pupils and one internship-teacher. Two interviews (pupil; teacher) developed into group interviews	To understand the different perspectives deriving from different participation levels. To see to what extent institutional processes, frameworks and policy involvement shape a possible arena of action and especially the development or the hindrance for the capabilities	

		of voice, education and work.	
Austria	Explorative and expert interviews: management, trainers and social pedagogues	Gain insight into the logic, philosophy and self-conception of the (training) institution and its executives in handling and forming the youngsters' transition	Content analysis using the common questions as a framework
	Group discussions with the apprentices	Overview; evidence on how the youngsters interact; guideline for the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the apprentices was designed.	
	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with apprentices	Insights into individual strategies of capability formation, its limits, room for individual manoeuvre as well as into incisive internal and external conversion factors to lead a life the youngsters have reason to value.	
Switzerland	Documentary survey	Political and economical context	Focus on the young people's capability for voice as a condition to the enhancement of their capability for work and education
	Semi-directed in-depth interviews with young people on the programme	Insight into young people's experiences during the preparatory stage and implementation	
UK	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, project workers and young people in the two case study organisations.	This method was selected in order to capture individual experiences.	A 'thematic content analysis' approach; using an analysis framework loosely based on Grounded Theory
Sweden	Unstructured in-depth interviews with young graduates with weak labor market attachment	Understand how young graduates with difficulties in finding a relevant job perceive their experiences of education and work in terms of capabilities for voice, education and work	Coding with the categorisation based on voice, education and work
	Interviews with employees at the university	Questions about student's influence to voice their opinion and to make it count within public policy process; how policy documents, texts and accounts are used in practice	
	Scientific studies and public discussions in the press	Resources enabling students and graduates to voice their opinion; the possibility to voice for the individual during the training period and in the transition from education to employment	
	Policy documents, texts and accounts	Comprehensive statement of the actual formal rights to education and the actual availability of measures for enhancing young graduates possibilities to get a job, provided by the higher education system	
	Interviews with employers, union representatives and employment office	Labor market perspective on young graduates and the value of their education	

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CHAPTER 4:

DYNAMICS OF EDUCATIONAL REGIMES AND CAPABILITY-ORIENTED RESEARCH

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Abstract: The paper analyses the results of the WORKBABLE-project in relation to debates about educational regimes, which highlight the connections between different concepts of skill (general, firm specific, and occupational) and varied institutional settings of educational paths. The analysis focuses on emerging strategies to tackle to problems of a growing number of young people to succeed in the standard path of education. After an analysis of dynamics which are common to all regime-types (such as strategies of decentralization of educational processes etc) and a rough overview over dynamics which vary between regimes a more detailed analysis of emerging variations to tackle the growing problems of VET in countries where the "dual system" dominates is offered. The paper contrasts the emergence of a transitory system in Germany, which rather serves a flexibilised labour market than to offer an adequate transition into VET; the regionalized emergence of programmes which aim to reintegrate the growing number of young unemployed who have to rely on social assistance into the standard path of the apprenticeships in companies; and the implementation of a complementary pillar in the Austrian VET-system based on a training guarantee agreed between the social partners and the government.

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Introduction

The main objective of the WORKABLE project was to analyse the resources and institutional support young people need to develop and expand their capabilities "to function as fully participating citizens in emerging European knowledge societies" (Proposal WORKABLE 2009, 3). For an increasing number of young people, this is a growing problem in the face of increasingly unstable and precarious employment careers. Therefore, young people's transitions from the educational system to the labour market and their significance for changing structures of inequality (Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009) pose a major problem for European policy makers as well as research on the trajectories of the European social models (Hermann and Mahnkopf 2010).

Most attempts to extend the capability approach (CA) (Sen 2007; 2009) to educational issues employ the concept of capability to widen the remit of education, its goals and contents against narrower concepts, such as human capital or employability. Such debates thus emphasise the significance of education in enabling individuals to develop a range of capabilities that allow them to lead the life they have reason to value. In this way, education impacts on the development of societies at large, the expansion of democracy as well as participation and human flourishing (Walker 2010; Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010). There is no doubt that these are fundamental issues in the debates on reforms of educational systems and educational responses to changing social relations and economic dynamics (Saito 2003: 348; Robeyns 2006; Otto and Ziegler 2006; 2008). However, as many debates on the CA are based on a very general conceptual level, the question remains as to how to enhance this approach for more concrete research on varying national systems and different policy fields such as education and labour-market policy. Thus, even though the CA is firmly grounded in normative debates (Sen 2007; 2009), the WORKABLE project tried to approach its basic concepts from a comparative perspective in order to come to terms with national variations.

As the CA does not allow tracing back national variations in capabilities to alleged natural differences in character and abilities between nations, varieties in the institutionalisation of so-called external capability sets had to come into focus. For WORKABLE, the latter were defined as "economically, culturally and institutionally structured sets of attainable life paths" (Proposal WORKABLE 2009, 5). Thus, external capabilities are fundamentally structured by the socially specific construction and provision of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors. Together, they shape the national differences of people of being able to work and to be educated.

Such an approach allows for an operationalisation of the CA that is sensitive to national variation as it opens capability-oriented research to the comparative debates on educational

and/or welfare regimes (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Hega and Hokenmaier 2002; Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Iversen and Stephens 2008; Lauder et al. 2008; Peter et al. 2010; Beblavy et al. 2011). As an entry point, the debates on educational regimes and welfare-state typologies may be interpreted as attempts to conceptualise – in an albeit very limited way – national variations of external capability sets that emerge from the varied forms and availability of resources and commodities as well as the institutionalisation of conversion factors (Sen 2007). However, this interpretation is only adequate in so far as these analyses conceive of the varied outcomes of educational and/or welfare regimes according to normative concepts such as inequality/equality (Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009), social inclusion/poverty, de/commodification, etc. (e.g. Lauder et al. 2008; De la Porte and Jacobson 2012).

However, due to the limited scope of many such analyses, which often rest on rather narrow operationalisations of the outlined normative concepts, the results of this research cannot simply be taken as an approximation of a capability-oriented research strategy about national variations. Furthermore, a lot of research grounded e.g. in the concept of educational regimes focuses on dimensions that are only significant for an assessment of nationally varied capability sets if they are specified according to criteria that fit to the CA. This is because they mainly focus on the relevance of education for economic competitiveness, thereby reducing education to human capital formation (Sen 1995). Thus, at this stage of capability-oriented research I would rather argue that the analyses of educational regimes have to be seen as attempts to identify variations of education and labour-market institutions that constitute specific regimes of functionings, i.e. things individuals actually do (Sen 2007; 2009). This problem emerges as these analyses typically do not include attempts to assess the range of alternative options individuals could choose from, the freedom they would need to do so and whether the actual outcomes of their actions are really based on choices they have reason to value.

From the perspective of the CA, it can nevertheless be argued that these regimes of functionings (i.e. employment status, certain forms of education, family life, etc.) are the result of educational (as well as welfare) regimes that provide a range of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors. However, their stratified outcomes and the conditions of labour-market entry that emerge from them, the relationship between the degree of real freedom of individuals and the necessities and constraints imposed by market processes and public policies would require more research from the perspective of the CA (on the capability to work, see: Bonvin 2012). This issue also emerges from the available body of studies concerning educational (as well as welfare) regimes (e.g. Ryan 2001; Müller 2005). These studies clearly reveal that the regimes of functionings individuals can attain are stratified by gender, ethnic background, class, etc. Hence the question has to be asked why the regimes of commodities and resources as well as conversion factors are unequally distributed. From the perspective of education and labour-market integration the restricted

and stratified availability of certain functionings is of crucial importance. This is because the ability to attain certain educational levels and to hold a formal employment contract offering social insurance, certain levels of income, etc. defines the conditionality (e.g. social rights, monetary resources, social services, etc.) of – in particular – the conversion factors people can dispose of to make use of the socially available regimes of resources and commodities.

Notwithstanding the conceptual considerations concerning the usefulness of the debates about educational and welfare regimes, another central question for the WORKABLE project emerges. The research on educational and welfare regimes mainly focuses on general analyses of variations between different regimes by comparing the predominant institutional structures and life chances of individuals. Thus, they only provide scant information on groups that fail in different countries and on the varying strategies used to tackle the problems of marginalised groups.

Of course, there is good reason to assume that a country's dominant institutional configuration will shape any effort undertaken to tackle social exclusion and to deal with people that fail in the dominant educational route. However, such a conclusion might well be premature as some countries could show striking variations at the "margins" of the dominant institutional configurations, engendering a vast variety of responses to growing problems within the dominant institutional setting.

Thus, after a brief outline of common trends dominating in all European countries – albeit in nationally varied forms – I will try to identify trends that vary between different educational and welfare regimes. Finally, I will show that developments can also vary considerably within one regime type, in particular in relation to policy strategies affecting so-called marginal groups within the dominant regime.

National variations of functionings: educational regimes and welfare-state typologies

In the context of debates on employment and welfare systems (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Ferrera and Hemerijck 2003; Iversen and Stephens 2008) or varieties of capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001; Lauder et al. 2008), attempts have been made to identify educational regimes and to group countries accordingly. As a consequence, in recent debates there has been growing awareness of the interrelations and interaction between welfare regimes and educational systems (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Hega and Hokenmaier 2002; Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Peter et al. 2010; Beblavy et al. 2011). The dominant attempts to

identify educational systems (Verdier 2007; CEDEFOP 2008; 2011) correspond to the typologies of welfare regimes (e.g. Lessenich and Ostner 1998; Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009). This can, in particular, be said for the importance of strategies to combat social disadvantages and inequalities linked to social origin and status (e.g. Ryan 2001; 2005; Müller 2005; Blossfeld et al. 2007; Grolsch 2008; Kurz et al. 2008), the significance of early selection and status preservation, and the possible trade-offs and interactions between a human-capital orientation of educational processes vs. wider concepts of knowledge and education (e.g. *Bildung*), etc. (Lauder et al. 2008).

Depending on nationally specific institutional settings of education and welfare and their coupling in the phase of transition from education to employment, different outcomes in relation to social inequalities are discerned (Blossfeld 2006; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011). The different worlds of the production of skills and competencies are defined by the different types of skills and the institutionalisation of the transition from education to employment. Concerning the production of skills and competencies and their links to employment systems, at least three regimes (Crouch et al. 1999; Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Iversen and Stephens 2008) and sometimes more (Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Verdier 2007) are identified. They are defined according to which type of skill and which institutional form to "produce" them dominates the respective regime. The main differentiation is between:

- general skills, which are easily transferable between companies and are predominantly produced in public – and in some countries, in particular for highly qualified employees, also private – education systems (e.g. schools, universities);

- occupational or industry-specific skills, which are provided in a system of alternance combining on-the-job training with education in a public institution and offering employees intermediate skills for mobility between firms but within the same occupation on craft labour markets (Marsden 1999);

- firm-specific skills, which are mainly provided within companies. They can be linked to the creation of internal labour markets to protect companies from staff poaching by competitors and can result in long-term employment relationships.

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These types of skills are linked to the following rough distinction of educational pathways in initial VET (Crouch, Finegold and Sako 1999; Estevez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice 2001; CEDEFOP 2008; Iversen and Stephens 2008; 2011):

1. General skills, provided according to the educational ability of young persons, are mainly obtained through an academic pathway (chiefly) focusing on state-run educational institutions (schools and universities). Very often, there is also a high

share of private education (the US is an example with a high share of private provision (Verdier 2007). Thus, the bureaucratic regulation of educational processes is very important for the production of this type of skills (e.g. France, Italy). However, in countries with a dominant focus on general skills problems emerge for young people who are less inclined to academic education. In particular if the transition from school to work is weakly institutionalised (cf. Iversen and Stephens 2008), an educational regime focusing on general skills is likely to be complemented by a market-based system of VET (e.g. Great Britain). Thus, people who are less successful in the academic route of education are not offered adequate forms of initial VET (Crouch et al. 1999; Blossfeld 2006; CEDEFOP 2008; Iversen and Stephens 2008) that will enable them to integrate into employment. They do not have many incentives for continuous VET either because the provision of training is more or less left to the market. This can lead to a polarised skills structure, the danger of social exclusion and the emergence of secondary labour markets based on flexible and unstable employment (Marsden 1999) for the low skilled who, at best, acquire firm-specific skills. This may lead to under-investment in skill-formation and market failure (Crouch et al. 1999). It is only in countries with a long tradition of internal labour markets (e.g. Japan) that the concentration on firm-specific skills does not necessarily create a low-skills economy for those who fail in the general education system. To prevent staff poaching, employees must be offered high levels of employment protection and a stable career perspective by companies. Educational regimes that are predominantly based on general skills often go hand in hand with flexibilised employment systems as well as residual/liberal and fragmented welfare systems as they dominate in Anglo-Saxon countries and/or in Southern Europe. Thus, young people face low wages, insecure employment contracts and unstable phases of transition into employment (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).

2. In countries where VET is based on a system of alternance (i.e. a combination of training through work experience with education in a public institution) and connected to occupational labour markets a structured transition from education to employment on the intermediate level is offered to young school leavers (e.g. Marsden 1999; Crouch et al. 1999). The "dual system" in place in Central European countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Switzerland) is paradigmatic for this pathway of education. Curricula as well as forms of certification are linked to corporatist forms of social partnership and the ability of unions, employer organisations and the state to commit their members to investment in VET, to low wages for apprentices and to the inter-company recognition of qualifications (Crouch et al. 1999). With its strong emphasis on the concept of "occupation"/"profession" (*Beruf*), this system is said to combine participation in employment with social identity and integration. This type of educational regime has traditionally been associated with conservative welfare

regimes based on the preservation of social status also reproduced through the "dual system" (Lauder et al. 2008). Nonetheless, this regime is increasingly subject to problems regarding the quality of training and the availability of apprenticeships. In so-called conservative welfare regimes, the early selection of pupils forecloses more academic paths of education for a large number of young people at an early stage (notwithstanding recent improvements to switch educational paths at a later stage). However, for those school leavers who succeed in completing an apprenticeship, transition into the labour market is stabilised through the employment-centred conservative welfare regime associated with corporatist employment relations (Bosch 2009).

Even though many young people face increasing problems finding stable employment after completing an apprenticeship, this form of transition from education to employment still manages to stabilise life courses for many workers (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011). However, in recent years a growing number of youngsters have been unable to find company-based apprenticeship places (e.g. in Germany) due to social inequalities concerning family origins, social status, migrant background as well as failure at school (early school leavers) (Krekel and Ulrich 2009).

3. A third educational system is based on a (universalist) public system of education which tries to provide general as well as vocational skills according to the abilities of pupils and to guarantee the permeability of different educational routes. Skill formation systems of this type lead to rather low social inequalities and compressed skills structures. This allows countries to adapt to new technologies quickly and to embark on a high value-added economic strategy (Lauder et al. 2008). Furthermore, the transition from education to employment is usually associated with an expanding system of active labour-market policies set up to help young people adapt to changing labour-market requirements by means of retraining and up-skilling (Crouch et al. 1999; Iversen and Stephens 2008). Thus, the risk of permanent social exclusion is reduced for young people even in times of ever more flexible labour markets and increasingly precarious jobs. In this way, this type of educational regime roughly corresponds to the so-called universal welfare regime in place in the Scandinavian countries (Crouch et al. 1999) with its focus on high levels of social security, an expanded public sector providing a considerable number of jobs for e.g. women and solidaristic wage policies to fight inequalities among different groups of employees. Nevertheless, it is obvious that not all groups of young people benefit from this institutional setting in the same way. Thus, there is a significant share of young people who are failed by the universalist education system. Furthermore, the transition from the (public) education system into the labour market does not seem to be adequately institutionalised for all groups of young people, leading to relatively

high levels of unemployment within this age group (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008).

Common developments

Notwithstanding the outlined variations, the analyses of the WORKABLE project allowed us to identify a range of developments and trends that can be found in all countries even though it is clear that their concrete configuration cannot be understood without taking into account national and regime-type specificities in an adequate way (see the detailed analyses in: WORKABLE 2011). The attempt however to identify and highlight developments that are common to all countries is important from the perspective of the CA and its significance for debates about the European Social Model.

The results of the WORKABLE project (2011) revealed that most countries face growing problems to ensure the social integration into stable employment careers of a mounting number of young people. Thus, the transitions from (compulsory) school to VET and from VET into the labour market, which constitute crucial steps in an individual's life course, put national educational and welfare regimes (in particular Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) for young people) to the test. Even though the situation of young people differs considerably between countries, a range of macro-social trends responsible for the growing problems of social integration and increasingly instable transition into adult life can be found in (more or less) all countries. However, from the perspective of the WORKABLE project and its European perspective their varied realisation is of crucial importance. Creating knowledge about the dynamics of national variations not only increases the complexity of social research and public policies but can also serve as a source of alternative paths and solutions to the crisis.

Thus, we observe that societies' mounting difficulties to integrate young people into stable employment paths and to avoid social exclusion affects certain categories of young people more often than others (e.g. Ryan 2001; WORKABLE 2011). Thus, it is in particular young people with low educational attainment and with migrant background who increasingly face problems during the transition to employment. For young women, the situation seems to be rather mixed as they generally show a higher propensity for staying in the academic route of education than their male peers. Another social dynamic that strongly affects the labour-market integration of young people after the completion of compulsory schooling is the growing importance of the academic route of education. The availability of an ever larger number of highly educated and skilled people, along with the loss of low-skilled employment opportunities increases the competitive pressures at the lowest end of the

skills ladder. Not only is a growing number of people less likely to be able to make use of the opportunities within a certain educational regime, due to, amongst other things, the growing diversity of the population (migration); but, compared to the days of the Fordist Golden Age (e.g. Jessop 2002), a large number of low-skilled jobs which used to provide stable employment paths have disappeared while precarious and unstable forms of employment have increased (Blossfeld 2006; Erzsébet et al. 2008; e.g. Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).

Another general trend that can be seen from the WORKABLE Case Studies (for more details on the case studies, see: WORKABLE 2012) and the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) refers back to the debates about the transformation of (welfare) states in its broadest sense from so-called Keynesian welfare national states to a Schumpeterian workfare post-national regimes (e.g. Jessop 2002). Thus, young people's growing problems to follow the standard routes from the educational system into stable employment have spawned intense search strategies not only to develop and implement new strategies and measures to tackle this problem but also to rescale political responsibilities between national, regional and local institutions, to create and implement new institutions and (sometimes also) to integrate new actors. Very often these processes seem to be driven by decentralisation and regionalisation strategies. The professed goal of these developments is to bring educational processes, and in particular those that aim to tackle processes of social exclusion, closer to local communities and to the needs of the local economy, thereby trying to improve the matching process between young people looking for employment and companies searching for new employees. Even though these outlined trends seem to be common for more or less all regime types they can differ considerably between countries as will be highlighted below in relation to countries where firm-specific skill strategies dominate.

Another remarkable development revealed by the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) is that the educational system, the labour market and the economy are increasingly seen to require specific strategies to bring them closer together. In this context, the symbolic role of the German dual system, which bases VET on a combination of on-the-job training and theoretically oriented education in public (vocational) schools, is worth mentioning. Even if an implementation of German-style reforms of the transitory period between compulsory schooling and employment via a dual system all over Europe is unlikely, the idea of bringing schooling and working closer together has gained a strong foothold in European countries. This is especially true for the group of youth who lose out in the academic-oriented paths of the different educational regimes. From the perspective of the CA, the downside of these developments is a shift in educational concepts and goals towards employability and human capital.

Variations between educational regimes

As outlined, the Institutional Mapping of the WORKABLE project (WORKABLE 2011) has shown that all countries face growing problems maintaining stable paths of integration into employment for young people. However, at this stage of capability-oriented research about the ways in which educational regimes try to cope with marginalised youth, only stylised hypotheses can be developed about regime-specific differences. It should be of no surprise that these problems seem most pronounced – at least if youth unemployment or the participation in full-time education are taken as the main indicators for these developments – in countries where the phase of transition after completion of compulsory schooling is least well (if at all) organised. Especially countries whose VET systems have traditionally been based on a high degree of voluntarism and predominately firm-specific training are faced with record youth unemployment and unstable employment in extremely flexible labour markets. For this reason, they have embarked on comprehensive search strategies to create effective (and efficient) sets of institutions designed to stabilise young people's transition into the labour market. Notwithstanding the role of central provisions and frameworks, a crucial tenet of these processes is the decentralised implementation of new institutions and programmes aimed at stimulating local innovation in social policies concerning VET and the labour-market integration of young people. Even though it is hard draw general conclusions on these trends from the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) and the Case Studies (WORKABLE 2012) of the WORKABLE project – due not only to the necessarily limited scope of the project but also to the experimental and innovative character of many of the analysed developments – some key problem areas could be identified. One is a growing fragmentation of educational systems, which become unable to provide all citizens – independently of where they live – with adequate educational opportunities and labour-market possibilities. One of the effects of this fragmentation is that educational institutions can no longer guarantee the same quality of educational services everywhere. This raises the question of whether growing inequalities, reproduced not least through the educational regimes and conditions of labour-market entry, are not further aggravated by these tendencies. Therefore, due to the highly flexibilised and segmented character of labour markets and the high share of contingent labour in these countries, this casts doubt on the ability of emerging institutions to create equal opportunities for young people in all regions. Possibly positive effects of decentralised place-sensitive strategies could be marred by the growing fragmentation of the system. Even more so, viewed from the perspective of the emerging disparity of activation regimes, there seems to be a strong reliance on strategies of discipline and the social control of young people, which runs counter to fundamental prerequisites of a capability-oriented strategy based on adequate possibilities for voice and exit (for more detailed considerations: Pascual 2007; Revilla and Pascual 2007; Bonvin 2012).

Countries with a more universal educational regime that organise VET through the public education system still seem to have the institutional resources to keep a high share of young people in full-time education until they are 19, thereby diminishing education-based social inequalities. On top of that, they have the advantage of being able to rely on an expanded system of ALMP for young people, which – at least in theory – should be able to support those who fail in the universalist educational system. Even though it remains open how the education systems and dominant activation regimes in countries of this type interact when it comes to new problems, it seems that the institutional density permits well organised processes of experimentation with new strategies and programmes (WORKABLE 2011, 2012). However, given the strong role of the public vocational path, it remains unclear whether new strategies and programmes are successful in reintegrating young people who were failed by the standard route – hence the high level of youth unemployment in countries such as Sweden. Should the problem of integration into employment of a substantial group of young people persist in these countries, severe social problems for these countries' welfare models might loom in the future.

Emerging variations within educational regimes – the case of the dual system

The Institutional Mapping of countries relying on the dual system of VET has shown – well in line with the international debates – that these countries can still rely on a dense and well organised institutional system for the transitory phase from compulsory education to VET and into stable employment (e.g. Kurz et al. 2008). Furthermore, these countries also dispose of a differentiated set of activation strategies to cope with young people who fail in the standard path. Thus, youngsters who cannot find an apprenticeship place are offered a set of activation measures, with youth unemployment kept at a comparably low level (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).

However, recent developments, including a persistent lack of apprenticeship places, a general educational expansion, the growth of precarious and flexibilised segments of the labour market and a complementary loss of low qualified jobs, raise doubts about the future viability of this system of human capital formation and its significance for identity formation and social stability.

As the number of young people who cannot enter an apprenticeship each year is now quite significant in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, the available set of institutions and programmes aimed at tackling these problems are moving to the foreground. The most

important question is whether and how participation in training-oriented measures within the activation system can be coupled with the standard path of VET in the dual system, i.e. whether these measures are credited for training in the dual system or whether ALMPs for young people are little more than a "waiting room" for entry into the labour market or an apprenticeship, thereby helping to provide an increasingly flexible labour market with a docile workforce. In this context, also questions of control, discipline and employability in the growing low-wage segments of the labour market emerge, casting doubt on the capability friendliness of these developments. Given the common trends and problems in countries with a dual system, the WORKABLE project (2011, 2012) found quite remarkable differences between Germany, Switzerland and Austria in their attempts to tackle the crisis.

In Germany, where in recent years between 40-50% of school leavers – in particular those with low educational attainment and migrant background – could not find an apprenticeship place, marginalised young people are placed in a so-called "transitory system" (*Übergangssystem*) consisting of a range of activation, job coaching and training measures (Greinert 2007; Atzmüller 2011; Ley and Lohr 2012). Critics argue that these measures can at best be a "waiting room" for apprenticeship positions in the standard VET path, at worst the start of a career in the activation regime and/or low-skilled employment. As these measures are not designed to provide entry into the standard VET system closely protected by the responsible actors such as unions and employer organisations, they rather serve to play down youth unemployment figures. Thus, despite the professed "transitory" nature of such a support system for those who fail in the standard route, its residual and precarious character and its inadequate coupling with the dual system raises the question of whether we are not witnessing the emergence of a new institutional mix. Given the sheer amount of young people affected by these measures every year, the question is whether the emerging, albeit fluid and constantly shifting system of institutions does not much rather serve to stabilise and regulate an increasingly precarious and flexibilised labour market in Germany, in which growing segments are forced to rely on low-wage jobs (Atzmüller 2011). In connection with attempts to modularise VET and to implement apprenticeships of a shorter duration, this could further weaken the dual system in Germany. Even though in Switzerland the dual system of VET is facing similar problems as in Germany, the Institutional Mapping showed some remarkable Swiss peculiarities (Gonon 2005; Salder and Nägele 2009; Bonvin et al. 2011; Seitz et al. 2012; Meyer 2012). Thus, the dual system is still the most important educational path after the end of compulsory schooling. A much higher share of young people try to enter the dual system after completing school in Switzerland than in Germany and Austria (where the number of pupils who try to stay in the public path of education is higher). In the German-speaking regions of Switzerland, up to 80% of young people (in particular males) start an apprenticeship after school. Nevertheless, in recent years a lack of apprenticeship places and the diminishing willingness of companies to train apprentices have created problems. Similar to Germany, a system of transitory programmes and measures has emerged to try and support young people throughout an extended placement

search phase. In contrast to Germany, the temporary character of this search phase seems predominant, as most youngsters succeed in entering an apprenticeship sooner or later (Salder and Nägele 2009; Seitz et al. 2012; Meyer 2012).

However, in some regions of Switzerland a growing number of young people cannot be reintegrated into VET as the social assistance system they were referred to provided some disincentives (e.g. loss of benefits) to take up an apprenticeship (Bonvin et al. 2011). Dissatisfied with the perspective of permanent social exclusion among certain groups of young people, regional policies have been set up in the attempt to implement measures that create paths of reintegration into the standard route of VET via the dual system or professional schools (see the case study about the FORJAD-programme in the Canton of Vaud (Bonvin et al. 2011)). These programmes focus on supply-side measures of professional rehabilitation, focussing first of all on marketability and employability and, at a later stage, on professional training. Thus, the Swiss case studies revealed an interesting strategy to reinforce the standard path of VET by creating a training institution for marginalised groups aimed at paving the way into the standard route for their clients. However, given the strong reliance on creaming of participants (Bonvin et al. 2011), the question remains open of what the perspectives of youngsters deemed unfit for an apprenticeship in the dual system really are.

While the crisis of the dual system in Germany has led to the emergence of a "transitory system" whose emerging function seems to stabilise young people's "integration" into a flexibilised labour market based on precarious and low-wage employment and while in Switzerland we find examples of strategies to build institutions and implement programmes which create paths to reintegrate marginalised youth into the standard route of VET, the Austrian case provides a further variant of how to tackle the particular crisis of the dual system. Here, an additional, publicly funded and organised arm of the dual system has been implemented under the label of a "training guarantee" for all young people under the age of 18 (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011). In general, the dual system in Austria faces similar problems as in Germany and Switzerland. Thus, about 40% of young people still start an apprenticeship at the age of 15 (about 40% continue in the public school system, including schools with a high degree of vocational preparation). The overall number of apprenticeship places has declined by about one third over the last two decades. Similarly, the number of companies offering apprenticeships has gone down considerably (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011; Dornmayr and Nowak 2012). In recent years, there has been an average gap of about 2,000 apprenticeship places per year.

Confronted with a growing crisis in VET, the Austrian government, in collaboration with the social partners, passed a so-called "training guarantee" for all young people under the age of 18. The aim of the guarantee is to provide every school leaver, who cannot not continue school-based education, with an apprenticeship place. The main instrument for this is to

replace existing ALMP measures that mainly served to prepare young people for an apprenticeship in the regular labour market with so-called supra-company apprenticeship training funded by the PES and mainly run by non-profit organisations. These supra-company training companies now offer apprenticeships for about 30 to 40 occupations (out of about 300 occupations for which formal apprenticeships are available in Austria) to about 10% of all Austrian apprentices. However, whether completion of an apprenticeship in a supra-company training programme will offer the same opportunities for stable employment as the standard route of VET remains to be seen as stigmatising is still an open question. Nevertheless, there are hopes that the reputation of supra-company training programmes will be quick to improve as, unlike company-based apprenticeships, these schemes are not subject to market pressures and can thus provide higher quality training.

Notwithstanding the outlined problems, this development is quite remarkable as an additional, public column of the dual system has been created that offers young people an alternative route to apprenticeship-level, thereby breaking the monopoly of the private sector in the dual system. Strengthening the public role can not only contribute to guaranteeing high-quality apprenticeship programmes but also, at least in theory, allow for an expansion of the (general) educational contents of apprenticeship programmes to support young people in the transition to adulthood. The inclusion of social-pedagogical measures in supra-company training programmes already points in this direction. However, as the outlined system is rather costly it may well be a temporary phenomenon to be scrapped or at least scaled down as soon as demographic changes and economic recovery create a lack of applicants for apprenticeships. On the other hand, given the sceptical views of many businesses concerning the educational and behavioural deficiencies of school leavers and their abilities to take up an apprenticeship and thus their declining willingness to offer training places, the supra-company training system might well be here to stay.

Conclusions

The WORKABLE project has tried to create a comparative research strategy for the CA, thereby trying to bring it closer to debates about educational and welfare regimes as approximations of regimes of resources and commodities and nationally varied institutionalisations of conversion factors. In the more micro-oriented case studies, WORKABLE (2012) tried to discern the significance of a range of measures for young people at risk of social exclusion to create capabilities which enable them to lead the live they have reason to value. From the perspective of national variations and different regime types, a more modest conclusion has to be drawn. Thus, the outlined changes in educational regimes and their efforts to create and implement new institutions and strategies to tackle

the problems of marginalised youth are mainly focused on a range of rather narrow functionings (e.g. participation in VET programmes, entry into employment) among which young people have to choose. Thus, the reconfiguration and adaptation of educational and welfare regimes, consisting of nationally varied sets of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors, to the problems of young people seems mainly geared towards narrowly defined outcomes in which the goal of labour-market participation prevails. Having said this, significant differences between different systems emerge. Generally, measures to tackle the problems of youth who fail in the standard path from education into (stable) employment oscillate between two poles. Either the emerging strategies try to reintegrate young people into the standard path of education and entry into employment through special support programmes that not only tackle the (alleged) deficiencies of young people but also provide qualifications and certificates that allow participants to move on to the standard paths. Or they try to implement or stabilise an additional, complementary route from compulsory schooling into the labour market that is less geared towards reintegration into the standard path of progression but rather aims to secure the availability of young people for a flexibilised labour market. Such measures certainly lean more towards workfarist labour-market policies (Revilla and Pascual 2007). Which strategies predominate depends very much on when in the educational path failure happens and how the problems of certain groups of young people are framed by the educational system and labour-market institutions. Thus, the notion of reintegration into a standard route of progression might predominate in the implementation of specific programmes for marginalised youth when ideas of a social right to a certain level of education is violated, i.e. if people are, for instance, failed by the system of compulsory public education. Strategies to expand a workfarist labour-market system to stabilise an increasingly precarious transition into flexibilised labour markets might prevail where progression to the next step is not defined by compulsion and social rights but rather by competition and market processes, which means that the focus is put on the employability of young people.

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CHAPTER 5:

CASE STUDIES

Introduction to the case studies

Lavinia Bifulco

The aim of the following nine case-studies 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. By applying the capability approach, we have elaborated a perspective which highlights:

1. *The relation between freedom, education and work*. The importance of educational resources does not lie exclusively in increasing individual professional skills and economic productivity. It also lies in reducing inequalities and empowering young people to lead integrated and active lives in society. In this sense we refer to the capability for education as the real freedom to choose a training/curriculum programme one has reason to value. This poses specific challenges to public policy, namely through education and training. Likewise we use the notion of the capability for work to indicate the real freedom to choose the job/ activity one has reason to value. Therefore the capability for work is a very complex issue that encompasses a series of dimensions and the need to take into account the plurality of views about what 'valuable work' is (Bonvin, 2012). It requires a focus on issues and dimensions such as adequate skills, the availability of work opportunities and access to them, etc. (Hollywood, Egdell, McQuaid and Michel-Schertges, 2012). The questions adopted by the case studies take into consideration this complexity: in what conditions does the process of developing skills in young people correspond to a process of capability building? How can sustainable growth be realised so that it increases at the same time as the inclusion of the young in the labour market and social life?

2. *The relation between capabilities, the knowledge society and the future*. Capabilities are intimately connected to the availability of knowledge through which young people can steer their own future development and contribute at the same time to the development of the society they belong to. Crucial, therefore, is the capacity to realign themselves to ever changing circumstances and actively pursue and realise occasions for learning and face the requirements of a knowledge-based economy. In this sense what is at stake is clearly the future, both individual and collective. Therefore, besides resources, opportunities and freedom of choice, young people should be empowered with the capacity to aspire

(Appadurai 2010). This concerns "how human beings engage their own futures" and the normative frameworks from which the desire and imagination of the future take form.

3. The relation between capabilities, voice and democracy. Voice is essential for sustaining capabilities. In fact, when choice comprises of pre-determined options, Sen holds that there is no real freedom: "The relevant freedoms include the liberty of acting as citizens who matter and whose voices count, rather than living as well-fed, well-clothed and well-entertained vassals" (1999: 288).

It is in this light that voice assumes relevance as the "political" expression of capacity. More precisely the capability for voice is "the capacity to express one's opinions and thoughts and to make them count in the course of public discussion" (Bonvin and Thelen, 2003). In this sense Sen emphasises that voice is neither an alternative nor an accessory, but operates as an integrating part of well-being. On this basis, the case-studies focus on how to equip and enable young people to be capable as participants in labour markets and as democratic citizens of a European society. Our research highlights the voices of young people and their chances to lead the life they value and thus provides better opportunities for young people to play an active part in decisions affecting them.

Apart from the differences in educational and welfare regime context, the nine cases analysed are different in their methodologies, levels, contexts and intervention targets. Also the architectures of governance are different, both vertically along the EU/national/regional/municipal axis, and horizontally with reference to the relations between public and non-public actors.

As said in the fourth chapter, the main criterion for programme selection are those that have applied new or innovative approaches; although the transitions of young people with less favourable labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme are also explored (Swedish case study) (see table 1). In three cases (France, Switzerland and Italy), the target is early school leavers; two cases (Denmark and the UK) deal with the young unemployed; in the German and Austrian cases the subject is young people with no upper secondary education qualifications; the Polish case study concerns young people in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills; and the Swedish case is about higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job.

Table 1: Case study descriptions

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

(Source: Hollywood, Egdell, McQuaid and Michel-Schertges (2012). Methodological issues in operationalising the Capability Approach in empirical research: an example of cross-country research on youth unemployment in the EU. *Social Work & Society*, in this volume)

The reasons for such a variety are to be found in the need to set up a cross-country comparison capable of throwing light on the most significant situations in the transition from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment or further education (Hollywood, Egdell, McQuaid and Michel-Schertges, 2012).

Our conceptual and analytical framework has allowed particular situations to emerge and at the same time has helped clarify our key questions: how to reduce inequalities and address the inadequacies and the mismatch between education and the labour market? What conditions allow young people to maintain and update over the long term the necessary competencies for living in, and contributing to, a democratic knowledge society? What individual, social and environmental factors promote or impede young people's capabilities for education, for work and for voice?

To answer these questions people and contexts, and individual and collective dimensions have to be considered all together. On one hand, the individual level is indeed essential to the concept of capability, and it is the dimension in which capabilities may be exercised and increased. Therefore the perspectives of young people themselves have been taken into account. On the other hand, the conditions that allow for the development of capabilities have their roots in institutional and social contexts and frameworks, and in the organisational cultures that define public intervention. To be free to choose what they have reason to value, young people need to be embedded in a context which allows them to exercise their freedoms. Therefore the case studies have highlighted the link between the individual and social dimensions of the capabilities, revealing those factors that allow the promotion of individual capacities and the modes in which they are constructed in the relation between context and persons. From this point of view our research aims at highlighting in what sense the promotion of capability for education, work and voice of young people is decisive both for individual well-being and our collective life.

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Early school leavers

Regional policies and individual capabilities: drawing lessons from two experimental programs fighting early school leaving in France

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Abstract: This case study focuses on innovative regional policies fighting early school leaving (ESL) in two French regions, Aquitaine and Rhône-Alpes. After a short presentation of the French policy context on the topic of ESL, we present the two regional programs studied and draw a first line of general conclusions and findings on their implementation. In a second part, we assess these programs in terms of capabilities for voice, education and work. The general aim of the regional programs will thereby be confronted to the beneficiaries and teachers' point of views. Finally we will address the question of the non take-up of institutional devices such as the studied programs as a key question to a capability approach of public action.

Key words: Early school leaving, public action, regional policies, non take-up and vulnerable youth

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Dropouts are newcomers on the French political agenda. Until the beginning of the years 2000, early school leaving was not a matter of concern for the French politicians and only a few academic work had been done on that topic (Bernard, 2011 ; Glasman and Oeuvrard, 2011). It started to change after the 2005 urban riots. 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[8], school dropouts have never been more mentioned[9]. If on a strictly numerical basis, there are less school dropouts, one should look elsewhere for the reasons why this 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. This second justification is related to the difficulties encountered by the dropouts to get access to the labour market.

The issue at stake 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 their 1982 levels, mostly due to a rise in the service industry (Rose, 2009). Hence the issue does not result from a shortage of unqualified jobs but in a labour market increasingly adverse to unqualified young workers. In other words, dropout has become a public problem mainly because access and stability in employment is more complicated and difficult for early school leavers, in a context of massive unemployment where young people in general and low-skilled youngster in particular constitute a very vulnerable category to the selective mechanisms of the labor market (Céreq, 2012).

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 representatives)
- Local governments (*conseils régionaux, généraux et municipaux*, i.e. regional, sub-regional and city councils), whose legitimacy to intervene in this field remain uncertain.
- Local structures and networks: (*missions locales, maisons de l'emploi, centres d'information et d'orientation, centres interinstitutionnels de bilan de compétences[10]*) in charge of implementing the public policies.

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[8] According to the ministry of education data, within 25 years, the youngsters exiting the educational system without any qualification has passed from 28% (1980) to 11% (2005).
[9] The 2012's presidential election has given a clear example of this interest.
[10] These local organization are dedicated to guidance and career counceling of youngsters and adults.

Such actors coexist on several territorial levels of government and cohabitate within intricate hierarchical and organisational relationships clearly stating the relevance of interrogating their governance (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007). At the systemic, or national level, numerous measures and instruments loosely coordinated and quickly outdated, decommissioned or scarcely financed, can be identified (Bernard, 2011 ; Blaya, 2010 ; Bonnery, 2004 ; Glasman and Douat, 2011). At the local level, one can observe a profusion of experimentations, individual or collective initiatives, all characterised by a strong awareness of the need 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. Social 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" (F.E.J[11]). This is the subject of the present case study, regarding two regional experimentations designed to fight school dropout. The presentation of our results is organised in two steps. In a first section, we will present the two regional programs, our methodology and some overall results. The second section will be dedicated to their analysis in terms of capabilities. The capability framework will provide not only an interest to the resources provided but will also show how individual conversion factors are included or not in the design of regional public policies. This bottom up analysis will allow us to understand how individual capabilities are strengthened or inhibited by public action towards early school leavers.

1. Studying two regional programs: methodological insights and overall results

Our main objective here is to explore the relationship between the institutional capacity of local policies stakeholders and the actual possibilities to enhance individual capabilities. To

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[11] *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).*

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 in terms of services delivered to beneficiaries.

1.1 Case study's objectives and methodology

We aim at underlining the regional disparities of these policies by studying a region (Rhône-Alpes) 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 education and another region (Aquitaine). Such policies launched at a regional scale are generally carried out with little cooperation between these two policy levels. Yet a series of contextual evolutions has created a policy window for their action:

- Preventing dropout has recently been put on the agenda and this policy has hardly stabilised.
- Relying on its competencies in the field of professional training the regional council has progressively invested the issues of guidance and securing career paths. It has therefore gained significant institutional resources in organising dropout prevention.
- The ministry of education's operational and financial resources has been strongly reduced.
- Regional councils are (except for one) controlled by members of parties opposite to the national government.

We have then chosen to focus our observations on two social experimentations, respectively launched by two regional councils in the Rhône-Alpes and Aquitaine (NUTS 2). Both experimentations share common characteristics: they are experimental programs carried out by the regional council, resting on a partnership-based management, and supporting local initiatives. These two programs are co-financed by the F.E.J and are respectively untitled: *regional plan for fighting dropout* (Rhône-Alpes) and *regional plan for school perseverance* (Aquitaine). Two distinct modes of action appear in these two plans: by supporting existing local networks that are fighting dropout through an improved monitoring of dropouts in Aquitaine and by providing the schools with additional funds as a means to prevent dropout in Rhône-Alpes.

The method used for the case studies is based on documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews. The documentary analysis focuses on policy documents, study reports and review of scientific articles. We have conducted 45 semi-structured interviews during the summer and fall 2011 with 3 categories of actors: regional public authorities; local operators (head teachers, heads of school, teachers, guidance counselors); and pupils. Concerning this last 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 grid focused on capability for voice/education/employment.

Although our methodology remained unchanged at the regional level, we adapted our interviews to the local context and the aims of the program. In Aquitaine, we have conducted our interviews with the local network's organisations. 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 focused on 5 teaching institutions in both the districts of Lyon and Grenoble: two vocational upper secondary schools from the public sector, one public agricultural college, one private agricultural college (maison familiale et rurale) and finally one upper secondary school specialised in bringing drop outs back to school (Collège et Lycée Egalitaire Pour Tous – CLEPT). In each of these institutions, we met with the administrative staff, the teaching teams, the dropout monitoring teams (when existing) and several group of pupils.

1.2 Presentation of the regional programs

As mentioned above, our fieldwork is also two-folded as we have chosen to study two regional action plans against school dropout (in Rhône-Alpes and Aquitaine). The first one focuses on supporting existing local networks of actors, the second funds experimental actions conducted inside the teaching institutions.

1.2.1 Rhône-Alpes

The regional plan in Rhône-Alpes consists in financing innovation within schools and was launched in 2008. It results from an agreement between the regional council, the ministry of education (more precisely two of its regional sub-divisions called rectorats), the regional Directorate for Alimentation, Agriculture and Forests (DRAAF) and the regional network of the "missions locales" (i.e. local interdepartmental structures dedicated to vulnerable young people). The public problem this plan wished to tackle was based on the finding of a significant number of early school leavers with no qualifications. Therefore, the regional council decided to prevent early school dropout by giving extra funds to schools in order to support pupils. Hence a call for proposals was launched and 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*" and were asked to submit proposals based on the following approaches:

- *Identification, prevention and research for adequate solutions*
- *Tutoring*
- *Individualised follow-up process for pupils (when enrolling and beyond)*
- *Providing re-incentives and remobilisation to pupils: allocating time for personal development through socialisation, self-appreciation, skills' enhancement workshops*
- *In-depth counseling on guidance and academic choices* (Rhône Alpes regional plan).

This plan was 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 Euros. Out of the 125 submissions, 91 projects were selected including 80 exclusively submitted by a school.

The services of the regional council have produced a general assessment of the plan and several significant observations can be made on the basis of the record:

- The main axes of the projects were: training for teachers, small group remobilisation workshops, individual counseling for at-risk pupils, tutoring, as well as personal and inter-personal competencies development;
- 80% of the requests for funding concerned overtime pay;
- Projects were mostly limited to one single school, and partnerships rarely extended to the information and guidance services;
- Projects often referred to families and pupil's involvement, but only giving them some general information about the project generally carries this out.

Regarding the regional plan and projects' management, one should first emphasize that the program raised interest among schools, since almost half of the 230 eligible schools in the area took positions and submitted applications. In a context of decreasing national public funding for secondary education, the subsidies distributed by the regional council helped offset the lack of funding from national policies. *"I think that globally, for the school involved, it has given them some air to breathe and has widened horizons a little"* (Regional council, upper secondary school staff).

The founding partnership for the program, formalised in an agreement, has brought together the regional council, the regional authorities for the Education Department, the Agriculture department and the network of "missions locales". According to the actors interviewed, the regional partnership has been working to their satisfaction, provided two reservations:

1. Although they are key in the implementation of these policies, the missions locales' involvement has been limited, due to a program design mainly focused on schools as evidenced by both the regional plan and the projects 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 lead 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"* (Rhône Alpes, mission locale regional network).

2. The monitoring of the regional plan entrusted to the "Pôle Rhône-Alpes de l'Orientation" (i.e. Guidance pole for Rhône-Alpes, or PRAO) included a mission of precise inventory for dropout in the region. However, the regional authorities of the Education Department (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". "*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*" (Regional council, upper secondary school staff). As a result, the PRAO had to resort to other extrapolated statistical sources to perform its task.

Regarding the systemic effects that have been observed in the schools, two elements can be pointed out:

- A mobilisation effect of the teachers and administrative staff: " *I think in terms of effect, the very first thing is that in participating in the plan, the schools said it helped us to tackle the issue. That is to say that as soon as they drafted a proposal, (…), it has had an internal mobilisation effect.*" (Rectorat de Lyon, guidance and counseling division)
- An awareness effect for teachers involved *de facto* in an internal program aiming at fighting dropout, while the issue tends to be increasingly externalised towards non-academic operators (psycho-motor therapists, dropout advisors, 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 mobilisation, especially with the teachers. That is the second effect*". (Rectorat de Lyon, guidance and counseling division).

In the end – according to the regional stakeholders and that was confirmed by our own interviews with teachers and head teachers – the regional plan for fighting school dropout will have instigated a project dynamic and initiated innovation.

1.2.2 Aquitaine

The project carried out 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 Quebec. This can be explained by the beginning of the project in Aquitaine that is related to a fact-finding mission conducted in Quebec in 2006. When in 2008, the regional council considered getting involved in preventing school dropout, three territories where pre-existed a cooperative dynamic between local stakeholders were identified (Marmande, Blaye and Hauts de Garonne). Based on such findings, a second fact-finding study in Quebec was commissioned with local stakeholders in the aim of stimulating

the networks they were already involved in or were about to create. "*So we identified those three territories and offered them the following deal: we will organize a mission to Quebec (and I will provide you with an account of this mission in 2008), the deal is not to copy-paste what is done in Quebec 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 to 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*" (Regional council, drop out mission). This is how the axis for regional policy has been defined, consisting in stimulating and providing tools for existing networks of operators.

The network was launched in 2008 and was also co-financed by the FEJ during the 2008-2011 period. The objectives of this experimental approach consist in:

- "*Supporting and encouraging partnership and network-setting of distinct institutions, structures and organisations that are locally involved with dropout, so as to reinforce their cooperation for a better support 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 dropouts, potential or actual, facing difficulties in academics and / or professional 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 Education division*
- *Validating the recruitment of three coordinators from the experimental networks*" (Aquitaine regional program)

In Aquitaine, the project was implemented in a global context of tension between the regional council and 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 ministry of education who did not regard kindly inviting at the table, on issues relevant only to them, people they did not recognise the relevance or expertise*" (Regional council, Education division). It is indeed quite likely that choosing to invest on the axis of network-building, rather than intervening directly on school policiy like in Rhône-Alpes, is due to this particularly tensed relationship between regional council and rectorat of Aquitaine 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, only two got involved in the project as confirmed by the official in charge of the program: " *and for the "Hauts de Garonne" nothing happened*".

Following requests from the local actors, the main axis for action consisted in 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 intranet program at the local network scale in order to identify and monitor in real time young dropouts. This program, named 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 both the Blaye and Marmande area. This development task, carried out by the coordinators recruited for the project, is very much appreciated by local operators: *"This is enormous work, it took him time, he went to all the schools so as to appoint referring operators in charge of pupils' perseverance, he trained academic staff to use Safire. Thus it is something who had a very positive impact, because alerts have been doubled"* (Mission locale, Blaye).

The regional program's twofold axis, coordination of local operators and implementation of a monitoring device, collided with a national policy launched in February 2011. Indeed, a circular from the ministry of education introduced two new devices: local platforms for monitoring and support, and the SIEI (Interdepartmental System for Exchange of Information). Those two measures, that local officials from state services have to implement, brutally collided with the local experimentations realised in Aquitaine[12]. *"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"* (Regional council, Education division).

In the end, the two staff members coordinating the networks will not have 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 give priority to the national SIEI program.

1.3 Common findings

Regarding political results, given that the two experimentations are coming to an end, here are our general findings about these two regional programs:

- In terms of *institutionalisation*: no extension or continuation of the projects since they 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.

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[12] Similar cases have been identified in other regions of France (Pays de Loire, Basse Normandie for instance)

- 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 *relation to the beneficiaries*: Young people and their families have usually not been given a lot of time for voicing their concerns, even when the program was specifically targeting the schools.

The global observation one can provide for both national and local levels is one of limited actions in time and space, strongly undermining public action's continuity yet a constitutional principle in France.

- For *decision-makers*: redundant competences overlap and conflicts arise at the unstable margins of decentralisation and national competences.
- For *operators*: local experimentations are alive but remain sensible to the regional political context.
- More generally, a picture of uncontrolled repetition of very similar programs seems to come together.

2. An analytical view of the three relevant capabilities onto the case study

Even if enhancing the capabilities for voice, education and work is not an explicit aim of both the regional programs studied here, the normative dimension of the capability approach makes it possible to use these three categories as means of analysis and evaluation. Are those programs vectors for reinforcement of capabilities (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 (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2008)?

2.1 Analysing the regional programs in terms of capabilities

Despite the fact that our interview grids where designed to shed light on the capability dimensions, we decided to implement a three-step process in order to operationalise the capability approach as an analytical tool for our empirical material. The first exploitation of our interviews focused on identifying in each of them the main aspects related to one of the three capabilities investigated (voice, education and work). On this basis, a second exploration brought to light the transversal characteristics of each of those capabilities. Third, we have then assessed the extent to which these capabilities were effectively enhanced for the pupils involved in these programs, i.e. we assessed the freedom

dimension, both in its process-based aspects (democratic participation) and its social justice principles (choice between a plurality of value functioning or adaptive preferences).

2.1.1 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 at all stages of its launching (design, implementation, assessment) but grants them also the freedom not to participate. More generally, a project will be enabling if pupils view its implementation positively. Hence, the later are not compelled to participate in experimental programs. They are invited to get involved and therefore have good information about the program (families nonetheless have less systematic access to information). The plan targets pupils with the more difficulties yet it should not identify them as such and thus preventing for stigmatisation as a reason for non take-up. They are granted easy access to the program (free access) and the organisation 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 about the different aspects of the project or even about its existence, and when they had access to some, it remained unclear. The fact that they actually understood the aim of the project does not seem to have been verified. Pupils for instance think they are getting grades from the tests they are given, and have only a very vague idea of what they could be used for[13]. 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 they are forced to participate since they can be excluded from school otherwise. According to them, the only way to express themselves is an institutionalised one, through the "délégués de classe" or pupil representatives. Outside of such representation, they have no voice granted to them.

From the operator's point of view, voice seems to be effective to different extents, and under distinct forms from one school to another. The Maison Familiale et Rurale de Chessy (Family Rural House of Chessy) has created spaces for listening and expression for 3rd years pupils (approx. 14-15 years old), for instance, and instituted discussion groups. Besides, psychological support has been set up for voluntary participants who can choose the place and the topic of those sessions.

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[13] This was the case for two tests used in upper secondary schools: the ROC (collective spelling identification) and the LYCAM (lycée ça m'interesse or I am interested in secondary school). These tests are used for indentifying dropout risks.

The agricultural secondary school of Montravel makes space for capability for voice: free to express their opinions, pupils are involved in field-trips, mentoring and tutoring scheme they can jointly elaborate with the teachers and the administrative staff. In the vocational secondary school Martin Luther King, voice might be less dominant in the operator's mind. The school organises tutoring on a voluntary basis and pupils can pick the topics they wish to study with the school non-teaching staff. In the vocational secondary school Marcel Seguin, the analysis of the interviews conducted with heads of school and teachers matches the one with the pupils but mentions very scarcely the dimension of capability for voice. Outside of the welcoming week when pupils are offered individual meetings and sessions are organised with families, added to the fact that a pupil can refuse individual care, the indicators for voice are largely absent.

The "Collège Lycée Elitaire pour Tous" (CLEPT what loosely stands for the Elite secondary school for all) is an experimental school (Bloch and Gerde, 2004). It offers an alternative educational approach for dropouts (they have an average 18 months of school dropout 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"*. We have met students from one basic group (independently from their grades and their level) and some of the teaching staff. The interviews show that developing capability for voice is at the very heart of the promoted educational approach. *"The rules of the CLEPT (…) are jointly constructed"* (CLEPT, teacher). They imply *"working all year long",* can be adjusted depending on the students, *"we hear what they have to say"* (CLEPT, teacher) and they are given incentives: *"they will not get shut down because they said something outside of the question asked, badly formulated, so speech is risk-free"* (CLEPT, teacher). Pupils confirm: *"Regarding self-expression, first you need to know that already in our timetables we have slots, just like for groups, what we are doing now, where self-expression turns around the table, on news, on internal issues for the CLEPT. We also have a "vie de classe" (class meeting) happening every week. I know some schools where the "vie de classe" is every six months, I exaggerate but really it is very rare. 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."* (CLEPT, pupil).

2.1.2 Capability for education

The pupils perceive capability for education mainly as an instrumental way to access a substantial one (capability for work). According to them diplomas matter to get a valuable job. The Baccalauréat (A-level) is envisaged here as a conversion factor, increasing their positive ability to do something worth it. The social norm does indeed makes it crucial to get this degree in order to access the job market more securely.

For the majority of our interviewed youngsters, being successful at school has value. Pupils are receptive to dominant norms in society . In order to guarantee the achievements they desire, i.e. to get "*good wages, a family, a job*" as stated by the pupils from a vocational upper secondary school, they know that 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 a vocational upper secondary school, Lyon). Education is not perceived as an end but as the means to to be more able 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 obtain a degree they value, 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[14] in a cursus they 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 there "*as a last resort*" since it was, in some cases, their "*5th choice!*" (Pupils from a vocational secondary schools, Lyon). Agricultural education might have been chosen for its alternative pedagogical approach, as a solution to failure to continue education in other schools. In itself, agricultural education is capacitating, since numerous pupils can access to a qualification they would not have as certainly obtained otherwise.

In Aquitaine, the regional plan is targeted on youngsters after they dropout, therefore it does not act inside the teaching institutions. Its aim is to sustain the existing networks of social workers, educators, and guidance counselors. When assessing the degree of capability for voice enjoyed be the youngsters enrolled in the program, it is obvious that their voice was very low during schooling and remains still very low during the dropout period.

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[14] 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.

Teachers and head teachers do not all mention, at least explicitly, a concern for developing capabilities for education. In its educational project, a school like the vocational upper secondary school Marcel Seguin remains speechless in that respect. However, some schools do put as a central aim of their projects the well-being at school dimension: pupils should "*feel well at school*" (teacher, Lycée de Montravel), enjoy learning again. They can focus on contents, on meaning or interest for education in itself. Teachers from the vocational school Martin Luther King explain: "*As French teachers, we 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 the classes to new migrants. In other words, the school is looking to promote more conversion factors for those who might be the most impeded to complete their education.

2.1.3 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 labour market. This project could be considered as aiming at guaranteeing a specific functioning: getting a job. But is it always a self-valued functioning? In order to answer this question, 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 she stays 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've got to! (laughs) That's what you need now to get a job.

Is it important to you to get a degree in order to get a job?

Personally I think, employers ask for diplomas anyways so after to get a job you automatically have to get one.

Similarly to the way operators did not seem in their discourses to deliberately develop capabilities or education, all operators do not emphasize the capability for work dimension. Some openly mention capabilities for employment: in the MFR in 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 resource to the numerical documentation. In the following quotation, the teachers in the vocational school Marc Seguin do stress the educational dimension, but 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, and 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 working on classes contents too. (...).*" (Teacher, vocational upper secondary school, Vénissieux).

Consequently, in a capability perspective, this particular school is in an opposite position. Capability for work appears to come first while providing motivation to pupils. The issue of getting a job seems to condition the desire and the will to study. In other schools such as the agricultural school of Montravel or the Martin Luther King vocational school 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 didn't even want to study anymore, and then: bad grades over bad grades, he did not feel like studying anymore and 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)

2.2 Capabilities for voice, education and work: necessarily intertwined

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 demanded high school with little room left, it was very hard to get into, it didn't work out*" (Mylène, Centre d'information et d'orientation 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 case of limited choices in education pathways, we find an instrumental conception of capability for work. By this, we mean that the transition to 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 met Antoine at the "mission locale".

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

I don't like school, so… I asked for a BAC pro[15] 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

To sum up, we might say that in France the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education. A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two

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[15] Vocational education degree comparable to A level.

other capabilities. On the one hand, claiming and voicing requires some self-confidence and skills provided by education. Capability for voice is not given per se but comes out of a formal and informal education. On the other hand, the access to the labour market and a valuable job is in France strongly dependent on the kind of degree gathered in education. More, France's continuous education and training system is known for being primarily accessed by already qualified workers. In that sense, a strong capability for education drags up and reinforces voice and work. But it should also 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(Cacouault and Oeuvrard, 2003). The first are able to express themselves (they express their guidance preferences, they put pressure on the school institution and are able to mobilize their social networks, etc.) when the second are not able to do so as well. In that sense, the voicing resource acts upon the capability for education. A weak capability for work also leads in echo to a poor voicing capability. By feedback effect, this process impacts the capability to access lifelong education through training.

If nothing comes to counterbalance the initial individual/social situation, these effects tend to institutionalise in a permanent way. The educational background or the belonging to a given social category constraints the capability for voice[16]. 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.

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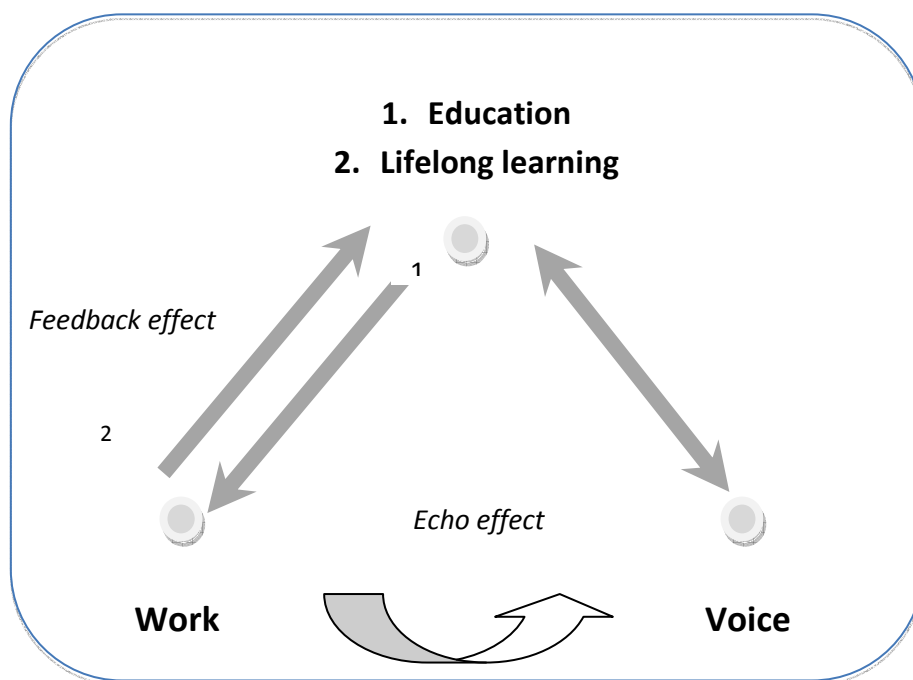
[16] Pierre Bourdieu's works have established the relation between school and social hierarchies. Although they are well known in France they remain theoretical. The social and educational structures are still strongly linked (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970).

2.3 Constraints to capabilities development and some good reasons to non take-up

In spite of the projects, numerous constraints remain within the schools. The absence and/or weakness of conversion factors limits the pupils capabilities' enhancement.

2.3.1. Choice of what?

First of all, for some of the pupils interviewed, enrollment in education is not a choice. Besides, if indeed all projects allow for participation, it appears clear that some pupils can be prevented and/or dissuaded to participate. Other pupils also have to provide for themselves and find a job. Sometimes, tutoring hours get in conflict with the fact that "*teachers and pupils are submerged with classes*" (Head of school, Vocation secondary School). Long hours in transport between school and home can also represent a disincentive for pupils. At this point, it should also be reminded that the "schooling situation"[17] supporting the projects rarely leaves room for a deliberate choice of the children. These programs take place at a moment when the guidance choices have generally been already made, the pupils are engaged in their high school and if a constraint preexisted, it will remain. The projects have not been conceived to reduce the social/individual constraints but to prevent dropout. The only freedom given to the youngsters is the following: not to be forced to dropout whether they have chosen or not the school, the educational path or the diploma prepared. This freedom is supposed to increase their chance of getting their diploma at the end. 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 also be unexpected. For example, supporting a pupil until he gets his diploma even in a prescribed path (and based upon an initial adaptive preference) might allow him afterwards to pursue his educational career in a chosen way. The initial diploma acts as "sesame" and the support he gets might be considered 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 support 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 destructive 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 frankly I don't need this. I can handle this myself.* And you would like to have another kind of help? *Yes maybe*. Like what?

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[17] By this we mean the mix of the teaching institution, the educational path and the targeted diploma.

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 and fighting against the temptation to promote a downgraded education for children at risk can increase the attraction and the pupils' involvement in the program. Even if the fact of attending the program reflects an initial adaptive preference, it can work out well and the pupils might not drop out.

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 programs, and require horizontal policies developing conversion factors, on an individual but also on a social and environmental level. The interviews with pupils/operators/decision-makers illustrate that the conversion factors most likely successful are individual ones in those projects: tutoring, building-up self esteem, widening what is expected to be academic knowledge. Thus, additional funding from policy for urban cohesion, public health or family policy would provide some of the pupils with more opportunities and choices in their academic schooling.

2.3.2. Some very good reasons for non taking-up

Non taking-up should be a crucial issue when assessing such programs in a capability perspective. 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 and adding 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 also produce exclusion and this refers to the dark side of positive action. If they are *a priori* considered as "deficient", or lacking in some respect, and not like responsible individuals, they might 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 forced to participate but they do not benefit from the program: they do not perceive its aim and therefore reject it: "*it feels like we have been sacked*" (pupil in vocational upper secondary school, Vénissieux).

Pupils resort to these programs when they are directly focused on academic skills. 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, and finally be a way to succeed at school 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 clearly a conversion factor linked to the way service is delivered to beneficiaries. 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[18]. 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.

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, 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 organisations. The complex and somehow poorly assumed process of devolution to territorial bodies (decentralisation) results in constant competency battles between the French state and these bodies. As shown here, the topic of early school leaving is one of such battlefields.

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

If the national framework of dropout policies can be criticised for its inefficiency and lack of strong political initiative, the local actors (street level bureaucrats and case manager) show a different picture. They appear to be strongly involved, 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 sensitive to the national/regional institutional context. Besides no framework of policy transfer has been created and the policy evaluation conducted is 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 pupils' 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 work, 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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Capabilities without rights? The Trespassing Project in Naples

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Summary: The aim of this paper is to analyze a project for young NEET in southern Italy in terms of capabilities. Our objective is to examine to what extent it is possible to promote capabilities for work, for voice and for education in a context of lack of resources and rights as the one the project is rooted in.

The paper focuses on the institutional, social and individual factors that hamper or promote the conversion of formal resources and rights into capabilities, and tries to understand what the outcomes are for beneficiaries. It highlights on the one hand the critical elements, and on the other the creation of innovative itineraries designed to promote such capabilities, trying to sum up lessons and indications in terms of policies, as well as theoretical and analytical implications for the capability approach.

Keywords: NEET, school-to work transition, capability approach, voice, local welfare.

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Introduction

In recent times the issue of young NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) (Bynner and Parsons, 2002) has become relevant in Europe: a growing number of young adults is trapped in the transition between the educational system and the labour market. Moreover, the support they receive is inadequate also due to the welfare state crisis: the high rate of youth unemployment and school drop out highlights the distress of public policies, that are less and less able to intervene in this scenario.

This paper presents the experience of the Trespassing Project. It is an innovative project aimed at young NEETs living in Naples, the capital city of the Campania region, in southern Italy. One of the poorest regions in Western Europe, it is affected by both social and economic problems: the condition of young people is critical, the unemployment rate is very high and illegal work is widespread. At the same time, since the end of the '80s, Naples has been an important test bed for experimental projects aimed at addressing problems in the school-work transition process: the Trespassing Project picks up where they left off, developing new strategies for intervention, through which on-the-job placement works on the development of basic skills[19].

In the wake of almost two years of analysis of the project practices, the research pays particular attention to the specificities of the socio-economic context in which the project operates, as well as the framework and functioning of social, educational and employment 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, attempting to investigate whether and how an institutional framework which combines autonomy and scarce coordination opens up opportunities for change, and if so, with what perspectives.

The analysis focuses on the institutional, social and individual factors that hamper or promote the conversion of formal resources and rights into capabilities for work, voice and education, and tries to understand what the outcomes are for beneficiaries. It highlights on the 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.

The work starts out from a general research question: how is it possible to promote capabilities (Sen, 1985; 1992) in a context of lack of resources and rights? This question is then broken down into more specific research questions concerning the capabilities for voice, work and education:

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[19] A special mention, among the others, should be given to the Chance project run by the Maestri di strada (Street Teachers) (Pirozzi 2008; 2010 and Moreno in http://www.unacitta.it/newsite/index.asp).

- 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?

- What is the role of beneficiaries? Are they able to choose what to achieve, to refuse to engage? Can they affect the structure and contents of the project?

The research process required almost two years of analysis of the project practices. It foresaw:

- 10 semi-structured interviews and two group interviews with policy makers from the Regional Council of Campania, project leaders and 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 implementation and let us focus specifically on the beneficiaries' point of view.

1. Contextual framework

In order to analyse the project, particular attention must be paid to the specificities of the 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 (scarce multiscalarity and multidimensionality of policies) (Paci and Pugliese, 2011). In particular, the institutional resources assigned to education seem insufficient to allow for the different starting points of the students to be taken into account and for upholding pupils' capacities.

The school system is unable to emancipate those who start with social and cultural disadvantages by redistributing opportunities via education. Consequently, the areas where most poverty is concentrated generally feature a high level of drop outs (Rossi-Doria, 2009, Fondazione Agnelli, 2010). Inequality and imbalance are substantial on a national level, especially in the north/south divide. Moreover, as for the employment policies, measures aimed at activation are few and far between, be they part of the overall system or at the service of policy end-users (Bifulco, Bricocoli, Monteleone, 2008).

The Campania Region 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 (Kazepov 2009). 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[20] (Bifulco, 2011).

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

1.1. 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, Centemeri, 2008). In 2008 Campania recorded the lowest GDP in Italy: it registered a GDP 75% lower than the EU25 average, and it is included in the convergence objective of the EU cohesion policy[21]. The indicators on schooling are lower than the national average and the Lisbon target. There are high levels of school dropouts between the ages of six to 14: Campania is in fact one of the Italian regions where many middle-school children are regularly enrolled though often never attend. The highest concentration of young NEETs is in the province of Naples: it stands at 37% compared to an average in the Campania Region of 33.5% (Italia Lavoro Spa, 2011). The data show a labour market with a great deal of structural problems: the level of unemployment is about 14.3% (national average is 8.2%), while among 15-24 year-olds it stands at 38.8% (national average is 24%), there is a high

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[20] 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.

[21] Two EU funds play their part here: the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and the ESF (European Social Fund).

level of illegal labour which stood at 23.4%, (national average is 13.4%)[22] (Istat, 2011a; 2011b).

With the aim of achieving the targets set by the Lisbon Strategy, Campania has invested in education and training over the last few years. Nevertheless, the investments have not produced the desired results. In a context of a labour market with ample margins of undisclosed labour and a very high percentages of unemployment, the resources destined for youth vocational training and adult lifelong learning are often used improperly as sidelines for social welfare, and funds are often used for patronage. In particular, EU funds 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, welfare support continues to be of a residual nature. In a national context characterized by weakness and lack of social rights, Campania stands out for 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.

As the regional policy making has a relevant role in Italy, due to the devolution process that started in the 1970's and reached its peak with the constitutional reform in 2001, the role of Campania Region is very important. Its institutional structure presents a high level of fragmentation: between 2000 and 2005 an integration process was attempted, and a unique welfare department was established, which included education, vocational training, work and social services. Subsequently, however, the departments have again been separated due to political reasons. Educational policies are above all scarcely integrated with social and employment policies. The sectorial nature of interventions does not lead to sufficiently structured courses, not taking into account pupils' social background. This explains why lower-performing individuals are creamed out and discriminatory processes are not forestalled.

1.2. Naples and the Spanish Quarters

Naples, the capital city of the Campania region, is one of the most densely populated cities in Italy. Here, 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 the number of the "non-attendings" and the level of school dropouts. The lack of stable occupational opportunities constitutes a structural weakness of the labour market, and off

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[22] The NEET population is made up of young people between 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).

the records work is commonplace. Many young NEETs therefore face the risk of undertaking deviant paths.

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. While on the 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).

1.3. The Trespassing Project: history, practices and informational basis

In order to introduce the 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.

The AQS 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*[23] and together with other volunteers, provided the first interventions offering support and counselling aimed particularly at prostitutes and transsexuals. Anna's *basso* 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.

Over the years, these interventions became more structured. In the 1990s, Naples City Council recognised the importance of the Association's work, and granted the use of a number of spaces where a youth centre was founded, and still committed to various projects aimed largely at minors, youths and their families, financed both by public bodies and private subjects.

Although the Association 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 institutions that finance it, which tend to exploit the outsourcing of social services to private agencies in order to reduce costs.

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). The Trespassing Project picks up where they

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[23] 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).

left off, developing new means and strategies for intervention, drawing on the reflections and interventional practices activated against early school leaving[24]. The project, which was awarded its fourth cycle of financing in 2012, consists of offering work familiarisation placements at small companies collaborating with the AQS. 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: public financing from the Education Councillorship of the Campania Regional Council and private financing from a private banking foundation[25]. The financial support from the Regional Council is not very reliable, payments may be up to a year late. 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 should fall under the jurisdiction of municipal welfare.

Since its creation, Trespassing has involved around 80 young adults, 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" (from the Trespassing call). The project focuses on the attempt to overcome the subjective barriers of 'incompetence' in order to activate young NEETs not actually equipped for school or professional training circuits.

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[26]. There is a maximum of 20 people that may be involved at one time: since there are always more applications than places available, meetings and individual interviews are ordered in which the beneficiaries are chosen. In this phase, information is gathered about their life context, literacy and numeracy abilities, 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.

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[24] Over the years, the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli and the *'Maestri di Strada'* Association, 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 (O.F.I.), as well as European projects such as Equal and Leonardo (Rossi-Doria and Pirozzi, 2010).

[25] The public financing imposes strict access criteria through public call, and is aimed at young people (16-18 years old) who have completed compulsory education, affected by elements of multiple deprivation, not following a school career or vocational training. The private financing aimed more broadly at early school-leavers (even those who have not completed compulsory education) affected by elements of multiple deprivation.

[26] The AQS in fact manages a database of various kinds of information on the young adults entrusted to it.

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

Once the selection stage is over, the first activities in which the beneficiaries are involved in is a collective work experience which lasts about one week with the aim of repairing a public building or utility. Its main aim is to bring together the peer group around a cooperation project in which individual roles and responsibilities are recognised. The transversal skills assessment process starts right from this stage, and a logbook is kept, in which each young adult has to document the overall experience within the project.

Once this work stage is over, the individual allocation of each beneficiary 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': 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[27]. The project focuses entirely on the hands-on work placement experience, the intervention methodology is based on experience and learning on the job. Each young adult is thus entrusted contemporarily to a company tutor and a social worker, who provides personalised tutoring and counselling[28].

From a pedagogical point of view, the approach adopted is largely that of 'scaffolding': a support strategy based on learning processes which allow the participant to carry out a task even if he/she initially does not have the sufficient capabilities to do it on his/her own (Hogan and Pressley 1997). Social workers follow the insertion of the beneficiaries in the companies with weekly counselling sessions, the times and lengths of which may be flexible, providing highly personalised support on the basis of the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries. This constant monitoring 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 beneficiaries leaving the project are not issued with professional qualifications, but are given letters of reference including an evaluation of basic skills. This approach is considered sufficient to outline an 'informal' biography of each of

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[27] An attendance fee of €12 per day is paid to beneficiaries, while the company receives €8 per day for its tutoring activities.

[28] There were four social workers 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.

them. At the end of the placement experience, a 'working sample' is taken, in which young adults are filmed on the job in order to outline the activities they are involved in.

2. Findings

There are various reasons why the Trespassing Project appeared relevant. Firstly, the target: the AQS works with young NEETs living in a complex context in which youth policies are few and far between. Secondly, the methods and means available to the social workers, 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 area, historically one of the most difficult ones on the Neapolitan territory.

We shall present and discuss the results of the analysis about the capabilities for work, for voice and for education, considering the factors which favour and hinder the conversion of formal resources and rights into capabilities. Often however these elements will 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.

2.1 Capability for voice

One of the main focus points of the AQS' action is coming up with interventions that allow participants to acquire basic relational skills that may later be deployed in the labour market and the project works explicitly on the reconstruction of the young adults' *voice*. The beneficiaries' voice is not considered a prerequisite: the project tries to promote it and let it be heard. They themselves often start off not knowing exactly what they want to do, falling into the 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 (SW1)[29].
At the beginning I wanted to be a hairdresser, but I tried and didn't like it... G (social worker) helped me to understand what I can do and now I am a babysitter (Y2).

Therefore, while on the one hand attention is given to what the young adult says, on the other hand the project (and above all the social workers) focuses on the characteristics of the beneficiary and the job placement in order to put together a tailor-made itinerary, also based on a profound knowledge of the young adults' cultural and social background.

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[29] SW: social worker; Y: young adult; PD: programme developer; CT: company tutor. The number indicates the interview.

This bond of trust, which leads the young adults and their families to strongly believe in the social workers' action, is created and strengthened in particular by the constant daily presence of a member of the Association in the offices. Their door is always open and a social worker is available to listen to whoever comes in. The fact that someone is present at any time of day, that he/she acts as a medium, translating the needs of people and families into concrete actions and interventions constitutes the very basis of the Association's approach. It has created a real social helpdesk which brings the few resources available closer to the needs of the people.

As for the Trespassing programme, the beneficiaries' voice is expressed in its different phases. First of all, 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. It 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 social worker, would therefore have liked to change V's placement, because it seemed to him that he was not adequately followed. But V 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.

A fundamental role in promoting young adults' voice is played by the time spent counselling, where the social worker supports the participant's job placement. The main tool used during this contact time is the work material which organises and defines the stages and times of the activities: the worksheets and tasks register. Every week, the tutor and the beneficiary fill out these forms, which have different aims: some focus on the placement and thus serve to make the beneficiary think about what has been done over the week; others concern the labour market rules, aspects of working contracts and relevant legislation; others deal with general basic skills bound up with society as a whole; yet others address the emotional and relational levels of the young adult:

for example, there's a worksheet on calculating percentages, which is 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! (SW3)

As it has been observed, the social workers adopt a listening stance with regard to the beneficiaries. 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 beneficiaries are used to, and which – albeit partially – manage to put in doubt the behavioural models which the young adults have grown to accept as the norm. Passivizing or inferiorising approaches are rejected, and tutors cannot take the place of beneficiaries on

the job. On the contrary, these are development paths that revolve around the sense of good faith:

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 long (SW4).

The specific methodology used defines highly-structured pathways with a strong support from the AQS, allowing for an all-round operation of promoting the beneficiary's capabilities by enhancing their ability to know themselves and the situation they are in:

The programme is important because you can learn something and you need it for the future, as you need to build it by yourself (Y5).

The voice is therefore considered throughout all the various phases of the project. This has an impact on the young adults' capacity to express themselves: at the beginning they show up with a general need for a job; with time, and thanks to the capability the social workers have to listen to them, the support of the counselling and of the worksheets, they acquire more and more awareness, and become able to say what they want:

(the social worker) was very important; he taught me many things and drove me… He made me understand what I could do on my own and that I could tell him what I thought (Y8).

The right to express their voice and its practice is a prerequisite for the development of all the other capabilities. The promotion of the beneficiaries' voice is a driver for the capability for education and for work: the programme activates the young NEETs in order to let them aspire for something that can be a further vocational training or educational path. However, at the same time, this is an element of ambiguity: working on beneficiaries' voice is one of its strengths, but as the educational system does not support their problems and the labour market is characterised by an high youth unemployment rate and offers very few opportunities for these young adults, voice is the only element the programme can work with. The factors that obstacle the conversion of rights in capabilities are social constraints that influence the action of the Association as it cannot work with the most deprived young people in this programme.

However, while the capability for voice is also promoted in its combined dimension (i.e. the internal capabilities combine with the external ones (Nussbaum 2000)) because the Association is able to listen to the requests and needs of the territory and of young people, such action is limited to the local context. Despite the continuous and relevant social action carried out by the AQS with programmes for young NEETs (as the Trespassing project), single mothers (employed through projects of daily nursery), children (after school activities), etc., the Association has little chance to be sustained by public actors such as the Regional or City Councils: the involvement of public actors is uncertain and irregular, not allowing for the aims and practices of the Trespassing project to influence and permeate the

public action and other levels of governance. This runs the risk of isolating the Association and especially the young adults, leaving them without perspectives due to the lack of a more general context of policies aimed at supporting them.

The 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 the participants just go back 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 (SW3).

Moreover, the lack of support by the public actors and the incapacity to define articulated and integrated projects relating to the young adults' various living dimensions shed a light on the scarce connections between policy levels and scales. As a consequence, the action remains local:

The youngsters don't exit the neighbourhood and we don't have the chance to let them do it, because of the lack of money and support (DP2).

This creates an excess of the local dimension, which risks to produce a form of segregation of the experience, the project and the young adults themselves: when the project finishes, the beneficiaries' provenance makes it very likely for them to fall right back to the starting blocks, depressing their capacity to aspire. 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): a common finding in every edition of the project is that one or two young girls give up Trespassing to have a baby (and they usually stop searching for a job) and a period in jail is a very common scenario for these young adults.

2.2 Capability for work

In working with job placement processes, 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 of familiarisation with work that do not necessarily lead people to a regular job, and that focus on the recovery and valorisation of basic skills:

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… the only thing we can really hope to do is to create 'pre-employability''(PD1).

On a micro level, the project promotes a series of actions aimed at supporting people's 'capability for work' (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006). In companies, beneficiaries are encouraged to approach work through everyday activities with the supervision of a company tutor who follows them – along with the social worker – throughout their job placement. The close collaboration and integration between these two figures, albeit with different tasks and roles, constitutes one of the strength of the entire project: the beneficiary may rely on a solid support framework both inside the workplace and outside:

The most important thing about the project was S (the social worker) and F, my tutor in the shop. I don't know what I would have done without them (Y10).

Hence the tutoring activity "expands strategically right into the workplace, facilitating the beneficiaries' learning process and supporting the artisans in their own pedagogical commitments," (Rossi-Doria and Pirozzi, 2010). Therefore, this does not only concern the participants but the entire context, building up an educational pact that allows young people activation.

Moreover, the young adults enter unprotected working environments: they 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. However much the participants' learning process may be modulated to fit their needs, this is still unprotected, 'hands-on' work experience.

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. The whole process is decided together with the tutor and the boy (CT5).

However, there are some dimensions of ambiguity in the practices examined. Despite the fact that the aim is to bring beneficiaries closer and not insert them into the labour market, it is often difficult to separate basic skills and professional skills: participants thus find themselves 'learning to work', 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 beneficiaries themselves:

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 (Y7).

But also from those of the company 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 I'm happy to teach these girls a trade, because then it's something that they can keep on doing (CT4).

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, the project however lacks the necessary conditions for it to affect the demand for labour. As we argued before, there is shortage of any overarching and coordinated policy framework to which to refer, and the Trespassing project has difficulties in connecting with other actors and measures in order to develop integrate programmes for the beneficiaries. This could make the young people's job placement an isolated experience, in which the lack of further interventions runs the risk of invalidating the entire project. The missing links between different scales of governance and with 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, the characteristics of the labour market in Campania are another constraint in the converting process. First of all, at the end of the apprenticeship reference letters are issued, which could facilitate the entrance of young people in the labour market. However, these letters lack any formal recognition, and their validity is limited to a network of reciprocal and shared trust that exists among craftsmen. Moreover, the high incidence of undisclosed labour (in many cases linked to the illegal 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. So they set off on the path of illegal work because there isn't any legal work on offer (SW5).

With regards to this issue, it is interesting to examine the evaluation of the outcomes carried out by the AQS. From internal research carried out on the youths who have taken part in the previous editions of the Trespassing Project and other similar 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 vocational training, 35% had no longer had any contact with the labour market, and the remaining 10% had been unreachable. As the focus of the project is to adopt strategies of familiarisation with labour culture, considering the context in which the intervention is promoted and despite the minimal data available, the project brings young adults closer to the labour market, and serves as a bridge in more than half of the cases studied, working on their capability for work. However, it is difficult to evaluate the outcomes from this point of view, because many cases end up in undisclosed labour. This is a crucial issue for the project and a central point to pay attention to.

2.3 Capability for education

The educational aspect is a characteristic of the Trespassing Project. Even if no direct bounds exist with the educational system, due to the scarce multidimensionality and integration of policies both at the national and at the local level, the apprenticeship gives the young people a chance to regain basic skills that are usually acquired at school. The process of familiarization with the work experience is not limited to the acquisition of technical and professional abilities: it is mainly a process that deals with socialisation and the development of mature relationships. Young people, then, "learn how to learn" embracing and sharing, during the on-job practices, rules and values typical of the adult world. They end up building a strong analysis of their experience, while highlighting their desires and the paths they have reason to value.

Being aimed at young adults with unsuccessful school careers behind them, Trespassing tries to bring them nearer to the world of education via alternative routes. Despite the programme does not aim to provide beneficiaries with any kind of diploma, there is a strong drive towards learning paths based on everyday practices, and the beneficiaries value this chance to learn:

Here I learnt how to be a hairdresser and this is important to me because now I can search for a job (Y9).
The importance of Trespassing is that you can learn something… and you need to learn, because this is the way you build up your future (Y13).

The social workers try to support the beneficiaries in 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:

I followed the project working as a beautician. It was there that I realised that I had to go back to school, and now I'm 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 (Y12).

In the relationship with the beneficiaries, social workers dedicate much time to learning process and to the construction of an educational strategy, both in working practices, and also during the counselling activities. Both the company tutors and the social workers 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, and the headquarters of the Association are open to all those who have taken part in previous projects, who come to visit the tutors for help with job-seeking, or for advice on a difficult domestic 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 value in their working practices, and supporting the development of their basic skills.

We have the worksheets, which ask you questions to make you understand what you're learning and how. But they are not only about work; there are also ones about their emotions, sheets on society and about getting around Naples... (SW4)

The strong structuring of the itinerary and the educational abilities of the social workers provide the young adults with a solid support framework, in which their capabilities are valorised through a process of personal growth. Furthermore, the worksheets also serve to familiarise them 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. Getting out, seeing other situations sometimes sett off major transformation processes:

Another very successful thing was the territorial estrangement process. 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: they've never been out of Naples (SW2).

However, despite the fact that the programme practices show an orientation towards the promotion of the capability for education, the main limit remains the lack of support for the project and of interventions that may affect the overall living conditions of the youths. Not only the educational policies are scarcely integrated with social and employment policies at the national level, but this happens also at the local one: the programme has no strong connections with the educational system and the active labour market policies, and it only works in order to make the beneficiary able to learn (mainly a job). This sector-based logic, together with the scarce multiscalarity, informs the policy-making and limits the process of converting the (scarce) rights and resources into capabilities: the lack of an integrated approach and of further measures risks inducing a transfer of responsibility from society to the young adult itself, that has to choose in a situation with no opportunities:

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 (SW3).

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 the one hand aims to increase beneficiaries' scope for choice, especially with regard to the working environment, and on the other hand it is centred on individual competences and attitudes in a given context. 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. 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 levels of public action (multiscalarity) and between different policies (multidimensionality).

4) Local dimension. Generally speaking, the interventions promoted by the AQS have a relevant local dimension. However, on one hand the 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 cannot generalise its results and methods and remains short-ranged and isolated. 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 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. The fact that the system (both local and national) of interventions in favour of young people is limited hinders the project as a whole, that lacks the collective dimension of capabilities. The individual capabilities of the beneficiaries, practiced through the job placement, thus end up 'on ice' at the end of the project. 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 job positions, 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. 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 social workers, the company tutors and the AQS as a whole tends to promote difference and increase choice; these actions are aimed at the future of the beneficiaries with the intention of putting together emancipation strategies. From this point of view the project tries to promote "the capacities to aspire" (Appadurai, 2004) that concern "how human beings engage their own futures" and the cultural - normative and cognitive - frameworks from which desire and imagination of the future take form. However, the links with the normative and value frameworks of the local context are strong and limiting. In fact, for most of the beneficiaries, the end of the project means going right back to where they were before. 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 integrated projects with regard to the various living dimensions of the young adults depress their capacity to aspire and their scope for voice. The risk is therefore that the youths, after having exercised their capability for voice within the project, find themselves in a situation in which the only possibility is that of reproducing patterns typical of their living environments without having the chance 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. Rights, as stated earlier, that are both lacking in the case in question.

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Vocational training as an integration opportunity for struggling young adults?
A Swiss case study

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Summary: The aim of this paper is to assess a Swiss s school-to-work transition programme against the capability approach. Our objective is to examine to what extent it enhances youngsters' capabilities by providing resources and conversion factors allowing them to project themselves in the future and plan their own life in a way they have reason to value. The impact of the programme is assessed with regard to its beneficiaries' capability for voice, for education and for work. The paper answers the three following research questions:

- What is the impact of the individualised approach promoted by the programme on the recipients' capability for voice?
- How does the programme integrate a life course perspective and to what extent does it take into account the beneficiaries' capacity to aspire?
- What is the impact of the programme on the supply and demand sides of the labour market?

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Introduction

From the mid-nineties on, in Switzerland as in all other OECD countries, one of the main instruments of active labour market policies (henceforward ALMPs) is contractualisation (e.g. Sol and Westervald, 2005). The objective is to make welfare benefits conditional upon the endorsement of activation principles, on an individualised basis. Hence, a new welfare contract takes place: the exchange between payments and benefits is substituted, or complemented in certain cases, by another exchange between entitlements (to cash benefits and to activation programmes) and duties (to activate oneself, i.e. to comply with the administrative and behavioural expectations concerning activation). In this context, tailor-made measures are provided instead of standardised benefits, but at the same time new and more extensive duties are imposed on the beneficiaries of such programmes. Thus, the move towards contractualisation is intrinsically ambivalent. It potentially opens the way towards social policies fostering individual emancipation, but at the same time, it also makes access to welfare benefits more constraining and selective. This reflects 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 divergences, 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 beneficiaries and emphasizes their responsibility in this respect.

Many authors have stressed the effects that result from contractualisation, especially in the field of transition policies, inducing a transfer of responsibility from society to the youngster itself (e.g. Duvoux, 2007; Saraceno, 2007). Some even consider that social integration contracts are not proper contracts in a juridical sense (e.g. Handler, 2004; Lafore, 1989) for at least two reasons: 1) there is no encounter of two free wills, the social contract aiming at producing the beneficiary's will and 2) there are no sanctions for institutional actors in case they do not offer social integration opportunities. This demonstrates the paradoxical effect of contractualisation: whereas reciprocity should be at the core of the contract, responsibility for social and professional integration primarily lies on individuals' shoulders. These ambiguities result in important tensions between empowerment on the one hand and constraints on the other (Saraceno, 2007). Indeed, the beneficiaries can be envisaged either as "beneficiary-partners" (Lafore, 1989: 581) or as responsible citizens upon whom constraints can legitimately be imposed (Duvoux, 2007).

The ambivalences of contractulisation are particularly strong in the field of youth policies. Indeed, in this context, the impact of ALMPs goes far beyond the relation of the youngsters

to employment, it conditions the way young adults engage in their future or, to put it another way round, it influences their capacity to aspire and the ethical horizon (Appadurai, 2004) against which youngsters' build their present and future citizenship.

In Switzerland, the FORJAD programme illustrates the tensions underlying such transition programmes. FORJAD stands for the French "formation pour jeunes adultes en difficulté" (training for struggling young adults). Launched in 2006, this programme aims at improving the level of education and the prospects for professional insertion among social assistance beneficiaries aged between 18 and 25 year-old. Based on a step-by-step logic leading to a vocational degree with an individual follow-up, its goal is to activate the so-called struggling young adults (JADs) by bringing as many welfare recipients of this age category back into vocational training and apprenticeship[33]. The priority is to reinforce JADs' training opportunities in order to increase their capacity to be socially and professionally integrated. Hence, achievement of vocational training is considered as the best way to exit social assistance and the best protection against unemployment. Thereby, the issue of marginalised youth is identified mainly as a problem of training or educational deficit.

Considering the ambivalence of the contractual trend, the aim of this paper is to confront the FORJAD programme to the framework of the capability approach (henceforward CA). Our objective is to examine to what extent individualised transition policies can enhance youngsters' capabilities by providing resources and conversion factors allowing them to project themselves in the future and plan their own life in a way they have reason to value according to Sen's recurrent formula (e.g. Sen, 1999). In order to assess the impact of FORJAD on the youngsters' trajectories, we will use Appadurai's notion of capacity to aspire as a metacapability, i.e. a precondition to the enhancement of individual capabilities. On this basis, we will pay specific attention to the influence of the programme on the development of the three following capabilities: the capability for voice, for education and for work. More precisely, we will analyse what kind of individualisation is promoted and implemented on the institutional side but also experienced and re-framed on the one of the beneficiaries. As Pohl and Walther argue (2007), it is crucial to distinguish between two types of individualisation: 1) in terms of personalised measures starting from individual needs and 2) in terms of individual responsibility for compensating their lack of competitiveness. In order to assess the potential and the limits of the FORJAD programme, several dimensions have to be considered. In this sense, we are going to assess its "informational basis of judgement in justice" (IBJJ) (Sen, 1990), i.e. the information that is taken into account when defining and assessing a beneficiary to the exclusion of all other types of information. As it has been demonstrated (e.g. Sen, 1979; Bonvin and Farvaque,

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[33] When the FORJAD programme was launched, more than 70% of the social assistance recipients between 18 and 25 years old had not completed or even started a vocational training (Von Muralt and Spagnolo, 2007).

2007; etc.), the choice of the relevant information determines the distribution of responsibility between the individual and the institution. We will thus confront the IBJJ of the FORJAD programme according to the three following research questions:

- Can the notion of individualisation underlying the FORJAD programme be interpreted as capability friendly? Does it provide youngsters with extensive capability for voice?
- How does the programme integrate a life course perspective (life trajectories, transitions, etc.) and to what extent does it take into account its beneficiaries' capability for education, capacity to aspire, capacity to plan and engage in the future, etc.?
- What is the impact of the FORJAD programme on the supply/demand sides of the labour market? How does it situate itself between an employability oriented and a capability for work oriented policy?

Our analysis is articulated as follows: the first section briefly presents the FORJAD programme and describes its specific IBJJ with regard to its target group; the second section assesses this programme against the capability approach according to the three dimensions mentioned above; the concluding section summarises the main teachings that can be drawn from the case study in order to promote capability-friendly transition policies.

This paper is based on a documentary survey of official texts, such as laws, directives, orders, etc. and 43 semi-structured interviews – 32 conducted with young adults[34] at various stages of the FORJAD programme; 7 field workers and 4 representatives of cantonal authorities in charge of transition measures. The results presented in this paper are drawn from the research project *Workable – Making Capabilities Work,* (2009-12), funded by the EU seventh Framework Programme.

1. The FORJAD programme

Like in Germany or in Austria, the Swiss educational system is characterised by a dual system[35] within which apprenticeship combines vocational classes at school and on-the-job training at a host company. Despite its very positive image among Swiss youngsters and parents, not all of them succeed in finding an apprenticeship at the end of compulsory

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[34] Among them, 18 were engaged in so-called social integration measures that are the preparatory stage of the FORJAD programme, and 14 were involved in FORJAD itself. Interviews with the former are referenced as M in this paper, while interviews with the latter are designated with the letter F.

[35] 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.

schooling due to a structural mismatch between demand (exceeding) and offer (insufficient) on the Swiss vocational training market. The canton of Vaud, which is one of the biggest Swiss cantons in terms of population, is particularly exposed to this problem: first, because of a labour market characterised by a comparatively high unemployment rate compared to the Swiss average (generally around 2 points higher than the national average 3%)[36] and second, because of an educational system that operates in a very selective and compartmentalised way (Perriard, 2005). In this canton, FORJAD is the first programme specifically targeting the JADs and represents a pioneer experience at national level. The programme aims at reintroducing these young people into the vocational and education system (VET) they exited prematurely. More precisely, it offers a twofold support to this target group, as soon as they are accepted into an apprenticeship. First, a personalised coaching is provided by social workers belonging to a private non-profit association. This coaching is multidimensional and covers four areas: academic (school support courses, etc.), vocational, social and personal. Second, FORJADs receive a scholarship grant, which implies that they do not depend any more on social assistance. In 2012, the FORJAD programme includes almost a third of all young social assistance beneficiaries aged between 18 and 25 years old (around 1000 out of 3000).

Moreover, FORJAD includes a preliminary stage intended to help young adults finding an apprenticeship and entering FORJAD. At this stage, about 20 social integration measures (MIS) are available for young people relying on social assistance. These MIS are aimed at assessing their motivation and validating their professional project. Some of them are oriented towards the acquisition of social and relational competencies (self-esteem, self confidence, etc.) while others insist on the development of individual employability and professional skills (acquiring professional experience in private or social enterprises, complying with working schedules, etc.). These MIS are relatively short (generally between 3 and 6 months). However, many young adults follow a plurality of MIS with little coordination between these (Schaub, Pittet and Dubois, 2004).

In short, the FORJAD programme aims at 1) reinforcing the professional integration of young people leaving compulsory school without any degree or training achieved, and 2) decreasing the expenditure on social benefits by reducing the risk of long-term dependence on social assistance.

In this article, we will examine how the JADs interviewed engaged in vocational training, given that all of them were facing a wide range of difficulties such as housing problems, debts, addiction, childcare, etc. that kept them outside employment or in situations of professional instability.

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[36] Source: SCRIS, *Portrait du canton et comparaisons avec la Suisse*, ://www.scris.vd.ch/Default.aspx?DomId=178.

According to all young persons interviewed, school played a decisive role in their life course. Many of them recall the end of compulsory schooling as a turning point in their biographical trajectory, understood as a succession of situations that occur longitudinally throughout their life-course. Indeed, whereas transitions refer to a state transformation[37] in short spaces of time througout one's biographical trajectory, turning points imply a change in its direction (Runyan, 1984). Therefore, not all transitions are turning points. Regarding JADs, 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 general post-compulsory schooling (as about three quarters of Swiss youth) and were oriented towards vocational training paths that are very much valued in Switzerland; second, they had failed to find an apprenticeship or to complete it successfully.

In addition to schooling aspects, many other factors intervene, as one of the major characteristics of the JADs' population is cumulative disadvantage. Interviews were particularly revealing in this respect. Indeed, young persons reported a wide variety of ruptures, ranging from life hazards or accidents to sometimes dramatic events that decisively changed the direction of their life course. Different factors can here be identified. Among them:

1) Migration experience and the issue of differentiated rights according to the legal status. Switzerland is characterised by a restrictive access to residence permits and Swiss nationality, yet even more restrictive for non-EU residents and immigrants from countries outside the Schengen agreement. 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.

2) Family and/or conjugal situation can deeply affect JADs' life trajectories. Divorce, separation, removal, death, are events that may occur in one's family, 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. For example, some interviewed JADs were kicked out of their parents' house at an early age and forced to cope with this situation alone. Among the 32 young people interviewed, six report a period of homelessness and great difficulties directly linked to this situation, as it conditions both their access to work and their possibility to keep it. Moreover, young single mothers represent an important share of JADs. Finally, a significant

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[37] According to Runyan's distinction between stages and states in one's life trajectory: "the life course can be divided into a sequence of stages and (…) a person can exist in one of a limited number of states within each stage" (Runyan, 1984: 101).

proportion of the JADs interviewed were social recipients long before they entered the FORJAD programme as their parents were themselves depending on social assistance.

3) Health: our interviews show 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.

Hence, the FORJAD programme addresses a public characterised by multiple and diversified difficulties. Its effectiveness therefore relies on its capacity to adapt to the specific needs of the youngster. In a capability perspective, the issue can be phrased as follows: to what extent the focus on vocational training allows to take into account such diversity? Is the informational basis of the programme open and incomplete enough to adjust to the diversity of the youngsters' situations and promote effective enhancement of their capability for voice, for education and for work? This will be the focus of the next section, where we analyse the relations between the local agents in charge of implementing the programme and the beneficiaries, with a view to assessing the extent to which the FORJAD programme contributes to enhance "the amount of choice, control and empowerment an individual has over its life" (Burchardt *et al.*, 2010: 8).

2. Assessing the FORJAD programme against the capability approach

2.1 Youngsters' freedom to choose: what room for their capability for voice?

In a capability perspective, it is key to assess to what extent JADs have the effective possibility to voice their wishes, concerns, claims, at all stages of the FORJAD programme, as this features as a prerequisite for the implementation of genuine individualised measures.

For the JADs, the entrance into the programme does not always reflect a free will, rather a certain form of loyalty that can be imposed by the threat of financial sanctions since their social assistant or integration counsellor can cut up to 25% of their integration income. As this interviewed tells us:

"- My social assistant told me that I was going to start a MIS. I didn't really have a choice, I had to do it.

- What was the alternative?

- I don't know, but I preferred to do what I was asked to do in order to avoid getting into trouble, because social assistance can reduce benefits." (M11)

In this context, the necessity to participate actively in their social and professional integration is non-negotiable. An exit option (Hirschman, 1970) is available but at a high cost, which makes loyalty to official expectations the readiest solution for youngsters.

At the FORJAD stage, financial sanctions are no more available as their income is provided by the cantonal office of scholarship grants. Indeed, JADs who have found an apprenticeship become administratively FORJADs. As such, they are bound to be individually followed by a coach in four different areas - academic, social, vocational and personal -, this individual support being the cornerstone of the whole programme. As one coach states, the follow-up is a "constrained support" imposed on FORJADs throughout the whole duration of their apprenticeship. Besides, if the coach considers that the JAD is not cooperative enough, he can close his "file" and stop the coaching. Moreover, if they fail to achieve their training, beneficiaries have to refund (part of) the grants they received. For the youngsters, this requirement represents a serious burden as many of them are highly indebted before entering the apprenticeship, but it can also be perceived as a genuine incentive for success and a motivating factor. As one FORJAD states:

"I was also told: "if you do not succeed your apprenticeship, you've got debts and you will have to pay back the scholarships". It was the only downside about the story but I really wanted to succeed my apprenticeship. So it wasn't really something that actually scared me." (F4)

This evolution emphasizes the youngster's responsibility for his future and possible successes or failures. Such emphasis on individual responsibility raises interrogations from a CA perspective, as the youngster is held responsible for something he has not really been free to choose. Indeed, according to Sen "without the substantive freedom and responsibility to do something, a person cannot be responsible for doing it" (1999: 284).

Even though official expectations insist on constraints and requirements imposed on youngsters, field-level practices actually leave the JADs a greater room for manoeuvre and negotiation, as the two examples of the individual coaching and the choice of the MIS illustrate.

First, the contractual relationship sets only very basic requirements for the content of the follow-up, such as a minimum of one meeting per month between the FORJAD and his or her coach, therefore leaving a wide interpretation. The usefulness of the follow-up is unanimously celebrated by its beneficiaries, they all declare enjoying the support provided by the coach, be it tutoring (individual support courses), administrative support (solving problems with insurances, taxes, debts, etc.) or more broadly social support (housing,

transport, childcare, etc.). The room for interpretation is particularly appreciated by the youngsters, as it gives them the possibility to negotiate to a large extent the content and the modalities of the follow-up. However, FORJADs' very positive appreciation does not prevent some of them to be more critical because of their will to be autonomous and act by themselves, and therefore to be recognised as responsible individuals. Therefore, the coach is expected to leave some independence and autonomy to young people in certain areas of their personal lives.

"We have to learn to stand on our own two feet, to have the courage to face problems and to remember that we are not worse off, that we must fight." (F2)

Second, concerning the choice of a MIS, some JADs said that their social assistant (AS) presented different kinds of MIS and let them choose between them. MIS differ in their goals (social skills acquisition or marketability enhancing), their content, their location, the number of hours they impose, their length, etc. Therefore JADs could make a choice, e.g. according to its content, its geographical location in order to avoid travels, the timetables, etc. In other cases, the choice was already made by the AS.

Moreover, all MIS are not available to all JADs. Gaps may exist between the wishes of youth and the proposed measures because of a lack of available slots or limited access to public transport. Hence, the content of the MIS does not always suit the JADs and their expectations. On the one hand, some young people accuse the MIS that are oriented towards the enhancement of social and personal competences to be insufficiently focused on their career plan.

On the other hand, some of the MIS that are employability oriented may lack meaning for some young people especially when the working activity is not very attractive, as this quote illustrates:

"Working there is good, it's just that when there is no work to do, there is nothing to do and you get angry easily. Everybody gets angry easily. And when you have no work, no one is motivated, everybody starts to sit, talk and drink... water." (M17)

Whatever the orientation of the MIS, their official goal consists in helping the youngsters in finding an apprenticeship. To do so, young people are strongly encouraged to answer job advertisements. Some JADs told us they sent more than 200 application forms for apprenticeships or internships. In such cases, the space for voice and negotiation, or even individualised approaches, is rather limited:

"They gave me lists with nurseries, names and stuff like that, I sent CVs but I found this was really like a factory. I copied 7 times, printed 7 times, sent it and waited for a reply." (M1)

Because of the limited number of available apprenticeships, the role of the local actors engaged in the MIS is often decisive. Indeed, since JADs' career plan has to be "as realistic and achievable as possible", as stated by the law, these agents strive to match labour supply and demand. In the words of the cantonal Head of the specialised education and training support service: "*They show the roads, the flux, the red and green lights, they provide the necessary information to enable young adults to decide*". As Goffman described it in the field of psychiatry (1952), integration counsellors have to "cool out" JADs initial ambitions when they perceive them as 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, more "realistic and achievable". This limits the youngster's capability for expressing professional aspirations, as it may be constrained by a top-down imposition of institutional views about what is a "realistic and achievable" professional project.

2.2 Between aspirations and conformism: youngsters' capability for education

Considering the youngsters' capability for education requires taking into account two dimensions: their capacity to act and their freedom to choose between valuable educational options. Interviews revealed that the agency dimension is often summarised to the capacity to develop coherent projects as a guarantee of the beneficiaries' responsible engagement in the future. Regarding youngsters' freedom to choose, analysis show that it is often reduced to an ambivalent conception of autonomy. The task is here to understand how the youngsters involved in the FORJAD programme perceive education, how they define their own projects and to what extent they are provided with sufficient resources, conversion factors and room for manoeuvre in order to engage in the future.

If some young people told us that they really wanted to start an apprenticeship, many chose to seek an apprenticeship because they were strongly encouraged in this direction by the local agent. They generally give an instrumental value to training, which is conceived as a protection against insecurity and precariousness. Under such conditions, the notion of autonomy is ambiguous. Indeed, it both refers to the acquisition of the market-oriented skills promoted by the programme and to the youngsters' will to be recognised as responsible individuals able to plan their future. The notion of "project" is a good illustration of this ambivalence as it is not referred to in the same way by institutional actors and JADs. JADs are well aware of the competitive functioning of the labour market and its downsides (many of them have indeed experienced job precariousness), and they develop an instrumental relation to training. Almost all of them declare seeking a "piece of paper" they can present to a potential employer. In their discourses, taking advantage of the apprenticeship to improve their professional prospects is often presented as a priority, sometimes without any consideration for the type of apprenticeship itself.

"- In which sectors did you search for an apprenticeship?

- I would have accepted any opportunity as long as there was a certificate at the end." (M17)

Nevertheless, concerning the way young people perceive their training and more broadly their future, it is interesting to notice that almost all interviewed JADs have fully adopted the idea of life project and life planning, which are part and parcel of the expectations of active labour market programmes. During the interviews, youngsters insisted on their own projects as a sign of maturity. Doing so, they show their adhesion to the call of the programme for reflecting on their professional aspirations and projects. Therefore, they demonstrate (or at least make a show of it) having incorporated the dominant "idea of work as a career and vehicle for self-fulfilment" (Maeder and Nadai, 2009: 75).

"Some of my friends do not care at all about their training results but it is not my case because I have plans behind. So it's important for me to succeed. But some of my friends do not have projects, they don't know what they are going to do after the apprenticeship, and it sometimes interferes in my relationships with these friends." (F4)

In the same line, youngsters use very often a vocabulary that relates to the logic of activation (to be "active", to "wake up", to be in the "real life", etc.). Young people display their will to get rid of the stigma attached to passivity as this quote illustrates:

"- I also wanted to show that I could do an apprenticeship, that I could have a job.

- To whom did you want to prove it?

- To my parents, people from the SEMO, my friends also, and not acting as a fool, unable to have a job." (F1)

In the same vein, their concern for the continuity and linearity of their life course is repeatedly reasserted. More broadly, they show their commitment to the idea that the individual must provide for his own future and be proactive.

"As a teenager, I started to find ways to escape from schooling, on weekends you drink, you smoke, and by doing so, it is true that I... I just changed my way of life. It was supposed to be linear and then it started to go every which way." (M2)

"I realised that if you do not plan your future as soon as possible, it will be a mess later." (M14)

These quotes illustrate, on the one hand, JADs' awareness of the stigmas attached to their situation, and on the other hand, their commitment to official discourses that promote the linearity of life course at the expense of non-linear trajectories. This reflects Beck and Beck-

Gernsheim 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 JADs' autonomy. Indeed, autonomy is also a deep-rooted normative injunction (e.g. Cicchelli, 2001), as was 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)

But this willingness to display autonomy may conflict with the follow-up provided by the MIS and the FORJAD programme. Indeed, sometimes young people are tired of being followed by someone:

"Having someone behind me during my apprenticeship, I think it devalues me. It bothers me." (M17)

This tension between JADs' concern for autonomy and the follow-up they are subject to can also account for their discomfort with the idea of seeking help, because they have fully integrated the injunction towards autonomy and the stigma of assistance:

"If he helps me doing more things, I will be embarrassed. It is because I like to be a bit autonomous, to show by myself the progress I make." (M14)

The notion of project is ambiguous too and can lead to misunderstandings. While local actors define the professional project as a programmatic project (with a logical and precise succession of steps), young people have generally a more vague idea of their project (Jonnaert, 2000). Thus, for some interviewed JADs, the project boiled down to an intention to engage into training in order to avoid being stuck in a passive state, but without any concrete elements about how to implement and pursue this project. Under such circumstances, choosing the type of professional training is generally not a priority:

"I was looking to do something instead of staying at home, but it was more because I wanted to be occupied than because I wanted it." (M6)

But even if they do not define their project 'programmatically', a great part of the youngsters stressed the importance to do things that made sense for them. This search for meaning points out that for young people, designing a career plan is often envisaged as a dynamic and long-term process. In this sense, it is important to take into account JADs own temporality as stressed by this quote:

"There are young people who are not highly motivated to enter the labour market, they are not ready, it is necessary to give them time. It is the only way to achieve something. But some people have not understood it yet. There is a proverb that I like: You can take a horse to the river, but you can't make it drink." (M11)

The importance of time as a key condition for the emergence of sense (and meaningful plans for the future) in the social and professional integration of JADs stresses the necessity to conceive professional integration as a dynamic transition from education to a relatively stable position in the labour market (Mansuy *et al.*, 2001). This also echoes Vincens' argument (1997) that professional integration takes place over a period when situations of job search, unemployment, training and inactivity are mixed and that process may take a long time.

Finally, JADs unanimously yearn to become the authors of their own lives. As this youngster claims:

"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 allows him to handle his life, to organise it and to claim recognition for doing – and succeeding in doing – so. This emphasizes the ambivalent nature of the FORJAD contract. Indeed, beyond the contractual obligations contained in the FORJAD programme, 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, understood as a cornerstone of capability enhancement, i.e. the real freedom to choose among valuable options, is therefore perceived as a key issue for JADs. Indeed, they are keen to prove 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. Fulfilling their personal objectives positively impacts on their self-confidence and self-esteem. However, this concern for personal autonomy and self-determination (a capacitating idea of autonomy) goes hand in hand with the injunction towards self-sufficiency that underlies the FORJAD programme (Goyette, 2003).

2.3 Supply vs. demand-side adaptability and the issue of capability for work

Assessing the FORJAD programme's capacity to enhance the youngsters' capability set finally requires examining to what extent it allows them to get a job they have reason to value. Enhancing JADs' capability for work thus implies adapting jobs and workplaces to their wishes and characteristics. Our investigation shows however that despite the multidimensional follow up provided by coaches and more broadly the contractualised support JADs and FORJADs benefit, finding an apprenticeship mostly lies on the shoulder of the individual. The Swiss apprenticeship market is structurally marked by a long-lasting disequilibrium between supply and demand, with which the programme has to cope. Under such circumstances, the coach plays an ambivalent role since he is called to concomitantly defend the youngster's rights on the workplace and strive to adapt him to the employer's expectations.

In other words, professional integration strongly depends on the youngsters' individual willingness and ability to work (Nadai, 2006). What is at stake here is their capacity to demonstrate they share the "work ethic of the general population" (Maeder and Nadai, 2009: 74) and are able to implement this ethos in their own life. And that's precisely the sense given by many interviewed youths to their participation in the programme, despite boredom and feelings of worthlessness. The case of this youngster who accepts to work for free because of her age (unlike the other MIS participants who receive social benefits because they are over 18) is paradigmatic in this respect:

"It's little hassle [the work in a second-hand shop] but I'm happy with it. I'm not employed, it's as if I was a volunteer. They are all paid except me because I'm a minor, and the regional social agency does not support the minors. And that way, I think employers will at least see that I have worked in (the second-hand shop) with colleagues who were paid and me not" *(M10).*

To enhance the chances of finding an apprenticeship, the MIS emphasise the importance of acquiring work experience through internships. However, many interviewed JADs outlined the gap between the workplace they first discovered during an internship and the one, different and generally harsher, they then discovered as apprentices. In this sense, referring to Weber's well-known analysis, many JADs experienced a "disenchantment of the world" of work. Such negative experiences in the labour market can affect negatively their motivation and, in turn, reinforce at best their instrumental conception of training or make them turn away from training at worst.

In addition, the search for internship "at all costs" can be dangerous because it places young people and their employers in highly asymmetric positions. Young people are looking for a permanent place and to this purpose, they agree to follow unpaid internships with the hope of obtaining an apprenticeship afterwards. Here, the logic is that any experience at a

workplace is better than no experience at all. But the MIS agents have no specific tools to ensure that employers, despite their contractual commitment, are respectful vis-à-vis youngsters engaged as trainees and that they do not take advantage of the young's willingness to make a good show or exert pressure on them (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)

Finding an apprenticeship is a key issue for JADs. It is envisaged as the solution to take them out of social assistance and precariousness, and it is the only way to enter the FORJAD programme. In such a conception of the transition from compulsory school to professional training, most of the responsibility lies directly on the youngsters as they are called to find an apprenticeship. At the preparatory stages of the programme, i.e. when those who have failed to find or to complete an apprenticeship are engaged in so-called MIS, they benefit from a support (be it logistic, in terms of access to information, help to write a letter of motivation or a CV, social networks, etc.) in their search that can vary from one measure to another and from one social worker to another. In some cases, the MIS agents have proved decisive for the youngster's success in finding an apprenticeship. In others, JADs have had access only to limited or very standardised information and self-presentation techniques that retrospectively appear of little use in their search for an apprenticeship. In such cases, success very much depends on the youngster's ability to convince an employer that he or she is a good bargain.

All in all, the MIS main objective is to enhance beneficiaries' attractiveness in the eyes of potential employers. Under such circumstances, compliance with the labour market requirements is conceived as a moral obligation Even the social skills that are promoted in the MIS dedicated to the acquisition of social competencies, are presented as necessary for both designing and implementing a professional project, and fitting in the labour market requisites (e.g. autonomy, ability to carry out a personal project, etc.). In other words, these social competencies are considered as resources to compete in the labour market. Indeed, MIS mostly boil down to supply-side adaptability tools, as they have very limited means to significantly affect the demand-side of the labour market. Under such conditions, it is no wonder that the adaptation to the labour market appears as an undisputable necessity to JADs themselves. This in turn reinforces their disenchanted view of the labour market.

During the apprenticeship, the coaches also play an important role in relation to employers. Indeed, they may act as intermediaries and/or mediators between the youngsters and their

bosses. Their role is particularly important since the apprenticeship commissioners, who are in charge of supervising the smooth and lawful running of the apprenticeship period, very rarely intervene in the workplace and even tend to back the employers' viewpoint in case a problem occurs. Individual characteristics and personality appear to be decisive, since every coach has a specific conception of his mission, which is determined by his individual trajectory, previous job experiences, political preferences, and so on. Whatever their job conception, however, the coaches' task is intrinsically ambivalent from the point of view of both the apprentices and the coaches themselves (who are well aware of this ambivalence). Indeed, they have two functions that may be contradictory on certain occasions as they are called to, concomitantly, defend the JAD's rights in front of his employer and push him to adapt to the demands of this latter and to the requisites of the labour market. In other words, they have to be both advocates and compliance officers. If their mediating role with employers can prove very useful in order to prevent or limit abuses, this does not impede JADs to sometimes ask their coaches not to intervene on the workplace since such an intervention could be a source of stigma (as it brings back the idea that the FORJADs are not apprentices like the others as they need specific support for success). Voice options thus appear very restricted for youngster on the workplace, where the call for adaptability (often endorsed by the youngster himself) prevails over the development of capabilities.

Conclusion

Despite its clear activation logic coupling behavioural requirements and benefits (Maeder and Nadai, 2009) and materialised through contractual obligations weighing upon JADs, the FORJAD programme considered as a whole, i.e. including the MIS as preparatory stages and FORJAD itself, allows the youngsters to receive individualised support, the content and modalities of which are negotiable to a large extent. Therefore, this programme is a very good illustration of the intrinsic ambivalent nature of contractualism when it is used as an activation tool in the field of social policies. Our investigation shows 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' capacity to aspire;

3) 'voice' options are mainly available for JADs in the framework of their relationship with local agents, i.e. in the choice of the MIS or in the delineation of both the scope and the degree of intimacy of the coaches' follow-up. 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 capacity 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.

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Young unemployed

Addressing the Issue of Disadvantaged Youth Seeking Work

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Abstract: In the UK a significant number of young people do not make successful transitions into further education, training or employment on leaving school, which has been exacerbated further by the current economic crisis. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interview data, this paper examines two Third sector programmes in the UK that can be seen moving away from 'work-first' employment activation and focusing instead on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth in finding work. When this move is considered through a capability approach perspective, questions are raised about the voice of young people, as their aspirations can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live. It is argued that 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 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 inhibit young people from entering work.

Keywords: capability approach; youth unemployment; work-first; employment activation

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1. Introduction

Since the economic downturn began in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2008, youth unemployment has risen and become increasingly significant for government policy. 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 (although these are often not seen as equating to qualifications, which young people have more of compared to older generations); the relatively high numbers of young people previously working in badly affected sectors such as construction and retail and more recently the public sector; and the overall increase in competition for a decreasing number of jobs (McQuaid et al. 2010). The National Employers Skill Survey in England (UKCES, 2010) found that a third (29%) of employers interviewed felt that 16 year old school leavers were poorly prepared for work. Issues included, a lack of experience of work/life, poor attitude, personality or lack of motivation, as opposed to any technical skills. Similar findings are also evident at a Scottish level where employers consider that school leavers have a lack of preparedness this is commonly attributed with 'a lack of understanding of what working life entails and a poor attitude towards work characterised by frequent absence, poor timekeeping, a perceived lack of responsibility to their employer and a poor attitude to career development and training' (Futureskills Scotland, 2008: 58). These factors present problems for all young people trying to take the first steps in the labour market but often it is those young people who are most vulnerable or disadvantaged that do not make successful transitions.

The issue of disengagement from the labour market is not new. Even in the context of the better economic conditions in the early 2000s a significant number of young people entered into negative destinations (such as unemployment); and it is 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 2011; Dieckhoff, 2011). 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 quality jobs' or 'poor quality work' throughout adulthood (Green & Owen 2006; MacDonald 2011).

The organisations examined for the two case studies 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 in recent decades 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 (1997-2010) 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 there has not been a major shift in policy as employment remains a key goal, rather than other forms 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, denying individuals and communities 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 2012).

This paper focuses on disadvantaged young people, aged 16-25 years, making the transition from unemployment to employment. It examines how two Third sector developed and operated programmes in Scotland (*Barnardo's Works* run by Barnardo's and *Get Into* run by the Prince's Trust) attempt to enhance young peoples' capabilities for work, voice and education; and partly move away from 'work-first' approaches to employment activation. These programmes, although focused on getting young people into employment, are more than job placement schemes as they seek to address those wider issues that prevent many young people entering and progressing in work such as confidence, lack of aspirations, lack of work experience, in addition to issues such as health and housing. We argue that in many ways these programmes can be seen as focusing on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth to choose the work that they have reason to value.

The remainder of this paper outlines the details of two case studies of programmes; the research methods used; the empirical results from the two case studies; an analytical review of the results; and the main conclusions to come out of the research.

2. Background to case studies and research methods

2.1 Case studies

The focus of the research was on two national Third sector organisations operating in Scotland:

Barnardo's Works (run by the children's charity Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk/) provides supported employment for disadvantaged young people (in terms of living in disadvantaged areas, being long term unemployment, lacking skills and experience, lacking qualifications, experiencing low self confidence, substance misuse, homelessness etc.), aged 16-24 years, and is delivered across urban, semi-rural, and rural areas. The voluntary programme lasts six months and provides an induction period followed by supported work placement with an employer. Generally in the first half of the programme there is no wage cost to the employer and in the last half *Barnardo's Works* supports half the wage cost and the employer pays the other half. The programme offers placements in a variety of sectors although some localities specialise in certain sectors. Aftercare is offered to all young people leaving the programme and some choose to take it up. Funding of the programme varies in each locality but in the main comes from European Commission funding, national government employment programmes, local authorities and charitable trusts etc.

Get Into (run by national youth charity, Prince's Trust: www.princes-trust.org.uk/) is a voluntary programme that offers intensive training and work experience in specific sectors (e.g. retailing) to those aged 16-25 years who are unemployed. 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. 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 also come from European Commission funding, local authorities and charitable trusts and funds etc.

2.2 Research questions

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' and provided them with the capability for voice, work and education.

The research questions that the two case studies sought to address were 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. The Capability Approach was used to analyse the degree to which the programmes gave the young people the capability to 'lead a life they have reason to value'. The main research questions we addresses were:

- 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?

2.3 Research Methods

A qualitative research methodology was adopted. This involved semi-structured interviews with managers, project workers and young people in the two case study organisations.

Interviews were conducted across the five different *Barnardo's Works* regional offices with sixteen staff members (service managers, project workers and employer liaison officers). Two representatives from the programme's head office were also interviewed. Twenty-two young people (sixteen young men and six young women) aged between 16 and 25 years were interviewed. These young people were all at different stages of the programme: 12 were on the induction phase, six on their work placement and four had finished the programme.

Fewer interviews were conducted with stakeholders on *Get Into*, reflecting the lower staffing levels and the difficulty of arranging interviews with young people who are on much shorter programmes. Four project workers and one representative from the programme's head office were interviewed. Five young people were interviewed both in their first week on the programme and then on completion. Three were female and two male, aged between 17 and 20 years,

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 participants gave permission, or detailed notes were taken. All the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim.

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. It is recognised that due to having an initial theoretical framework (the Capability Approach) we were not able to build theory exactly in line with the approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin, however our analysis of the interview data

used their broad approach to grounding theory building in the data. The research questions were 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.

3. 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 (programme aims; how the programmes provide young people with the capabilities for voice, work and education; and the programme outcomes in terms of capabilities for voice, work and education) as well as sub-themes, specific to the individual case studies, within these core areas.

3.1. General findings – Barnardo's Works

3.1.1 Programme Aims

The overall aim of *Barnardo's Works* is to help disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24 years, to gain access to employment. The programme is aimed at those young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and areas and works with *"young people who wouldn't have the opportunity elsewhere"* (Service manager). It 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).

While working with the most disadvantaged young people the staff participants also spoke of the need to work with those who were seen as being ready to be on the programme and those who would benefit most from the opportunity offered by the programme. Young people needed to be able to cope with work, i.e. be 'job ready', otherwise it was seen that the programme would be 'setting the young people up to fail'. However 'job readiness' as defined by *Barnardo's Works* was at a much lower level than the definitions used 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)

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 such as self-confidence and self-belief, which were seen by the project workers as important conversion factors for ensuring future sustainable employment. 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 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: lack of family/peer encouragement; lack of role models; long term unemployment; lack of confidence; substance misuse and youth offending background; lack of advice from school. The staff reported that some young people were reluctant to inform staff about certain barriers, especially at the beginning of the programme, although the young people often disclosed more information as they got to know the staff better. Only one question in the questionnaire used by the researchers was directly related to the young people's barriers (Has anything outside work made it difficult for you to take part in the programme?) and the majority of the young people responded that there was nothing. It became clear during the interviews that the young people did not always want to talk about all the barriers they faced with the researchers although most mentioned a lack of qualifications, experience and self-confidence through the discussions about their experiences before and on the programme. As such it is recognised that there may be other barriers that our interviews and analysis were not able to identify.

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 that 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 (such as gaining qualifications). The programme staff spoke of the support they provided with often taken-for-granted individual and external conversion factors (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. As such, from a Capability Approach perspective the programme unpacks the difference between outcomes and functionings, by taking an approach that recognises that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to adequately take account of the process that leads to that functioning.

3.1.2   Providing Young People with the Capabilities for Voice, Work and Education

Providing young people with the capabilities for voice, work and education were identified in the case studies as being much more than helping them get qualifications or placing them in work placements. Other factors such as support, encouragement, advice, supportive employers, building aspirations and managing expectations were identified as key elements in enabling young people to have the capabilities for voice, work and education. In addition there was considerable support for the young people after they had started work experience (i.e. considerable 'aftercare' was provided during and after their work experience).

A lack of support and encouragement (i.e. supportive social networks) was one of the potential resources, and arguably individual conversion factors, that the young people could lack. 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 and addressing some of the barriers that may arise during the transitions from unemployment to work.

> *"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)

However in many cases the programme workers offered support and encouragement to the young people that were not necessarily available elsewhere (so enhancing personal conversion factors). 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 staff stressed that: employers needed to: offer a nurturing environment; buy into *Barnardo's Works*'s ethos (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.

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. 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). 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; which in some cases was a new experience for them.

> *"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)

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 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 or 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 the range of options open to them.

> *"...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 manager)

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. 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 greater control or responsibility).

> *"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)

However, project workers also thought laterally to help young people achieve their aspirations framing a placement as a first step for the young people to achieve their aspirations in the future.

3.1.3   The Capability for Voice, Work and Education

Many of the young people on the programme lack work experience and therefore do not understand what paid employment entails, so the programme aims to provide 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. 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)

Providing a 'realistic' experience of work was not without problems as other employees in the workplace would be aware that the young people were there as part of an employment programme. However, both youth people and staff participants reported that they were made to feel welcome in the workplace and did not feel that they were treated differently. , 'Realistic' experience could mean that young people might not have a voice in their working conditions as in the early stages of the placement they may have felt unable, or did not have the knowledge, to question or discuss practices they felt disadvantaged them, but this was unclear from the interviews. Another important difference in respect of a 'realistic' experience of work is that in the first half of the placement the young people are only paid (welfare) benefits and are only paid the employer's wage in the second half. It was argued by the organisation that this arrangement made it easier to get employers involved and encouraged them to take a risk with young people they might not have otherwise considered. It was also outlined that where possible the employers would keep the young

person on at the end of the placement, although this was becoming less common due to the economic downturn.

The programme often works with young people from families where there may have been generations of worklessness. Therefore the work education also helps young people see the value of work. Some of the young people mentioned and appeared to value 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)

3.2 General Findings - Get Into

3.2.1 Programme Aims

The aim of *Get Into* is to support disadvantaged young people, aged 16-24 years, 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. Young people on unemployment benefits can normally continue to receive these while on *Get Into* and the programme also covers some expenses such as travel costs. As with *Barnardo's Works*, 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. Young people that the programme worked with were cited as often having: negative experiences of school; a lack of self-belief; a lack of encouragement from family and peers; a lack of careers advice from school; and a lack of (sustainable) job opportunities. 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.

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 e.g. 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 external labour market situation was also seen as having an effect on the demand for the programme, 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)[38]

3.2.2 Providing Young People with the Capabilities for Voice, Work and Education

Getting the recruitment right was seen as vital as there could be up to 300 applicants for 12 to 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 manager). Programme staff described how young people needed to be suited to the way the programme is run, appreciate the opportunity that the programme offers and have a genuine interest in the sector that the programme they were applying to join focused on (e.g. be interested in working in retailing). 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 manager)

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

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[38] Did not participate in the interviews

unemployment can be seen as compromising young people's abilities to make the choice to engage in work that they value and also fear of not being allowed on the programme may restrict their voice to say what they actually value.

As well demonstrating that they were suited to the programme and sector and had a genuine interest in the sector, as with *Barnardo's Works*, 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 as it could *"make a massive difference in the 5 weeks"* (Project worker). However, the barriers 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. *"This means that it is essential that the* [programme organisation – Prince's 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)[39].

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 the agencies that referred the young person to the programme. 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. The intensive recruitment procedure employed by the organisation was to ensure that dropouts were kept to a minimum, however, there were occasions where young people did leave the programme. 'Failure' in the programme was attributed to a number of factors including family breakdown, homelessness, lack of motivation, bad timekeeping, not being able to adjust to working environment and a lack of family support. Where possible the project workers would try and help the young people address these issues by referring them to other relevant agencies or giving them more support, but at the same time they also expressed frustration at not being able to help the young people.

> *"So it can be a bit depressing because you really, really want them to do well and you are giving them all of the support that you can and sometimes you just can't do enough...sometimes it's just beyond your control and you just have to sort of tell yourself at least you have given them the opportunity and some people will need second, third and fourth and fifth chances until they get it right"* (Project worker)

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[39] Did not participate in the interviews

This also illustrates that some young people will need considerable time and several attempts before they are in a position to develop their resources and convert them into valued functionings.

3.2.3   The Capability for Voice, Work and Education

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, rather than the immediate outcome of a short term job that is not sustained: " [what] *we're trying to help them to do is help them build careers rather than get jobs and hopefully they realise that"* (Project worker)

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 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 and so having the capability to convert their existing resources into valued functionings (as well as develop their individual capabilities and resources).

> *"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)

As well as 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: *"for some of them it might be their first job, so knowing exactly how to behave"* (Project worker). The young people develop a range of work related individual capabilities/functionings: e.g. professionalism, time keeping, teamwork, how to learn and move on from mistakes made in the workplace. The programme also aims to help young people understand the value of work and to have realistic expectations of work.

> *"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)

This is particularly relevant as the young people may experience a drop in income as they make the transition from (welfare) 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 and the future career progress that the initial job may help lead to.

4. Analytical Review

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 before finally considering the limitations of the programmes from a capabilities perspective.

4.1 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. The empirical data demonstrates that young people's aspirations can be limited because of 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 to the young people on their programme by giving them choice. As such the programme supports the young people to develop the capability to aspire by allowing them to make informed choices 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, to some degree, young people to have voice and voicing what they want to learn and get out of the programme. Both programmes also provide the young people with more generic skills and knowledge to find other jobs such as writing CVS, job search techniques and interview skills.

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, the willingness of individual employers to participate in the programmes, 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 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, notably where UK youth unemployment rates are currently far higher than other age cohorts, often negative attitudes of employers towards low skilled young people and by the skills and experience of the young people themselves.

Although the primary aim of both programmes is to get young people into work, they do not have a sole focus on 'work-first' employment activation, rather by including a focus on promoting the individual capabilities of disadvantaged, unemployed youth they aim to give young people the opportunity to choose the work that they have reason to value. They recognise that addressing youth unemployment is more than placing them in work; it is also about providing sustainable employment that the young people themselves 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 a more 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 partly 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.

4.2 Capability for Work

One of the main focuses of both the programmes is to develop young people's individual conversion factors[40]. 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 issues such as housing and health. Therefore core to the approach taken by the programmes is not only achieving hard outcomes such as experience, employment and qualifications, but

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[40] 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.

also addressing those soft outcomes/capabilities such as confidence, self-belief and resilience, as well as helping to address housing and health issues etc., 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 programmes acknowledge the important influences of family, friends and the local community on the decisions and behaviour of young people. This approach takes the stance that focusing solely on the job outcome fails to take account of the process that leads to that functioning. Indeed, the project workers outlined on a number of occasions where family and friends can have both a positive and negative impact on the outcome of a young person participating in the programme

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. The external labour market can be seen as playing a crucial role in understanding the nature and extend of youth unemployment more generally. In the case of the UK, a lack of jobs growth, cutbacks in recruitment by employers and cuts in public sector employment mean that even when young people have the capabilities for work there are limited opportunities for work open to them. This lack of choice and opportunity in the labour market can have a detrimental impact on young people's ability to enter and progress in the labour market.

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. Also as the young people in both programmes do not cost the employer the normal wage, they both encourage employers to give the young people the opportunity to show that they would be useful employees, and some young people are kept on in employment with their employer.

However, during the time with the employer it is likely that few young people would feel that they could give full voice to some of their concerns about the job.

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 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. Both programmes provided the young people with the generic skills to find new jobs, such as how to write job applications and CVs as well as interview skills and how to search for jobs. In addition both programmes stated that they aimed to give the young people the self-sufficiency and confidence to progress in the job market or to find new jobs if they are made redundant. Both programmes reported young people coming back to them for advice when they had lost a job. What was less clear was the extent to which the programmes set the young people up with the skills to build a career and progress in the labour market. The focus was on entry level positions in the labour market and teaching them the skills and behaviours for those types of job. It was perhaps out with the scope and capacity of the organisations to provide this support and advice for longer-term career progression and sustainability, particularly as they are relatively short-term programmes.

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. Educating young people about how to behave at work, such as good time-keeping and attendance, getting along with colleagues and taking responsibility, where seen as very important to their success in the programmes. When young people failed to achieve these work place behaviours this could potentially lead to them being excluded from the programme. What was less clear was the extent to which young people where educated about their rights at work, for example what employers can and cannot do, that they have a right to a voice in the workplace. However, both organisations emphasised that the employers were carefully chosen to ensure that they would treat the young people correctly and not exploit them. Working with vulnerable young people, who often lacked any significant experience of paid employment, the programmes wanted to find placements that would nurture and support the young people rather than putting them into an environment that could be potentially harmful.

Young people are also enabled to reflect on what work they are 'able to do' through, for example, 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 to

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.

4.3 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 and left school with few, or no, qualifications and/or left school early. Project workers reported that the education system was not adequately equipped to deal with the many problems faced by such disadvantaged young people and there was too much focus on academic achievement. 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. As such 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 or career specific skills and qualifications – both of which the young people in our case studies were lacking. Both the programmes focused getting young people into work rather than further education, however, this does not mean that education was not valued as many of the young people gained qualifications as part of their work placements and many went on to do further education combined with work, or as full-time students.

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 and also about accessing education and training more generally. The programmes therefore help the young people develop a range of work related individual capabilities/functionings: e.g. professionalism, time keeping, team work, how to learn and move on from mistakes made in the workplace, understanding the norms of the workplace, what employers will expect from them as an employee and which might also be useful if they participated in additional education. A relatively negative experience of low skilled work might also encourage some to realise the need for education in order to achieve a better career or job than they now perceived to be available to them and so enter Further Education[41].

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[41] Some 374 young people participated in Barnardo's Works between July 2007 and June 2010, with half of the young people who started the programme successfully moving on from the programme after 26 weeks - 46% (171) into employment (including apprenticeships) and a further 4% (14 young people) into Further Education.

Barnardo's Works provides young people with qualifications (albeit limited qualifications given the time available). As some of the young people may never have previously got any qualifications or valued 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, qualifications, 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. As mentioned above, many of the young people intended to continue to gain further qualifications as part of their job or as a full-time student.

4.4   Limitations of the Programmes

There are, however, some limitations in the programmes from a capabilities perspective. Both programmes have limited influence over external conversion factors e.g. weak local labour markets, vacancy characteristics and recruitment factors. These shape the directions taken by the programmes and the opportunities they can offer to the young people. The extent to which the programmes can directly address internal conversion factors is limited. The programmes are relatively short and therefore it may be difficult to address some of the deep-rooted barriers faced by the young people.

Although both programmes differ from many 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.

Both programmes were highly reliant on external funding sources (such as EU or 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 government's Work Programme for long-term unemployed were seen as having potential impacts in how the programmes may operate in the future.

Almost all young people (98%) that participate in the programme achieve some form of accreditation (McQuaid et al., 2011 and see also www.fsb.org.uk/021/assets/da/barnardos_works_info.pdf).

5. Conclusions

The UK case study has examined two, Third sector run, programmes that support disadvantaged young people making 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. It is in this context that both programmes enable young people to make informed choices about what they would like to do by providing, for example, insights into the realities of certain occupations or 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 is likely to be.

The findings provide useful insights into what work young people potentially find reason to value, although it is recognised that such work should be viewed very much in the context of the types of jobs the young people were able to access. For many of young people we talked, having *any* work was seen as being valuable, even it was entry level and poorly paid. 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 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 (including the educational opportunities they had at school before they entered the labour market).

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, e.g. willingness to work, the programmes acknowledge that simply providing placements or experience will not necessarily enable disadvantaged young people to sustain employment in the future. Rather young people's unemployment experiences are also linked to their housing, health and family relationships etc. 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 approach taken by the UK case studies appear to largely 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 holistic 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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Pedagogy Back on Track; Enhancing Capabilities for Young People in Education and Work

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Abstract: The Danish case study presents findings and considerations derived from an empirical approach based on interviews with young persons, teachers and leaders of four participating institutions. The study discusses the official definition of the "target group" and points to structural and social circumstances. It further returns to an old idea of a "youth moratorium" as an alternate to the "work first"-agenda – not least in the shape of "realistic counseling". The study shows how adaptations to market and to the "work first"-agenda seems to be counterproductive or even a negative conversion factor for the capability for work. The study points to "critical transitions", not only understood as "misleading trajectories", but as "coincidental trajectories", too. The study concludes in summing up the general problems. In addition the study invites to a discussion concerning pedagogy.

Key words: Work-first; Social Pedagogy; Vulnerable Youth; Basic Vocational Education and Training; Realistic aspirations

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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 programmes; as well as for the young people participating in educational and training programmes. Likewise it is aimed at revealing the factors that promote or hinder vulnerable young people in their transition to the labour market. The Danish Case study focuses on the arrangements for young people that have failed their earlier schooling (e.g. early school leavers, or students of technical schools that have given up their education, etc.). The case study which, by and large, follows the logic behind a multiple case study (Yin 2003a pp. 46-53; Yin 2003b pp. 23-24), is situated on a local municipality level responsible for the counselling and enrolment and with local institutions being responsible for this **Basic Vocational Education and Training (EGU)** programme.

A capability approach-inspired pedagogy could become part of overcoming the crisis of education. A balanced combination of the educational system and the labour market would further improve how to get back on track. By means of the Capability Approach the needs of disadvantaged young people could be taken into account, and the support system would then develop into a holistic, diversified and flexible system.

The target group in question is affected by having all lost track in the transition from school to further education or work. Due to this, the target group of the Basic Vocational and Educational programme (EGU) can be understood as a subset of the vulnerable target groups that **WorkAble** is concerned with. It contains for instance early school leavers, ethnic minorities, as well as young persons with learning disabilities.

2. The main research interests

The methodological, theoretical and empirical design has followed the outline for the common research questions for the WorkAble project and they thereby serves as the analytical grid. The research aims at giving insights for further EU policy development as a result of revealing how the mutual interrelations between resources (both personal bundles of commodities and institutional resources), space of labour market oppertunities the institutional (external circumstances) and individual conversion factors relate to the transition from education to labour market for young people within this particular educational and vocational programme (EGU) are working and how this influences the individual's capabilities to live a life they have reason to value. The following sub-questions have also been identified:

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

3. Methods applied and their limitations

In order to answer these interdependently and mutually relational research questions, a research design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research methods was at first planned. Generally, the case study design followed the overall strategy: *"for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence,"* (Robson 2000 p. 52). Therefore the research design consists, firstly, of documentary analyses and interviews with relevant political stakeholders/managers that have been identified as key actors in the educational regimes. Hence, the normative 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. This was followed up by an in depth analysis on how labour market requirements are pursued in different contexts and seek to focus on those who fail within these regimes. Secondly, the central empirical collection took place at 4 basic vocational education institutions located in two Danish main cities and two smaller cities. 23 interviews were carried out with institutional leaders, teachers, internship practitioners and pupils using semi-structured interviews based on different interview guides corresponding with the research questions, but from a different perspective in order to be able to triangulate these various interviews (Ramian 2006 p. 26). The duration of the interviews was between 26 minutes and 59 minutes depending on the interviewee´s communication skills and was later transcribed. The Capability Approach was applied as the overall theoretical frame the design of the interview guide aimed at assessing the different specific capabilities young people lack in their struggle to live the life that they have reason to value. The qualitative framework also contained semi-structured group discussions with the purpose of tackling the main research questions with respect to all interviewees as well as biographical information with respect to young people. Thus, the interview dynamic resulted in the reconstruction of spontaneous (re-)creations of social situations (Garfinkel 1967; Nentwig-Gesemann 2010).

Ethical concerns and the processing of the empirical material

To secure that the involved interviewees had their voice respected and a real freedom to chose not to participate, a written agreement explaining the aim and context of the research, guaranteeing the obligation to deal with the collected data anonymously was made between the researchers and the interviewees. To analyze the data the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9 was used in the first place using open/free coding. Reworking the coding scheme thereby preparing the final node-structure led to the final coding of the interviews.

4. Some of the main findings of the case study

The basic vocational education and training for pupils at risk of leaving the educational and vocational track is characterized as an *individualized* programme aimed at both employment and continued education. Furthermore it is seen as a second chance for those adolescents who do not fit into ordinary vocational programmes.

 Entry into the programme often happens after a period where the young person does not receive any formal education and is without a job. By the Ministry of Education the target group is furthermore characterized as not having the: *"preconditions for completing another qualifying youth education."* (Ministry of Education 2010b). This description has furthermore been documented in the interviews. As one of the young people phrases it: *"books or anything with mathematics - it has never been me, ever, so my school ended when I was in the 7th grade"* (I[42]: 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[43] 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 as constructed by the professional actors and the Ministry are young people more oriented towards practical skills than subject competences*: "with a weak educational background, and are not very academically inclined"* (Ministry of Education 2010). The interviews with the professionals as well as the pupils raise some important questions in relation to this. It seems to be the case that the pupils have experienced situations in their earlier educational path where they were bullied. Quoting the words of

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[42] This refers to the number of the case in this multiple case study

[43] Grade 0-9 covers approximately the agespan from 6 til 16 years of age. Pupils in the 7th grade will be 13-14 years of age.

Martha Nussbaum they had experienced an assault on their human dignity even though: "dignity is a vague idea that needs to be given content by placing it in a network of related notions, it does make a difference." (Nussbaum 2011 p.30). These humiliations have led to low self-esteem that works as an *individual conversion factor* in relation to further education. Seen from Martha Nussbaum's perspective this would also be a violence of or lack of *affiliation* that also concerns the social basis of self-respect and non-humiliation. In fact the interviewed pupils often utter experiences with earlier teachers such as: *"I've had a very, very poor schooling at the elementary school. In 8th grade I had a math teacher who drove me down mentally, which meant I actually merely never been to school in 8th grade. The only hours I attended, was my German class and it was only to talk to my teacher"* (IV: pupil 1) or *"I've been picked at and I have been chopped down by all of my teachers through three to four years and also in the technical school, I really do not know what they had against me"* (I: pupil 2)

This vulnerable group of young people points to an interesting characteristic of the Danish welfare state: "The reproduction of inequality" (Hernes 1975), which should not be considered as a past stage in the history of educational sociology. Unequal distribution of education exists and reproduces in new forms. At the same time a decline in the social mobility can be experienced, and the chances for working class children to reach an academic level is by no means increased (Hansen 2003 p. 99). The educational participation of the working classes has been seen as a sound parameter assessing whether a central political goal embedded in the post-war years is still intact and working (Hansen 2003 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 opinions and participate as democratic members of society. It promotes *less* valuable (from the individual's perspective) *educational* and vocational opportunities than they are formally entitled to. It promotes *lesser opportunities to enter into the job market* and enjoy the mutual recognition with other workers that this entails.

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

Social and structural circumstances characteristic for the target group

The majority of the students have a parental background characterized by a non-familiarity with the educational system. Most parents have only completed compulsory education (comprehensive school covering primary and lower secondary education) and have no experience of the next educational levels (e.g. higher education).To some parents education is not valued as important, since those parents do not share the common values of parents

in the Danish society. Working class parents prefer jobs and wages over the coat of education. Many of them are unskilled workers and have had, or still have, a job primarily in industrial companies. Hence, the students themselves did not succeed well in primary and lower secondary school. Another point is that the target group experience problems to: "*relate to their own age group*" (I: internship teacher). We find that in addition to lack of success in school these students are often lonely, meaning that their networks – except for their own family – are scarce. This lack of capacity to experience and enjoy affiliation to other young people is worth taking into account. Instead of accounting the lack of affiliation to other young people as a subjective characteristic of each individual´s ability to make relations it seems merely to be a structural product of the circumstances.

Other structural circumstances that need to be mentioned in relation to the Danish case is that 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 1970s become a still more important factor in shaping youth life and youth trajectories (Young 1998). Therefore, these past school experiences seem to follow them as a "bad companion" when entering their further education and training.

Similarly the labour market has undergone dynamic changes pointing to the need for qualified labour. This means that "education for all" in Denmark is 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 labour market structures to match the students' needs and wants concerning a life they feel reasonable to value. The institutions offer, or perhaps even promise, to help socially integrate young people by way of counselling, training, education and labour market policies. However, in many cases they reproduce the risk of social exclusion. But this is a fragmented picture and it seems that much depends on the understanding of teachers, counsellors and social workers/social pedagogues working in the institutions.

The need of a youth moratorium as a part of youth life course

In many cases professionals understand the transition through a youngster's life course as a linear one: education leads to employment that leads to marriage, children and so on. In fact, many young people do not follow a linear way of transition. They are trained today; tomorrow they find a temporary job keeping them employed for some time. They try one type of education – shift to another and sometimes return with renewed energy, aspiration and motivation. On their way towards adulthood they would usually lose the temporary job and have to suffer from unemployment leading to further training and/or to another job of a similar kind. This 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 thereby develop an informed understanding of their potential and wishes. In a way the demand for quick decisions and a linear understanding of the transition from education to job market brings vulnerable young people into situations where they do not have the time necessary to shape their identity and especially their wishes for their future life. In this dramatic rush of demands for decision making that influences their future life to a great extent, the actually chosen path for our group of young people becomes arbitrary – in many cases it could have turned out quite differently. For many of the interviewed young people's situation the content of their individual plan has been shaped merely by chance – even their entrance into the programme happened due to coincidences. With respect to the above mentioned, much depends on external factors and structures, e.g. labour market development, personal circumstances or uncertain perspectives. What we have found in our case study seems to be consistent with the findings of the EGIRIS-project, European Group for Integrated Social Reserach (Blasco et al. 2003). We may, therefore, compare our findings with what is called "misleading trajectories" (Blasco et al. pp. 26-31) and at the same time call for a sub concept that could be named "coincidence trajectories". Instead of asking the *market*: "what a transition should be", it would be necessary to ask: "what a transition could be". Beyond the findings it seems reasonable to argue for a de-acceleration of the many crucial life choices the young person are forced to take and instead open up for a period that could serve as a playing field for better and more informed choices – choices they themselves have *reason* to value.

But, as can be seen when looking at the target group description and 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.

Which are the new conditions?

There are as always in human development new conditions to bear in mind. At present they can be phrased as new or changed digital conditions and impacts, not only the young people in question, but also the pedagogical situation that seeks to address the problems as well. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the following: The transition to digital capitalism has led the working society – the industrial-capitalistic modern form of socialisation – into crisis and created a tendency to liberate people in such a way that time and again they are pushed into mastering constellations of anomaly. 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 p. 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.

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 the state use their right to demand a certain number of apprenticeships to be part of the offer of the private company; the trend mentioned is rather recently implemented due to the increasing number of unemployed youngsters. This is assessed to be better than just being kept waiting for months or years.

Individual voice in the planning vs. counselor's 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 Education 2010). 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. Following our interviews 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 EGU has an overall aim which is <u>not only</u> oriented at the labour market. In the legislation – at least – a *work-first perspective* is not the primary outcome. Interestingly also, one of the top aims of the programme is that the: *"Vocational training also will help to develop young people's interest and ability to participate actively in a democratic society"* (Act 987 of 16/08/2010). The aim is thereby that the young person in question achieves a personal and social development as well as professional qualifications/competences for the labour market. This demand and aim has some affiliation to the German understanding of *Bildung.* Also the enhancement of personal, social and professional competences should enable the EGU pupil to be enrolled in either one of the other education and training programmes (EUD) that leads to a professional qualification as a skilled worker (a certificate for a completed apprenticeship) or at least provide the basis for entering the labour market. In other words either the programme helps the young person back on the educational main track or it secures sufficient competences for the young to seek employment. The programme becomes thereby at the centre of re-transition into the labour market for those who failed the main educational path.

As stated earlier the local municipality decides the number of pupils that are enrolled in the programme. This limit is influenced by two factors that convert the economic resources into a number of places offered. Firstly there are the private labour market possibilities for internship. The companies have to pay an internship wage. Therefore the main expenses linked to this programme are placed in the private companies if the EGU-pupil goes to have his/her internship there. Some professional actors experience a decline in the interest from private companies. As an example one of the managers states that it *"has been a tremendous challenge for the EGU programme in relation to the internship situation, because it's no secret that when a machinist apprentice can´t find his internship, then an EGU-pupil that can´t anything of course have even more difficulty in finding an internship … it is impossible to find a craftsman who will take an EGU-pupil today."* (I: manager). It is quite obvious from the interviews with the pupils, as well as the professionals, that this forces the youngster to change their ideas about workplace and work area. This brings us further to the next thematic in the analysis. Another "hot" issue here is the target group's opportunities to seek internship on an equal basis with others. Based on this case study, we are analytically able to follow Nussbaum's argument stating that it is a governmental responsibility to secure all citizens the opportunity (over a certain threshold): *"Control over one´s environment"*. This central capability includes: *"having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others"* (Nussbaum, 2011 pp. 33-34; Nussbaum 1999 p. 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 an internship: *"Yes it's difficult for a company to argue; yes we have just fired ten, but we will take five [internship and flex-job]"* (stakeholder interview)

Realistic aspirations for work and education – conversion factors for voice

From a capability perspective it becomes clear that even though the EGU programme intentionally should be planned individually and therefore be giving voice to the youngsters' wishes for a future work life, this intention is restrained in several ways. The question is therefore whether the pupils and young adults have the *capability for voice* in these arrangements. We find the adolescents being forced by counsellors to have "realistic ideas" of themselves and their future plans. Looking more closely it becomes clear that this happens in a complex relation between three interrelated factors, labelled as:

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

Job market adaptation as conversion factor for voice

Young people in this programme often need to *learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market.* Providers find that the young people are often need to learn to have a more "realistic" view of their future choice of employment. In this sense the young person's individual plan becomes influenced or even manipulated – and absolutely not by *the beings and doings they have reason to value.* An empirical example is stated by one of the managers:

> *But their influence is so far formally real, but it's just a pseudo influence because of their competence to know what the possibilities are - this is thus relatively limited. So there will be much talk with the supervisor, who will in a nice way manipulate a lot in the direction that we [EGU professionals] believe is best for them. It is probably to let them see that it can´t be done ... it's hard to let them go the whole way [and try out an internship the EGU professional do not believe is realistic], because we need those internships again, we must use the reputation of EGU again (I: manager)*

This does not support the voice of the pupil in these programs. They are only formally entitled to choose between valuable opportunities. This is problematic for the capability for voice, because it: *"clearly contrasts with the call for adaptability (that often prevails in the field of welfare), where people are not allowed to choose freely, but are called to adapt their preferences to the existing opportunities in their social environment"* (Bonvin 2009 p. 58).

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

Employability, human capital and human capability for work are distinct, but mutual related concepts. In this respect our perspective differs from a human capital understanding of the function of work. But the choice dimension is as stated earlier only formal and directly contrasting that work gets a first priority in practice. This leads to a danger of exclusion of the young from different work places. An example of the work first perspective is seen in the following part of an interview with a leader of an institution giving internship offers for EGU pupils:

Interviewer: ... you have a couple of young EGU pupils at your institution. Do you have others that you offer such an internship?
Respondent: So I have educators who have had a long-term sick leave getting financial support. They are at my place, too.
Interviewer: Ok, so people that need this way into the labour market again.
Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: What is it that you offer the EGU pupils who come to your place?

Respondent: Uh (?)

Interviewer: What is the reason that you take them? Do you have to?

Respondent: No, I do not have to take them. I just need some more hands ... the main essence is, I suppose to give these young EGU pupils some work skills. So they have something to get up for in the morning. Everything else is coming to them slowly afterwards.

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. As stated above, the municipality is the contextual place for the programme and has the main responsibility for offering and implementing it. We find many differences between the ways in which the programme is handled within each municipality due to demography, job opportunities, history and the local governance. 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.

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.

We have been able to identify "critical transitions" built into the institutional structures. These transitions refer to situations where youngsters are confronted with a decision or selection to pass to another level within the educational system or to move on to the labour market. At each of these transitions young people must use their resources to cope with the requirements of the situation. Counsellors apparently act as making the decisions for the young people. 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 decision lead to separated pathways with little

possibility of passing from one alternative to another. One first very critical transition is the transition from primary to upper secondary education. The age of selection (after ended comprehensive schooling) seems to indicate that early selection is a trap since this first selection is marked significantly by disadvantage. A second critical transition concerns the move from compulsory education to upper secondary vocational education or training.

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. 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.

6. Putting the study into perspective

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. The "grand old man" of Danish sociology of education, 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 to contemporary educational sociology.

In an information society or a knowledge society, for that matter, the productive utilisation of information and knowledge is central. In the light of the missing social balance, psychosocial well-being 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.

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 field In the field of education, it is therefore important above all to remember that lifelong learning, as a consequence of the knowledge and information society, cannot be conducted via linear extrapolation and new smart learning machines, but by each individual handling the different states of knowledge biographically.

Such ambivalence and several more seem to point to the notion that the Capability Approach would also be able to integrate pedagogy more extensively in the social discussion of how we organise our future society. This expectation is unlikely to be fulfilled on its own. Central to pedagogy, now as well as previously, is the job to bring human beings in a state of harmony with themselves and thus promote human integration into society. As in earlier forms of capitalism, the very idea of human worth and dignity is under pressure from digital capitalism. Here the model of the 'abstract worker' rules, which is to say that the modern economy has finally produced its own, socially marginalised 'whole person' and thus proclaimed the – hardly intended – funeral of pedagogy. The understanding of social imbalances can result in ideas of a socio-technical optimising of human beings, which precisely aim to produce abstract workers that are forced to seek inner balance in powers

that are beyond the worldly, namely in religion or spirituality (Bovbjerg 2001). So far, pedagogy has taken the diametrically opposite starting point: the socially embedded human beings bound by time and space, who can understand themselves on this basis and who construct social relations in respect of the concrete, experienced personal integrity of others (e.g. Schmidt 2005). That is, pedagogy is unable to just profit from a CA-perspective – unless it is willing to renew its human traditions and characteristics. If not, it may in the worst case become "pedagogy for the capsized, the superfluous and those who have fallen short". Instead, digital capitalism will draw on market oriented learning technologies that focus on human beings' unconditional flexibilisation. Those who fall through in this process can thus be left to traditional pedagogy (also Sennett 1998 and Bauman 1998).

This includes another socioeconomic account for pedagogy to settle. The point in this case draws on a distinctive societal tradition. Essentially, it is a matter of demonstrating that economic growth is possible only when it is reproduced socially via education and social work; this is the only way that it is possible. In this mutually dependent relation, family work, education and social work are not the mere precondition or necessary appendix of production; it is its very motivation. Certainly, globalised as well as rationalisation-intensive capital is no longer thrown upon qualified mass work, as previously. Thus, the value of reproduction work has also dropped – e.g. privatised, again – just like the individualised education efforts (educational inflation). At the same time, the socially threatening problem of social disintegration has increased. This is to some extent connected to flexibilisation's new anomaly and instances of mastering. If it is going to be possible to ensure social integration, education and learning are in need of a pedagogical and social face and a 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 (Gramsci 1972), the establishment of a historical left wing for the democratic renewal of society and not merely thematise citizens in relation to the state, but equally in

relation to the economy. In the universe of educational sociology we are also dealing with a re-organisation of problems and discussions (Hansen 2003).

For the part of the first point, the historical justification is already well-known: For the sake of its development and modernisation, capitalism is thrown upon the development of human capital and thus also the improvement of the living conditions of workers and salaried workers. The improvement of these conditions had and will have a significant pedagogical effect: People develop their own interests in education which cannot be reduced to economy. The required economic development of human capital and the discourse of human liberation determine each other.

With regard to the second point, Erik Jørgen Hansen has thematised that the industrial-capitalistic division of labour generated social disintegration problems (rupture, transition, fissions in different areas of life, immense risk, in brief: anomy), and at the same time it is thrown upon social integration (see 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 (Hansen 1988). With regard to reproduction, the meaningfulness of the given production in relation to human dignity and nature preservation was and is still a subject of investigation. This meaning component must be placed in the foreground of the applied pedagogy which (far too easily) allows itself to be enslaved by the dictates of 'professional force'.

This humanistic tradition within a pedagogy, which should not only be seen as socially satisfying, but also as a productive force for social change, should be brought into the debate about the CA. A purely socio-technological vision is inadequate. The basis and production factor 'social satisfaction' is oriented towards the cost budget of a growth-fixated capitalism. Here, it is a matter of minimising the human distraction, i.e. closing the 'technology gap' of the human self-will (Luhmann & 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. Thus, a pessimistic development is one possibility. Another is, of course, that pedagogy is subjected to detailed, critical analysis with a view to 'start afresh – under the conditions of a new age'. Whereas the former age focused on the fate of the individual and its social realisation, gene technology turns everything upside-down: social fate from a pre-social condition. This 'either-or' is not easy to handle for a modern pedagogy that still relies on reform pedagogy's evolution-theoretical hypotheses of an 'inner' construction plan for human development (a pure and unspoiled inner childlike nature) – as a basis for excluding social opposites and understanding oneself as autonomous display or creativity, beyond the framework conditions of society.

The optimistic aspect here is that the paradigm of being the master of one's own existence, alone and together with others, has neither become redundant nor been overtaken. Rather, it has been expanded substantially: Just as Marx used to write about simple and extended reproduction, in relation to production, we can in the current situation talk about the difference between repressive (primarily socially-taxing or even subject to negative social inheritance), simple (the reproduction of living conditions without socially-integrating surplus value) and extended mastering options (with social surplus value and thus resources for social change), which also include the societal and socio-political. Do we want to or have to accept that some parts of the population undergo socially repressive liberation, while others undergo socially extended liberation?

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Those in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills

The development of capabilities of young people with low skills. The case study of a vocational education programme in Poland.

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Summary: The article presents results of a case study of educational programme, which was designed to answer the structural problems of vocational schooling in Poland. It aimed at improving skills of students from vocational schools and was provided by a big employer operating in the sector of power industry. The analysis of empirical material consisting of interviews, documents, legal regulations and statistics, focused on identifying factors working in favour of building capabilities of its participants (increasing spectrum of their possible life choices). This particular case study gives insight into more general mechanisms contributing to the development of freedom of youth with low skills or impeding it by reproduction of inequalities.

Key words: Capability approach, vocational education, reproduction of inequalities, vulnerable youth, employment.

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Introduction

This case study of an educational initiative for young people gives an insight into the 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 foreign international power industry company in cooperation with upper secondary vocational schools. It addressed young people in vocational education and aimed at improving their educational and professional prospects. Compared to other training and educational initiatives in Poland, it might be considered innovative, because of its preventive and long-term character as well as a broad range of good quality services.

By applying Amartya's Sen capability approach (CA) (1992), we analyse what are the decisive factors that facilitate or impede development of freedom of young people in vulnerable situations. This theoretical framework takes 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 CA gives us the analytical instruments to distinguish factors, which make the educational process relatively successful and contribute to the opening of real opportunities for its participants. In order to grasp negative factors crucial for limiting freedom to choose life one has reason to value, our analysis of empirical data was also inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's general remarks on mechanisms of social reproduction operating through education system (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970).

Origins of the programme 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 faced by companies and vocational schools resulting from the recent history of the educational system in Poland; and – on the other – to the specific situations of organisations implementing the programme: the ENERGET company and the secondary vocational school, subsequently called TECHNIQUE.

Restructuring of centrally planned economy and dismantling of communist regime had important consequences for the educational system (Mertaugh and Hanushek 2005). In result of new financial and governance rules introduced in the 1990s, the central government transfers to local territorial units an amount of money that they might 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. Schools found themselves in a position requiring strategic thinking in marketing categories in order to attract the maximum number of students and avoid being closed. They started to organise meetings with candidates, advertise their educational offer and change their specialisations according to trends of popularity (and not necessarily labour market demand).

These changes of financial and governance rules together with increasing popularity of general education hit particularly hard vocational schools, since their infrastructure generates more costs and – for many years – the number of candidates has been decreasing. In order to avoid closing schools, headmasters tended to introduce rapid "re-skilling": e.g. teachers of vocations – which were not popular enough and too expensive – were asked to change their specialisation into cheaper and more attractive. They were forced to learn sometimes a completely new speciality in a matter of days. This has resulted in the declining quality of vocational schooling, since teachers who freshly "re-skilled" had no practical knowledge of the new subjects.

Moreover, vocational education has been separated from employers when companies gave up the educational functions typical for the communist system and closed their vocational schools. As a result, enterprises lack influence on the list of vocations taught in schools, the content of minimum curricula and external technical exams, which are defined by central government institutions and remain resistant to modifications (Sztanderska *et al.* 2007, 31).

All above-mentioned structural changes have had far-reaching consequences, among others, the coexistence of high youth unemployment rate with persistent shortages of workers in some sectors of economy. They also hit particularly hard ENERGET and TECHNIQUE due to their specific situations. In the middle of 2000s, ENERGET found itself in disadvantageous position: the moment of retirement of important part of its power engineering technicians was approaching, meanwhile this specialisation was eliminated from the list of vocations taught in schools years ago 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 recruit among graduates of technological universities or by promoting current ENERGET employees.

ENERGET mobilised different circles – academics, teachers, local authorities, employers organisations – to lobby for restoring this specialisation and to work on updating its curriculum. In 2010 the Minister of National Education finally amended the directive regulating this issue (MEN 2010). ENERGET also initiated the programme "We empower you

to learn", that preceded the re-introduction of the "power-engineering technician" specialty. The programme aimed at pupils in vocational schools eager to learn elements of power engineering as an extracurricular activity.

TECHNIQUE was one of the two schools that entered into cooperation with the company. It was chosen for in-depth research, because of low skills of its pupils, which is the effect of low popularity of vocational education in general together with TECHNIQUE's weak position in a highly competitive Warsaw educational market[44]. On the wave of mass interest in general education after 1989 and the introduction of the new rules of financing, it was forced to open general upper secondary school and retrench vocational education. In 2008, the general high school was closed, when it lost in a competition for new candidates and since then all the efforts have been invested in vocational school. Therefore, cooperation with a big international company seemed to be a good opportunity to get financial and educational support as well as an effective way to promote school and attract candidates. From the very beginning, the programme was meant to evolve into the opening of classes with the specialisation of "power engineering technician", which took place in 2011/2012 after the end of research.

Methodological issues

The study was based on documentary and statistical data analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs). The first methods were used for obtaining background knowledge and select relevant case: we analysed the influence of recent changes in the educational system on the challenges encountered by vocational schools and employers seeking for workers with specific skills (Sztandar-Sztanderska and Zieleńska 2012).

The idea was to choose a programme for youth that was innovative in a sense that it attempted to deal with the identified structural problems instead of providing short-term training or internship for young unemployed after the end of their regular education. The case study includes curricular lessons provided by the TECHNIQUE 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 TECHNIQUE's workshops or apprenticeships and *vice versa*; grades which students received from mandatory classes determined whether they qualified for ENERGET scholarships.

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[44] The selection to upper secondary schools is based on results of external exams. Best performers are given priority to choose schools, others go to schools with remaining places. As TECHNIQUE is not renown there is no competition to get there – it accepts all candidates regardless of their results.

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. We interviewed 20 people. Their selection reflects the effort to meet requirements of data triangulation (Denzin 1970). We included individuals from various organisations (school, company, local authorities and administration, association cooperating with ENERGET, university) and representing different interests and perspectives on the programme. Among students, we decided to conduct interviews only with those from second and third grade, who had at least one year experience of being in the programme to form their opinions. A diverse group has been chosen for the study, consisting of students with the best, average and weak school results, involved and not involved in closer cooperation with ENERGET, male and female (one of the only two female students from those classes was interviewed).

Finally, two stipulations have to be made. Firstly, we were denied the access to information on social and material situation of students (e. g. which students get support from social services) and details on their school performance. The school authorities were worried of contravening students' right to privacy. Second of all, the study had finished before any of the students took general and vocational exams . Therefore, we do not know if the skills and knowledge they gained in the programme will be sufficient for them to get official diplomas. However, it is clear that a lack of diploma if they fail is an important obstacle for later educational and professional choices.

Theoretical background and research questions

All forms of support for young people provided together by ENERGET and TECHNIQUE will be regarded as what Sen calls "commodities". This term refers to different goods and services, in this particular case – curricular and extracurricular activities, school equipment and scholarships. As Sen emphasises, how they will be used depends on individual and non-individual features, called "conversion factors" – someone's skills and knowledge, traits of character, social norms and legal framework of the society, but also financial situation and other resources one has access to. 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, etc..

This relation between commodities and conversion factors has great relevance for the analysis of the programme: 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

the interaction between various individual and non-individual conversion factors. Taking a CA normative standpoint, our focus is therefore on empirically distinguishing what makes it easier or more difficult (or 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 was difficult to adopt Sen's general economic model for the purpose of empirical analysis of dynamics between different capacitating and constraining factors. In order to name some of the observed mechanisms that indicated that the programme also contributed to the reinforcement of inequalities between students, we decided to refer to some observations of Bourdieu and his collaborators on education system and development of dispositions (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970; Bourdieu 1979; 1998). During the analysis of empirical material we realised that their concluding remarks on social reproduction based on the macro analysis of French society conducted a few decades ago are useful in the analysis of processes taking place on this micro scale in different social and historical context.

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 mechanisms described by Sen and Bourdieu as well as preliminary research findings.

Firstly, individuals' freedom to act may be restricted even if their access to commodities seems fairly open. Our assumption based on quantitative data on education system (Sztandar-Sztanderska and Zieleńska 2012), later confirmed by statements of teachers, ENERGET employees and students themselves, was that pupils entering the school had generally low level of skills and knowledge and that there were 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 commodities provided in the programme or if not, whether the programme itself develops these skills and equalises chances between individuals, by, for example, making them able to understand the lectures and exercises; set their own goals and find the way to achieve them; discern rules of the game and play along with them (e.g. understand actual criteria for recruitment to ENERGET or criteria they have to fulfil to pass final exams). 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 higher cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970). We decided to investigate further if similar processes take place in the programme.

Secondly, both Sen and Bourdieu pay attention to the process of adaptation of preferences and show that people rarely aspire for something that is improbable to achieve, because of

constraints, 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 of individuals as suggested by rational actor model. It is based 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 do not want or value it, but because it did not cross our mind that it is a possibility. By a Latin expression "*amor fati*" Bourdieu emphasises that taste is formed by the experience of constraints and people in disadvantaged situations learn to like and choose what is more probable to achieve (Bourdieu 1979; Sztandar-Sztanderska 2010, 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. Bourdieu is useful in providing us with tools to analyse reproduction (what we call in this text constraining factors), whereas 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 the 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 the development of freedom demands the 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 focus on the way the voice of young people is framed in the programme and on factors that expand or limit it.

Finally, we found it important to analyse whether the educational path outlined by the programme does not limit students' future freedom by being too specific and making changes of education and professional career difficult. 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, particular power plant or skills that might be useful in other educational and work paths. We can paraphrase it in Bourdieu's terms (1986): 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.

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

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 (aged 16-19). They were taught in the vocation called "technician-mechanic with the specialisation in construction of power machines", which at that time was closest to the 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. The company supplemented a standard curriculum with non-mandatory and mandatory activities: vocational and soft-skill workshops, excursions to power plants and apprenticeships. It also granted scholarships for the best students in every class. Apart from that, selected pupils were invited to participate in so-called "ambassador programme" and play a role of representatives of the company at school by transferring information, organising meetings, etc..

ENERGET employees (called "mentors") responsible for the programme implemented it without extra-remuneration. In the school year 2010/2011 alone, 21 employees volunteered to teach students beyond their regular job. Their personal commitment seems to exceed the narrow interest of organisation to prepare and pre-select students to work there and to promote the company. According to interviewees, they were dedicated to their tasks, eager to modify their teaching methods to attract attention and adapt to level of skills and experience of young people. Also the school went beyond typical educational activities: a psychologist was hired to support students; some of the teachers provided "catch-up" after lessons and fixed their permanence hours for individual consultation.

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 and promotional materials provided by the company were used to win over candidates. As one of our interviewees 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] *is used in this recruitment action* <teacher 1>. Many 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 secure school's position and attract better candidates.

Clear organisation goals, both of TECHNIQUE and ENERGET, and personal involvement of their employees were the key to the relative success of the programme. Teachers from the upper secondary vocational school as well as ENERGET employees shared a common interest to develop it with particular care for quality, which differentiates it from many ad-

hoc short-term training programmes designed for vulnerable groups in Poland[45]. The programme gave students opportunities to learn and to experience themselves in various situations which could not have been provided by the school alone. However, there are also more detailed aspects of its implementation that require discussion. We analyse them in the next section.

Conversion factors *versus* constraining factors

The programme comprised of various capacitating and incapacitating elements. We will describe them by referring to the three particular problems described in the theoretical part: 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.

Producing good ENERGET employees or increasing capabilities

The analysis of the empirical data has shown that although the programme is designed to answer a very specific problem of ENERGET, many elements seem to work in favour of creating more general capabilities for work and education instead of "formatting" people to become its employees. By referring to Bourdieu's terminology, we could say the programme gives the participants opportunities to acquire dispositions that may become embodied capitals in other vocational and educational domains.

All the interviewed students – regardless of their grades and plans for the future – positively evaluated the extracurricular activities provided by the company. The apprenticeships were assessed the highest, but also workshops and lectures were considered more interesting than regular classes. They emphasised mentors' ability to present theory by using examples from everyday life – what contrasted with their school experiences. As one of the students puts it:

> "We have a lot of theory dictated from books in vocational subjects. Whereas here (...) [in ENERGET's workshops]*, 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 brought some stuff, did experiments – generally it was more interesting than lessons"* <student 1>.

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[45] Public Employment Services responsible for training the unemployed focus on low prices and high number of participants, which results in short-term courses of mediocre quality (Liwiński and Sztanderska 2006; Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009).

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 (...) – 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>.

Mentors emphasised that their 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, because two week apprenticeship is too short for this purpose.

Although the programme focused on providing participants with knowledge from specific areas, it also included workshops aiming at development of so-called "soft skills". They were twofold: organised by school psychologist directed at increasing the integration of classes; and provided by ENERGET where students had the opportunity to learn how to present themselves, communicate effectively, write CVs and prepare to job interviews. The school authorities seemed to value the most the former aspect, which was considered essential in the contemporary labour market. Also students perceived training in public speeches useful, not only for seeking employment, but also for passing the final oral exams.

Another aspect of the programme, which worked in favour of building more general skills were the "catch-up" classes. School employees organised tutoring from science after compulsory lessons to give students with learning difficulties the chance 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 of their financial situation.

Although the programme provides additional courses, which work in favour of creating capabilities, students' future depends to a large extent on fulfilling the requirements of obligatory education (acquiring institutionalised cultural capital in Bourdieu's terms). They are obliged to pass a general final exam to continue education at tertiary level. They also have to pass the vocational exam if they want to work in their vocation (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 the level of obligatory vocational courses and have very poor results, suggests a constraining factor. They explain it by the fact that their vocational teacher has problems with transferring knowledge and instead of improving teaching methods threatens to fail them.

Ability to use commodities

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

They seem more eager to set goals and more aware of the means needed to achieve them. Even though some of 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. Many other students lack these skills and, thus, have difficulties to critically interpret the marketing message used to promote the school, saying that well-paid employment in ENERGET is guaranteed after graduation[46]. They seem not to be aware of other factors that play a role here: their school results, economic situation and changes of ownership of the company that are currently taking place. Moreover, many of them do not see any link between their future and current actions (e.g. consequences of choice of subjects 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 was the timing of extra-curricular courses which limited the chances of some students to take advantage from them. Firstly, the catch-up classes were organised after the lessons in the afternoon – and it was difficult for many of the students who lived in a considerable distance from school (mostly outside of the city) to attend them, because of the long journey home. Secondly, the lectures in the framework of vocational workshops took place during obligatory classes. It caused a twofold

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[46] All interviewed ENERGET employees were displeased with this message used during school promotional campaigns. They repeated continuously during interviews that: employment is by no means guaranteed; if there is a vacancy, a formal requirement is to get positive grades in both general and vocational final exams and to win an official recruitment procedure; whereas salaries depend on a position and a job tenure, therefore students are mistaken to judge upon high salaries of upper rank workers.

effect: On the one hand, some of pupils 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 vocational workshops] *?*
>
> 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 learn more… and there was a time when it was during the lessons* (...) *they organised it during math – and I'm weak at math, I didn't want to skip it, get into bad books"* <student 3>.

On the other hand, some of the students with learning difficulties were eager to come to the workshops and skip obligatory classes regardless of potential negative consequences, such as worsening of their grades.

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 taught in the programme. One of the mentors confirms it:

> "*This is an inter-generational company. There was a time – not so often these days – that a father, two sons, and sons' wives worked here. (...) And there is this Marek in my group and his father works in the other power plant – he has it easier. Despite the fact that Marek is a very good and polite student… it's that his father helps him. The language of power engineering is specific – similarly to the language of the railway men or miners – you can say a word and another person immediately knows what this is about. Those students* [whose parents work in ENERGET] *have it easier. They are more motivated.*" <employee 2>.

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

The abovementioned examples may be treated as the symptoms of reproduction of inequalities. School sets rules which make it more difficult for people in worse situation (in terms of school grades or distance to school from the place of living) to benefit from commodities provided in the programme. It requires from them exceptional effort and only few are able to do that. Moreover, some skills and knowledge that help people to be good performers are a part of the cultural capital they come to school with – often acquired in the family. It is more difficult for those who do not already have it, to develop it in the educational process. 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).

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. Despite 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 (...). Majority of [friends form lower secondary] went to general upper secondary schools. They could afford that, I couldn't. I'm not eager to learn, I'm lazy and stuff... so I decided on vocational school" <student 5>.

It is striking, that even one of the best performers tends to picture himself as worse than others. The 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 in the programme. 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 by school authorities – 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], 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] 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 because of their gender. It leads to their adaptation of preferences and stereotypical behaviours. Power engineering technician is represented as masculine vocation demanding physical strength.

Two girls 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] *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."* <employee 2>.

The girls find themselves in a difficult position. They are not good performers and no one expects much from them. Their reaction is self-exclusion – they present themselves as not interested and indifferent to what is happening at school. This is a derivative of the mechanism of male domination described, among others, by Bourdieu: the fact that some vocations are perceived as male as a matter of "nature" leads to the conclusion that women – who are physically weaker than men – should not perform it (Bourdieu 1998). Argument of "nature" makes it very difficult to deny. The females at school react by conforming to these expectations without regarding them as unjust or wrong.

However, there was one factor that in case of some students lessened the adaptation of preferences. It might be considered a result of the increased plurality of the informational basis of judgment. ENERGET employees represented professional milieu and – unlike the teachers – were not part of "the school game". Students were impressed by their knowledge, expertise, stable professional careers and relatively high earnings. Interactions with them influenced their thinking about the future and contributed to expanding the set of choices considered possible.

Mentors apply different criteria to the assessment of students than teachers. They 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 ambassador. He was never reproved or reprimanded during apprenticeship for being tired because of the night work. On the contrary he could count on some kind of conciliation and encouragement:

> "*Dawid, he supports a sister, a brother and a disabled father. And he often used to (...) say: 'I'm so tired, I worked all night'. He has to earn the living. And you can see that he is honest– he is not a skiver, he just can't make it physically. He kept saying: 'I would like to come to work here'. He has been working somewhere for three month already and he received payment only for one month. And I said: 'I have been working here for 30 years and my salary was never late. This is a certain source of income. (...) 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 his performance during apprenticeship, but his honesty, which made him trustworthy. Mentor also appreciated the fact that he was determined and ready to work hard. In other words, he fitted the profile of the company perfectly, even though he was not what school teachers would call an exemplary student.

Mentors have also different attitudes towards students than teachers – they treat them more as adults than children. In some cases it results in creating bonds and pushing young people to perform better than usual. There is an example of a student who was known for disturbing others during apprenticeship. One of the employees decided to talk to him and ask him for a gentlemen's agreement that they will treat each other as grown-ups and he will stop disturbing:

> *"Adam, Adam must have ADHD. (...) 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] *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 which was read 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 to a certain extent a result of limited space to voice one's opinions, make them count in school. The programme is implemented in the traditional school context where the 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 (e.g. raising hands before asking question). There is little space for students to step beyond those hierarchical relations: they are expected to be active in these frames, show their competence and are evaluated according to these criteria. 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. Neither students nor parents are invited to discuss criteria of assessment according to which young people are evaluated, even if there are conflictual situations. These limitations are not problematised by any of the sides, they remain – what sociologists call – "unthinkable", "self-evident", "taken for granted".

Finally, the adaptation of preferences especially in terms of future employment might be reinforced by the focus of soft-skills workshops. They concentrate on how to sell oneself to

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

Conclusions

The programme "We empower you to learn" is implemented in the context of growing separation between private sector and vocational education and the crisis of vocational education. On the one hand, employers have limited influence on curricula and lists of taught specialisation, which are defined centrally and mechanisms of changing them are rigid. On the other hand, vocational schools are permanently underfunded, their equipment is often out-dated and level of teaching mediocre.

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 to 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. Firstly, a strong position of ENERGET and many resources at company's disposal made such a long-term and multi-dimensional initiative possible. Secondly, 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 possibility to work repeatedly with young people over a period of their three- or four-year educational cycle instead of short-term training that is provided by Public Employment Services in Poland.

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 could not have been provided by school on its own. 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 article 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 provided 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 and help them overcome negative thinking.

The application of CA supplemented by selected theoretical concepts of 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 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 upper secondary general and vocational exams or how many people attain higher education or find employment. What disappears 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. As a 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.

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Young people without upper secondary education qualifications

Learning to Work:

Young People's Social and Labour-Market Integration through Supra-Company Apprenticeship Training in Austria

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Abstract: The institutionalisation of supra-company apprenticeship training after its incorporation into the Vocational Education and Training Act in 2009 was a political signal to acknowledge a kind of third pillar next to school-based education and company-based apprenticeship training after compulsory schooling within the Austrian educational system. However due to the deep-rooted persistence of the dual system, it is still regarded as a "buffer" when the former fails to provide sufficient placements.

As the Supra-Company-Apprenticeship Training is part of active labour market policy students are still clients of the Public Employment Service – and not (just) young persons to be educated. Therefore, one main challenge providers of SCAT have to cope with is to prepare students on the one hand for their placement within the regular apprenticeship system and on the other hand to provide high-quality vocational training as a valuable offer. This janus-faced pedagogical treatment of students has a major impact on the students' development of capabilities for education, for work and for voice in a system with notably *transitory* character.

This contribution will first give a short overview of the case study's institutional embeddedness. After a brief introduction into the research methods used, we will outline the key findings of the case study from a capability perspective: First, the capability approach endorses *education* from two perspectives: Education is a capability to be achieved as such. Education also serves as a conversion factor for other capabilities. We will present findings for these two notions, including an analysis of the (two) crucial phases for choosing the educational pathway one has reason to value and a discussion of the training's empowerment dimension in terms of 'learning (how) to work'.

Second, turning to the capability for *work* we will on the one hand question the principal notion of work proposed by the capability approach and then lay down the youngsters' perception of 'decent work' in labour processes.

Finally, we will take a look at what opportunities for *voice* and for being able and 'free' to choose, aspire and follow the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to value do youngsters encounter before and while participating in SCAT.

Key words: Youth, labour market integration, learning processes, capabilities, supra-company apprenticeship training

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1. Introduction

This paper will take a closer look at young people's social integration into the 'world of work' via the scheme of supra-company apprenticeship training (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung*; SCAT) in Austria. The capability approach will serve as a grid to go beyond a mere labour-market integration perspective: Focusing on the capabilities for education, for work and for voice, we will scrutinise what conversion factors help (or hinder) youngsters to mobilise the resources at their disposal to develop these capabilities and choose an educational pathway or kind of work they have reason to value.

Before delving into the rich findings of the selected case study, we will first give a short overview of the case study's institutional embeddedness: How can the establishment of supra-company apprenticeship training (SCAT) be understood within the context of Austria's dominant vocational education regime, the 'dual system'? Who are the main institutional stakeholders and what perspectives on capability formation do they pursue?

After a brief introduction into the research methods used, we will outline the key findings of the case study from a capability perspective. What notions of the capabilities for work, for education and for voice did we come across within our case study? How are the capabilities (for work, education and voice) enhanced? What resources are available and convertible for developing these capabilities? What opportunities for capability formation and for being able and 'free' to choose, aspire and follow the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to value do youngsters encounter before and while participating in SCAT?

1.1 The emergence of SCAT

Austria's national educational regime has traditionally been oriented towards the 'dual system', which puts special emphasis on young people's vocational education.[47] Of all Austrian teenagers born in 1993, about 42.5% entered apprenticeship training upon

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[47] The Austrian educational regime is characterised by its twofold dimensionality after secondary school. Students can choose between upper secondary schools providing general or vocational education or an apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training takes place at two different sites, thus, apprenticeship training is also referred to as a "dual system of vocational training": company-based training of apprentices is complemented by compulsory attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices (*Berufsschule*). The focus is on the practical application of skills. Apprentices thus spend most of the time of their apprenticeship training in the "real environment" of a manufacturing plant or service provider, where training on the job takes place. Apprenticeship training is based on an agreement between the company and the apprentice, stating the conditions of training within the framework of a contract of employment.

completion of compulsory education. (Schneeberger/Nowak 2009, 1) However, uneven business cycles, economic restructuring processes towards a 'service economy'(in particular in cities such as Vienna), the concentration of apprentices in a small number of occupations, the decreasing willingness of Austrian enterprises to provide training facilities have led to a decrease in available company-based apprenticeships.[48]

One of the reform measures aimed at tackling these structural problems was the introduction of the 'Vocational Placement Guarantee' (*Ausbildungsgarantie*) in 2009, which included the incorporation of 'Supra-Company Apprenticeship Training' (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung*; SCAT) into the Vocational Education and Training Act. The aim of the Vocational Placement Guarantee is to supply a greater variety of apprenticeship places for those in need. Supra-company training facilities are financed by the Public Employment Service to allow young people to complete an apprenticeship in such a training centre ('SCAT I training'), even if the primary aim remains to integrate young persons into regular company-based apprenticeships. Supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a 'safety net' for those young persons who fail to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.

In 2009/10 16,314 places were financed for the SCAT programme overall (up from 10,213 in 2008/09), with a funding sum of 225 million Euro. (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2011, 60) SCAT thus is part of the active labour-market policy measures targeted at young people. Youngsters who are not able to find a company-based apprenticeship qualify for attending this training by registering as unemployed. SCAT is designed not to compete with company-based apprenticeship training but to supplement it, thus providing support for this traditionally important pillar of the Austrian educational system.

Currently, 7-8% of all apprentices are taught in a SCAT setting. (Bergmann et.al. 2011, 141) Evaluations of the impact of SCAT on the participants' labour-market performance show an overall positive labour-market integration for graduates, which, however, depends heavily on the regional labour-market situation. All SCAT programmes are rather high-threshold measures compared to other measures of the transition system. Thus, youngsters with pronounced learning difficulties or 'personal and social deficits' who fail to adapt to a tight schedule such as that of SCAT I are not absorbed and carried on by this training. One quarter of participants drop out of the measure without having found a placement in company-based apprenticeship training. Of those, more than 70% are either unemployed or drop out of the labour force altogether. (ibid, 111)

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[48] There is a 'structural' lack of apprenticeship places in Austria of at least 2,000 places per year (see Haidinger/Atzmüller 2011, 18-19).

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 hard. In addition to disadvantages such as the often low educational attainment of their parents (which youngsters 'inherit' but often overcome) and their allegedly insufficient German language skills, they frequently experience discrimination when applying for a company-based apprenticeship. (Gächter 2011, 7pp.) Other participants came from difficult social and family backgrounds and were said to have social competence deficits, manifested in a lack of work discipline, low frustration tolerance, etc. With respect to participants' educational performance, in particular weak German language and mathematical skills were evident. However, the SCAT programmes also cover youngsters who were simply 'unlucky' when looking for a company-based apprenticeship and took up the chance of an alternative training facility. (Dörflinger et.al. 2007, 23)

The training itself is very much organised in a school-like fashion. Groups of up to 15 apprentices per module learn the theory and practical skills of their jobs in workshops. Internships in companies are another key element of the educational programme. The programme also provides tutoring and socio-pedagogical support for apprentices who have learning difficulties or deficits in the vocational school accompanying apprenticeship training. The innovative aspect of this training is its supportive and workshop-like character which gives the young people more time and space to develop their occupational capabilities than company-based apprenticeship settings. The professional knowledge imparted by SCAT is regarded as on par with company-based training. (ibid, 143)

In Austria, the case study was conducted at "Jugend am Werk" (JaW; "Youth at Work"), which is a rather large provider of a range of labour market and vocational education and training programmes for young people as well as persons with special needs. JaW provides places for more than 1,500 people of different target groups; including some 250 supra-company apprenticeship training places in a range of craft, industry and service-sector professions.

The next section shall briefly outline the different (institutional and individual) perspectives on youngsters' capability formation in the Youth at Work setting. JaW's executive staff, trainers and social workers (meso level), the apprentices themselves (individual level) and the institutional setting JaW is embedded in, i.e. Public Employment Service (PES) stakeholders (macro level) here hold partly overlapping, partly contradictory points of view.

1.2 Different perspectives on capability formation in Youth at Work (JaW)

Supra-company apprenticeship training is provided and financed by PES funds, and potential participants need to be registered as unemployed or job-seeking. As participants' wages (*Ausbildungs-/Lehrlingsentschädigung*) are paid for by the PES, the measure is clearly part of labour-market policy. At the same time, it is run in a school-like mode, with the option – and expectation – for participants 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 persons to be trained or even educated. Interviews with stakeholders on all levels of JaW and with the youngsters themselves 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 of successful labour-market integration.

This latter objective is also taken up by many of the stakeholders implementing the SCAT scheme at JaW (meso level). At the same time, SCAT is a form of *vocational* training preparing participants for graduation in the end. It provides high-quality vocational training and education for young people who could not find a company-based apprenticeship. For some professions, the JaW apprenticeship programme even offers broader training than most companies can provide: while most companies today specialise in a very specific range of services and/or products and therefore cannot cover all aspects of a profession's profile, apprentices at JaW can acquire a wide range of 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[49]).

Still, the *main* target of the SCAT scheme remains preparing the apprentices for a company-based apprenticeship: at least from the point of view of the PES, JaW is not to become an alternative to traditional company-based apprenticeships. Much rather, it is a 'safety net' and the majority of enrolled youngsters should ultimately complete their apprenticeship outside JaW.

The transitory, 'safety-net' character of the measure is problematic from an organisational perspective since the provider's horizon of planning personnel, investment and financing is

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[49] The interviews with institutional stakeholders at JaW such as trainers or executive personnel are referred to as JaW_SH. For a more detailed description of research methods see Section 2.

determined by factors the institution cannot take influence on, such as the local demand for apprentices on the labour market. It is also critically viewed by the apprentices themselves: Many young people appreciate their apprenticeship at JaW and are conscious of its advantages whereas others feel that they just get a second-class education and do not take the training seriously but hope for redemption outside the institution.

2. Main research questions and research methods used

Bearing in mind these three levels of involvement at Youth at Work, the next sections will mainly focus on youngsters' opportunities for capability formation and for being able and 'free' to choose and aspire to the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to value. The research process was determined by the following research questions: What does capability for work and education and what does capability for choice and voice mean in the context of SCAT? What kinds of resources and conversion factors hamper or enhance these capabilities' formation?

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-working section, deputy general manager) were interviewed covering two clusters of professions[50]. In addition two group discussions with apprentices were conducted. All steps of the empirical research were crucial for developing an integrated picture of capability formation in the SCAT context. The following analysis is fed by findings and the interpretation of data from all phases of the empirical research.

We began our empirical research by conducting explorative and expert interviews with JaW management on various levels, with trainers and pedagogues. The aim of this explorative step was to get an insight into the logic and 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 principles applied are important external conversion factors that the youngsters have to struggle and cope with, and which foster the youngsters' personality development and capability formation to a greater or lesser extent.

Next, we conducted two group discussions with the apprentices themselves. The interviews were designed interactively with role play elements, brainstorming rounds and associative

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

methods. (Bohnsack et.al. 2010) The aim of these two sessions was to get an overview of the key issues and problems young people face when going through this kind of educational shaping and to look at collective patterns of orientation. Besides, we wanted to explore how the youngsters interact, how they relate to each other and which topics they find worthy of discussing when talking in peer groups about their experiences with teachers, learning contents or the training's time structure.

On the basis of the results of the group discussion, semi-structured interview guidelines were created for individual interviews with 18 apprentices[51]. 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 empirical findings will be analysed by looking at three dimensions of capability formation: the role of education as a capability to be achieved and as a conversion factor; the capability for work; and the process freedom and opportunity freedom to voice.

3. 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. We will also refer to this understanding of capability for education in section 5 when analysing what scope of process freedom and opportunity freedom to have particpants' opinion heard and considered and to choose can be achieved within the JaW educational setting.

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[51] The interviews with youngsters are referred to as JaW_Y1 to JaW_Y18 throughout the text.

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 both a capability and a conversion factor – shall optimally 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) In how far this quality approach is realised will be part of the case study's analysis.

3.1 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 crossroads 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* training in the SCAT programme and the reflection of its advantages and disadvantages from a youngster's point of view.

3.1.1 'Orientation period': informational basis, 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' in both institutional lingo and public discourse. The PES (Public Employment Service) is one of the major institutional stakeholders in charge of supporting young people's transition into employment or employment-related training. The youngsters interviewed perceived it as a rather inscrutable and rigid institution generally supplying useful information, however hardly tailored to youngsters' individual requirements and aspirations. Instead, the young people are expected to adapt to the institution's culture and to take up its proposals.

The transition phase is also strongly associated with failing school and, consequently, negative learning experiences. Interviewees expressed a profound dissatisfaction with teachers and the particular school they attended. "The teachers simply were a pain in my neck." (JaW_Y1) But what followed on from this obvious rejection frequently was not a deliberately chosen pathway but a period of questioning and an 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 wasn't right 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 a practical education – they would much rather need additional support to help them stay in school or need a 'break', a phase of reorientation, to reflect about themselves and their abilities – and maybe reformulate their wishes in order to allow them to choose an educational pathway they have reason to value.

Thus, first, social and institutional (PES) pressure to find a more or less adequate training option within a limited period of time stand in the way of a 'real freedom of choice' – even though the PES also provides useful information on possible education (and employment) trajectories.

Second, some youngsters (have to) choose a profession they actually did not want or plan to choose due to a lack of apprenticeship places in their initially desired profession. Here it is the unsatisfactory support of PES and its lack of time resources for extensive talks with youngsters and for preparing individually tailored counselling as well as the limited range and numbers of desired apprenticeship professions that hamper the youngsters' opportunities. Many interviewees would be ready to start any apprenticeship rather than spending 'too long' searching for an apprenticeship 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 youngsters' ideas and dreams can be discussed. Parents or older siblings provide the young person with relevant practical information about a profession (especially about their own profession). This of course provides a rather restricted scope for judgement – and is 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" (JaW_Y16, JaW_Y2) or being bored and to start pursuing socially valued activities, such as working, going to school or attending training, is an expression of *individual and collective disciplining*. Plomb (2000, 61), who conducted a study on the application, job/training search and initial work experiences of unemployed youngsters in France, speaks about the difficulty of youngsters in search of a career path to *justify taking or not taking a timeout* – "the emptiness, the lack of a comprehensible, visible and generally acknowledged activity is a heavy burden".

3.1.2 Opting for and sticking to SCAT

That youngsters' desires and hopes have not been yet settled is also revealed by the fact that 25% of those starting supra-company apprenticeship training drop out, mostly because they did not get the apprenticeship place they initially preferred. What is more: Although many of those interviewed believe that they took the right decision when beginning 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 favourite 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, as was suggested by one of the trainers interviewed at JaW.

SCAT provides an institutional setting designed to prepare the youngsters for the world of work outside a protective framework. This is not a banal exercise. The 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 of working life in SCAT. The apprentices tend to idealise the easygoingness of school time (which in many cases was not as easy-going as perceived in the aftermath) as a life of fun and easy living in stark contrast to their hard-working lives as apprentices today. "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 [Curriculum Vitae] you are not yet prepared to pursue." (Plomb 2001, 61) The youngsters have to re-invent themselves in new surroundings. They have to make sense of their doing which is not yet revealed to them. (ibid, 66)

What speaks against 'choosing SCAT' is the – still widespread – opinion that JaW only or mainly offers education and training for persons with special needs. The youngsters do not want to be perceived as 'handicapped' and clearly delimitate themselves from those who, from their point of view, are completely excluded and will never be able to become 'unmarked'. The youngsters both reject and reinforce the image of JaW as a place for those who are 'left over'. Rejection strategies, for example, include emphasising their productivity and their desire to 'prove' 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 experiencing and mastering the stress waiting outside.

One of the main issues the apprentices bemoaned 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 huge gap marks the apprentices as being less appreciated than those who had the power, luck or brains to take up a company-based apprenticeship. At the same time, most of the interviewees have a very high opinion of the quality of the training they are going through in terms of equipment, didactics and support. JaW is perceived as a place of structure, of stabilisation, of integration – however a temporary place: what will happen afterwards?

To sum up, the two critical phases for choosing the educational pathway the youngsters have reason to value, the 'transition period' on the one hand and the deliberate decision for a SCAT training on the other hand, are heavily influenced by social and instutional conversion factors and a lack of personal and particularly institutional resources hampering the "excercise of autonomy" (Walker 2005). A "real" freedom to choose – as will be also elaborated in section 5 when turning to the capability for voice in decision processes – is far away from the youngsters' ungergone experiences.

3.2 Education as a conversion factor

The second notion of education from a capability-approach perspective is its significance as a conversion factor for choosing a (life) trajectory one has reason to value. As a conversion factor – how 'empowering' is the SCAT training for the youngsters involved? What individual abilities to improve the youngsters' capacity to act are enhanced? We identified three main features of education as a means to adopt those capabilities the youngsters have reason to value – and those crucial for a possibly trouble-free integration into the world of work: the provision of an appropriate institutional support for learning and in social matters, the internalisation of 'secondary virtues', and the enhancement of 'constructive learning'.

3.2.1 Institutional support for learning and in social matters

SCAT is performed in a workshop setting with school-like organisation but practical contents. The young people appreciate the additional study support and especially the good preparation for the final apprenticeship exam as well as the socio-pedagogical support provided. Learning-friendly apprenticeship conditions imply a respectful, mutually benevolent and friendly relationship between trainers and apprentices where the young people feel free to make mistakes and ask questions. A good learning and working atmosphere, finding friends among the apprentices, and the feeling of being supported (by trainers/co-apprentices) if necessary are crucial factors for being able to unfold resources. One interviewee even talked about the apprenticeship 'peer group' (including the trainers) as her "second family" (JaW_Y1).

Of course, officially discriminatory behaviour of peers or trainers against others is not accepted. However, intervention in cases of discrimination is not easy. Despite social pedagogues providing conflict management, youth representatives standing in for the apprentices' interests and an open-door-policy by the local and central management, youngsters often feel left to their own devices when challenging discriminatory behaviour, particularly of trainers, who are in a structurally more powerful position.

For the apprentices, it is motivating if trainers respect them as *capable persons* (*not* in terms of their learning progress), conversely disrespectful treatment 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 ultimately of trust. Conversely, to be constrained to speak German is a form of non-usage of available resources. This prohibition impedes the positive perception and acknowledgement of the institution as a conversion factor of their resources and consequently the willingness to learn in such a surrounding.

3.2.2 Learning to labour

Shaping the youngsters' personalities and behaviour is not only accomplished by providing a supportive learning atmosphere. In course of the training youngsters succeed to a greater or lesser extent or fail to adapt to the requirements the world of work outside a protective frame work expects. Consequently, labour becomes more and more integrated into the youngsters' habits, routines and fantasies*. Their daily routines – and dreams – are structured newly and 'realistically' around working time and working issues. (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's the 'job'. You cannot change anything about it." (JaW_Y7)

Becoming 'normal' and adhering to norms required in working life necessitates the internalisation and the non-questioning of being disciplined – in terms of 'behaving properly', executing what is expected – and of being punctual. Punctuality is a key welcome behaviour as was expressed by institutional stakeholders on all levels of SCAT. This process of becoming used to being on time and the reflection of its importance is perfectly voiced in the following statement: "Punctuality is really important. Myself, I am not punctual." (JaW_Y17)

The youngsters become aware that when going through such a measure you receive something very much 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 "a 100%" (JaW_Y15), that he is even worth to be trusted with the responsibility for supervising an entire production process. His pride of his capacity to take on responsibility in a working arrangement is intertwined in his narrative with the worthiness of his doing – and being.

3.2.3 Constructive learning – how to learn

After having grasped conversion factors that deem important for the social integration and fitting of youngsters into the institutional logic and the institution's aims, we now want to take a look at learning processes themselves.

The motivation for learning and working was positively influenced by youngsters' chance of doing something productive, useful and tangible. This involves several features: Learning processes in apprenticeship training must imply the production of something visible and a useful outcome (1). The production process itself is not only physically or psychically tiring but also makes youngsters aware of their capacity to form and shape raw material into something of completely different appearance (2). The production of things for daily usage opens up immediate alternatives of agency and 'empowers' them in daily life – as professionals and as social agents. Youngsters not only learn for an abstract exam or for the commodification of their labour but for the application of their skills in daily life (3). Finally, taking on responsibility for entire production processes – their supervision and self-determined organisation – strengthens the motivation to learn and consequently enhances the development of capabilities (4). These four features of constructive learning shall be described in more detail:

First, this form of learning is defined as '*being productive*' in terms of *useful*: to produce something of value (for others) and for practical application. To accompany an entire production process and to have a final and useful output is seen as a very positive way of adopting a capability to – for instance – construct something. Conversely, the destruction of what has been constructed or repaired by the apprentices fosters quite sad images of their work products: "We 'repair' cars provided by MA48 [municipal waste management]. They are, so to say, taken from the scrapyard. After we've 'had' them, MA48 picks them up with a claw, dumps them into a container and makes small tin cubes out of them." (JaW_Y1) 'Unproductive doing' demotivates the youngsters to work "because whatever I construct is taken apart again. It's useless what I am doing. I don't produce anything. It's just practice I learn from. But it's useless, you cannot call that doing 'work', you can just call it 'learning'. What I make I dismantle again. It's 'production-free', that's simply demotivating, the whole motivation is gone." (JaW_Y2)

Second, it implies the deployment of your *senses*: The product in the end must not only be 'of use' but it also must be tangible. The motivation to learn, do and work stems from the fabrication of a formable product which changes its features, taste, smell and shape during the process of production. Many of the future cooks described production processes in fond detail and were impressed and proud of the transformation process they initiated and accompanied and of the creatively arranged products of their doing they could present.

Third, learning how to produce things of *daily usage* is a real – almost pure – capability. It opens up alternatives of agency in daily and working life: "We bake our own bread and we produce almost everything ourselves. We even make the pasta ourselves. We don't just open bags and empty them into the pot. (...) And imagine a restaurant runs out of pasta. There's no pasta and you can't buy it just like that. Then I have the chance to make it myself." (JaW_Y12) To be interested in forming this capability for work is closely connected to the conception of 'apprenticing a trade' and of learning a handicraft: "It's good to see that I can do something for people. Life without a plumber is impossible. Can you live without heating, without warm water, without a stove? No!" (JaW_Y7) Apprentices can thus show that they can contribute to society something that has value for themselves and for others. Providing others with know-how and suitable advice empowers the young person and can have a positive effect on his/her self-esteem. As the young people realize they can bring their own capacities into their future profession – such as their creativity or strength – their interest in distinct activities of the apprenticeship profession rises; many apprentices begin to appreciate the profession and develop a kind of passion for it.

Fourth, and as a consequence of the above mentioned points, doing something that makes sense with all your senses means that you are highly motivated not only to learn ('automatically') but also to *take on responsibility* for the production process. Becoming responsible for taking decisions throughout the production process and for its supervision implies – as an apprentice –becoming more autonomous from the trainer. SCAT apprentices frequently work on their own or in groups without constant and direct supervision. The fact that the trainers appreciate and trust their abilities raises their self-esteem and their motivation to learn: "I *love* it when we are two or three persons in the kitchen – without the boss [trainer] (…) we do our own thing … It's stressful between eleven and half past eleven, but that's the wicked thing about it!" (JaW_Y15)

The empowerment dimension of JaW's pedagogical approach to enhance the youngsters' capacity to act as self-confident but also 'adjusted' persons can be summarised as follows: First, the provision of institutional support for learning and in social matters including a respectful and non-discriminatory treatment and cooperation, is an incisive factor for the youngsters' social integration into training. Second, JaW's training prepares the youngsters for their labour market integration – this is an empowering and constraining excercise at the same time. Empowering it is because youngsters are educated for an 'autonomous' living in

terms of being self-supporting. Constraining it is because youngsters' habits and routines are newly transformed and stuctured around working issues and work ethics. Third, a from our point of view important empowerment dimension stems from the kind of vocational and practical education the youngsters are going through: the encouragement for participating in constructive in terms of productive, useful and tangible learning processes.

4. The capability for work: Options for choosing the work, doing and labour processes one has reason to value

We will now turn to the second capability to be examined. The capability for work is of particular interest in an educational setting, such as the supra-company-apprenticeship-training scheme, preparing explicitly for the 'world of work'. Before coming back to the 'constructive learning concept' laid down in chapter 3.2.3 as an important conversion factor for enhancing the capability for work, some principal thoughts about the capability for work shall be formulated. Furthermore, we will elaborate on the social function of the capability for work taking into account what 'work' signifies for youngsters in abstract terms. Finally, we will outline how the voice character of work – how work ideally shall be organised – is imagined by the young people interviewed.

Following Bonvin (2012), the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activity one has reason to value. He refers to work as labour, as paid work and asks what is perceived as a valuable activity or job. This notion of capability for work has to be related to the embeddedness of work in a society traversed by the accumulation of capital. Antagonist forces between labour and capital as well as power asymmetries feeding this antagonism may be an issue to be addressed or even challenged when promoting a "job one has reason to value" but never removed. We'd like to contrast this notion of the '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 particularly for young people more often a threat rather than a challenge.

Sketching '*constructive work and learning processes*' in the previous chapter, we wanted to show what doings and activities the young apprentices perceived as making sense, being productive and being a worthwhile proficiency to develop. What motivates them is producing things that are useful and 'important', that are 'here to stay', that are kept and that you can look at as a product of your doing. This notion of work is imparted by the particular kind of education – apprenticeship training – focusing on the development of skills and on learning a handicraft.

When youngsters think about work and a future job in *abstract terms*, two observations stand out. First, the interviews show that working itself is an important 'value' for the young people: From their point of view, it is (almost) always better to work than to be unemployed – even if the financial outcome is (almost) the same. Therefore, work has a very basic function in terms of personal well-being and is perceived as the main safeguarding factor against social exclusion. Additionally, the social function of work has to be considered: personal work experience is an important topic among friends: "You feel silly if you are unemployed because everybody talks about work. [If you are unemployed] you don't have a say." (JaW_Y2) Second, the internalisation of capitalist work ethics also plays a role and is expressed directly, for example: "Everybody who can work should work." (JaW_Y6) These ethics also imply that hard work pays off in financial terms or – the other way round – that you only earn good money if you are willing to work 'more' (than the average working time).

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' become apparent. Concretely, the youngsters are pooled in working groups, practice co-working and permanently swap roles in the labour process. Labour within the concrete labour process is divided, however tasks are shifted from day to day from person to person. A just division of labour from the youngsters' point of view implies that everybody should do everything (including the annoying tasks) and implicitly opposes a functional division of labour within the production process. Rather than the person who is 'best' specialising in a particular task, everyone should get the chance to learn everything and everyone should be allotted to unpleasant though necessary tasks.

What is more, the SCAT apprentices perceived 'abstract labour', which does not make immediate sense and or prove immediately useful to them, as well as industrialised production, where the production process itself cannot be observed, tracked and controlled, as 'alienated labour'. The youngsters also had a clear picture of what 'exploitation' of their labour means: they mentioned long working hours; physical and psychical stress and doing only annoying and repetitive work. By contrast, decent work included a good working climate; nice colleagues; having enough to do – "so that I am challenged in my work" (JaW_Y13); having "fun when working"– here again sensuality and 'enjoying' work is a crucial feature; and not working in unqualified jobs (such as a cleaner). Voicing your rights as a worker and standing up for these rights begins when rights "you are used to" (JaW_Y1) are jeopardised.

Practicing in internships can also motivate those youngsters to become part of the labour force, as some reported experiencing finally 'in real' the diversified tasks of their profession. What is more, they have experiences they can share with others, especially with their friends – most of whom are also apprentices in a company. This is a very strong factor of social inclusion. On the downside, sniffing the air of 'real' working life also foreshadows

their possibly monotonous deployment in the working process. One girl remembers her internship and puts it in stark contrast to the learning and working processes experienced at JaW: "When I did my traineeship in a canteen, they just had tinned food. I didn't see how to do things. And here we hardly ever take food from a tin." (JaW_Y12)

5. The capability for voice: opportunity freedom for choice and process freedom at JaW

The capability for voice must be contextualised with the other two capabilities for education and for work building the framework of interpretation for this case study. We have already discussed the restricted opportunity freedom in the so called 'transition phase', in choosing an educational pathway and life trajectory one has reason to value. At the same time we tried to outline that youngsters in this particular educational setting have the capacity and do develop a sense for judging what activities are and what pathway is worthwhile for their professional future. Following Bonvin (2012, 16) the capability for voice in young people's lives and educational trajectories relies on the availability of political resources (ability to constitute a collective body); the availability of cognitive resources (ability to communicate and argue, access to information, representative bodies); and available entitlements, i.e. de-commodification options or a reasonable fall-back position. Are these resources available and viable for the youngsters and what (kind of) process freedom and what (kind of) opportunity freedom do the youngsters encounter in the JaW setting?

In the last section we want, first, to come back to the principal opportunity freedom youngsters envisage when they stand at a crossroad of several pathways to continue. Next, we will turn to the question what resources and conversion factors the young people encounter or miss for realising the freedom to intervene in the daily schedule and organisation of this educational *and* labour market measure they are going through.

5.1 Opportunity freedom

First, the decision making process itself in the transition process from one (educational) institution to another (educational or labour-market) institution or to the labour market itself must be taken into account. How can a youngster judge his/her 'real' opportunities? How can he/she gather all information necessary to decide on one or the other pathway? How can he/she make the right decision, loaded with the expectations of maturity and responsibility?

Not surprisingly, *friends and peer group* do have an important impact on behavioural norms of the young people. The peer group is the doorman at the entrance into the world outside – but is it a 'collective body' of agency in this precarious phase?

Schittenhelm (2010, 95) refers to *collective status passages* between education and employment which young people experience when they have completed school. This phase of transition may be undergone collectively; peer groups do have an incisive influence on decisions about future educational pathways. However, due to the diversity of educational and professional decisions of colleagues/friends they may suddenly find themselves alone with their future, left over or trapped in a gap between two systems and the big responsibility to choose the right, future-oriented and most prosperous alternative. Having overcome this phase, their desire 'to choose' may be exhausted.

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 to fears of disorientation. In contrast, a limitation of searching processes in learning settings and the correction and supervision within these settings is connected with fostering learning capabilities.

Second, all youngsters should be adequately equipped to escape from the constraints of valueless training either through the real possibility, i.e. entitlement, to refuse the training or through the possibility to transform it into something they have reason to value. However, the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of 'getting lost on the street', becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living. As one interviewee puts it, "Most of those who are on the street have lost in their life. If I have such friends and join them outside at this time of the day and simply don't do anything but just botch things up then at some point I don't have any future anymore. (…) Some of those going through this measure have already been in jail. And this I don't want. You have this on your criminal record. And what can you do then? You can't do anything. You can go and clean toilets – that's all what is left for you to do." (JaW_Y2)

To sum up, opportunity freedom is limited by the fact that youngsters face major difficulties in judging their 'real opportunities' when being expected and actually socially coerced to choose deliberately and autonomously the most reasonable option for their professional future. 'Autonomy' is here to be interpreted as a a feature rather constraining than opening up a freedom to choose. What is more, the non-availability of entitlements in case of 'rather

prefering not to' (Melville 2002 [1856]) and the lack of a reasonable and eqivalent fall-back position are also factors hampering a real choice of what the youngsters have reason to value.

5.2 Process freedom: intervening in daily schedules

The concept of capability for voice also addresses the issue of process freedom: to which extent are (young) people allowed to express their wishes, expectations and concerns in collective decision-making processes and how can they make them count? (Bonvin 2012, 15)

The daily routine within supra-company apprenticeship training is determined by a fixed schedule consisting of theoretical and practical modules. This structure cannot be modified by the apprentices. It is not foreseen that youngsters going through this measure participate in its design. In addition, time management is very strict – in order to inure the youngsters to the required punctuality and discipline in the 'real' working world – encompassing a very early start at 7.15 a.m. and rather short lunch breaks. What the apprentices can sometimes influence are their concrete activities: they can suggest doing practical work instead of studying theoretical modules or vice versa. Although several apprentices criticise these strict time requirements, they see little or no need for a change in terms of a more 'democratic' way of determining their daily time structure. Two reasons for this are particularly interesting: First, several apprentices feel that their trainers do try to consider their wishes if possible. The trainers know what is 'best' for their pupils. Following Ley and Düker (2012) in their contribution to this Collective Volume this attitude can be interpreted in the following way: "[the youngsters] comply with the decisions and actions of these authority figures and do not expect that their needs and requirements are a legitimate basis for social work interventions." Second, many youngsters are simply not interested in intervening: This attitude might have to do with their perception of SCAT as a temporary solution on their way into a company-based apprenticeship. Another aspect is that many apprentices generally sense and experience having few choices. This may be explained by the fact that they are (continuously) told – by their parents, the media, PES counsellors, etc. – that they have to adapt their dreams to 'what is possible', which leaves few ways open on how to imagine and organise life, especially when it comes to learning and their (future) professional life in a competitive society.

Youth representatives, directly elected representatives of the apprentices, are an institutionally provided resource for realising the capability for voice. Often however when elected they do not know how to 'fill' the post, and it was bemoaned by the trainers several times that the youngsters do not (yet) know what it means to 'take on responsibility'. Expressed demands (such as the right to smoking breaks) are not taken seriously, even though these are topics that affect the youngsters personally, directly and immediately and stand a good chance of being successfully implemented. Other – more 'profound' –

requirements, such as more space, longer breaks, more excursions, better equipment, are hopelessly unrealistic in their realisation. The fact that many interviewed apprentices perceive participation as impossible or only "seemingly possible" within SCAT could be interpreted as a consequence of missing participation possibilities as citizens in society in general.

6. Conclusions

JaW is a measure standing at the crossroads of labour-market and educational policy[52]. This location has various implications for the capability formation of education, of work and of voice. The article aimed at identifying the main aspects of what resources and conversion factors support or impede the development of these three capabilities in a supra-company-apprenticeship training scheme.

In terms of the capability for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. The experience of working with and shaping material (of high quality) is an important and motivating learning process for the youngsters.

Second, trainers, both as teachers and as persons appreciating or depreciating youngsters' abilities and resources are crucial factors for enhancing or impeding youngsters' capabilities. They are seen as positive role models, as professional craftspersons, as those with whom youngsters have to struggle and to argue about their own learning process (and skills) and their acknowledgement. Conversely, they can also be perceived as negative social figures reinforcing the distance between the established institution and the aspiring youngster.

As a third aspect, the 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 individually organised non-dedicated 'creative' time. 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 as a prerequisite of the capabilities for learning and work. On the one hand, from the very beginning of the training the youngsters are trusted with creative and responsible tasks, however supervised. On the other hand, due to the tight institutional and pedagogic scope

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[52] See also Haidinger/Atzmüller (2011) for the institutional setting and implementation of the supra-company-apprenticeship training in Austria.

set by SCAT, the individual strengths of the youngsters are only marginally taken up, acknowledged and developed.

Thinking about the capability for work needs a critical reflection of what work actually is. Possible answers are diametrically opposed: Does 'being capable for working' mainly mean preparing a young person for the labour market or does it imply teaching her/him to be proud of what he/she is DOING – of what the person is able to create? In the first case, the focus of the training will be on how discipline (and self-discipline) can be encouraged among the youngsters in terms of secondary virtues and principal 'work ethics', but also by providing psycho-social and learning support to sustain a searching young person's process of maturation into a valuable worker in a company. At the same time, SCAT is a space for 'practical capability formation' and the training very much endorses the quality of work and of production processes.

'Capability for voice' encompasses opportunity freedom and process freedom. SCAT itself – in terms of process freedom – offers little scope for voice and choice. It is a thoroughly structured system, with little room for manoeuvre to develop self-determined and freely chosen capabilities. In general, the youngsters feel that they have little opportunity freedom in their lives– in terms of raising their voice as citizens but as well concerning more concrete issues, such as freely choosing a particular educational pathway. Youngsters should get the chance and time to find and choose an educational pathway they have reason to value. Admittedly, finding the appropriate pathway is hard to achieve in view of the external pressure from society, labour-market institutions, peer group and family.

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Establishing Caseness, Institutional Selves and "realistic perspectives" - A German Case Study on the Transition from School to Work

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Abstract: This case study will focus on the institutional and normative framework of the German transition sector and one of its programmes - namely 'Competence Agencies' - its organisational forms and logics of action and the local context they operate in. Main questions will address their identification of problem groups and constructing 'troubled selves' 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 and an illustration of the pedagogical programme (chapter 1). Basic research questions are outlined and the research methods are described (chapter 2). The modelling of the object of research embeds it analytically into the current social policy agenda (chapter 3). Three empirical findings are highlighted: Beginning with the questions of which pedagogical space is constituted and how 'caseness' is established, 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 provides a link between an institutional and a subject-oriented level (chapter 4). The three capabilities for work, education and voice are the basis for an analytical review of the case study and the conclusion (chapter 5).

Key words: Vulnerable Youth; Vocational Education and Training; Case Management; Institutional Selves; Realistic aspirations

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1. Setting the Scene

We start with a short framing of the current situation in the vocational training sector and the educational system in Germany, which are the main contexts determining the position of and conditions for vulnerable youth in the transition from school to work. We contend that the current situation is characterised by three main problems: (a) The basis of the German transition sector, the general four-tier school system[53], has been repeatedly criticised for the early selection for secondary schools and the resulting lack of equal opportunities. As a consequence, social inequalities are not compensated but reinforced in educational and vocational settings (cf. for example Solga/Rosina 2009). (b) 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 for 100 applicants (cf. BMBF 2010). Thus, there is a lack of 200.000 training positions in Germany (Solga 2011a). Furthermore, according to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court from 1980, the constitutional right to free choice of employment is only guaranteed as of a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants (cf. BVerfGE 55, 274). We argue that this constitutes a systematic injustice, the causes of which are to be found in the structure of the transition sector. This injustice severely limits the possible effects of institutional and pedagogical efforts. (c) Furthermore, disadvantaged youths in particular are facing an increased risk of unemployment and poverty in later life (Solga 2011b). This is why Heike Solga coins the term of „certificate poverty", where young people not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education are in a vulnerable position as well as those 15% of young adults who can not obtain a training position in the course of their transition process (cf. Solga 2011b: 415).

These three aspects – inequality in the school system, insufficient training positions on the apprenticeship market and the aspect of "certificate poverty" – are not only characteristic for the situation (and the expansion) of the transition sector, they are relevant to all efforts within this context. Again, the question arises if the established institutions and organisations reproduce inequalities rather than reducing them.

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[53] The school system is usually differentiated into Hauptschule (lower secondary school), Realschule (secondary school) and Gymnasium (grammar school). In addition, about 7.5% of young people do not manage to get any lower secondary school certificate ("early school leavers"), and 54.5.% of those come from schools for special needs (Förderschule, not exceeding lower secondary school). This is also one of the reasons why Gomolla and Radtke talk about a four-tier system and highlight the "institutional discrimination" of this type of school (2007).

From the perspective of the Capability Approach, these structural contexts are most important in terms of the real opportunities they provide or withhold. In the following, we want to advocate an understanding of inequalities that does not only focus on the allocation of material goods and the classification of status hierarchies. Inequalities are not only relevant in respect to unequal resources and commodities, but are to be understood as constraints and enablements of the life young people want to realise and of having access to objects, relationships and practices they appreciate and have reason to value. Insofar, poverty is not merely understood as material poverty, but as the absence of capabilities (cf. Otto/Scherr/Ziegler 2010: 150). In this perspective, educational interventions into the life conduct of individuals are relevant to questions of inequality and vulnerability and thus to social justice.

Capabilities - in this case study - are regarded as a relational concept, that is a concept that has to be explored 'between structure and agency', as real opportunities and the dispositions to make use of them to be able to realise one's concerns are both preconditions for capabilities. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in. However, before the process of realising valued beings and doings, aspirations are formed and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where such realisation might occur. Hence, we scrutinised the context in which capabilities might be realised, based on the assumption that institutions in the transition from school to work should act as enabling structures. This also means that capabilities 'themselves' where not identified in the course of the research. Our perspective is on 'talk', not on 'action' and we took a retrospective (ex-post) perspective so that decisions in action could not be grasped.

Furthermore, it turned out that sometimes it is hard for young adults to reflect on what they value, on their social positioning as the major predictor of life chances and especially on the desirability of different options which are all essential preconditions for moving beyond functionings, that is valuable beings and doings that are already realised, and towards capabilities, that is the enhancement of options for a flourishing life that might be chosen by the individual. Major reasons for this barrier to the enhancement of capabilities could be found in the almost exclusive focus of the institution – contrary to its conceptual underpinning – on the functioning for work (in terms of the labour market). On the other hand, this hints at the basic question of agency in the Capability Approach, which is still in need of more clarification. In this respect, we want to emphasise the concept of institutional selves, which could be a contribution to embedding the concepts of agency into the Capability Approach. Agency should not just be regarded as a 'rational choice' to be taken by individuals who are on a level playing field. Rather, the different individual preconditions for being able to reasonably choose and the provided 'pedagogical space' need to be taken into account, that is a space in which aspirations and desires are reflected upon and formed.

After illustrating some empirical findings from the case study, we tackle the question of how capabilities for work, education and voice can be formulated as an evaluative framework and as goals for interventions in the transition sector.

2. Research methods & main research questions

The research was designed to answer the question of what kind of (pedagogical) space was provided by the institution and the social work professionals by employing expert interviews. Document analysis was applied in order to provide contextual knowledge and embed the programme into social policy agendas. Secondly, it aimed at capturing a subjective account on the formation of aspirations (interviews with young people). In this article, we want to especially focus on the expert interviews, which see the interviewees as representing a specific field of knowledge. Thus, the professionals are the 'hinge' connecting policy and practice as they have to 'translate' objectives of social policy to the lives of individuals and interpret what they could mean with regard to specific cases.

In our broader case study (for details see Düker/Ley 2012) we focused on a 'Local Transition Management Institution' (LTMI) in a middle-sized Western German town which serves as a single point of contact ('one-stop-shop') for young people with 'difficulties' in the transition from school to work. The LTMI's two basic aims are firstly the creation of a coherent local structure of support, and secondly the constant and conceptually coherent guidance and individual counselling of young people in their transition process. In the following, we want to focus on one specific programme situated in this LTMI, namely the 'Competence Agencies'. We contend that the concept of transition management and this programme represents one main strand of policy answers to youth unemployment and is characteristic for newer ways of dealing with this social problem in the German transition regime in that it is committed to 'steering from a distance'; both with respect to the local transition sector (similar to the idea of 'care management' in health services) as well as with respect to the individual case, implying an emphasis on personal responsibility and a 'pedagogisation' of social services.

Focusing on this programme, several (basic) research questions can be specified: (a) How is the current policy context translated into institutional settings? What kind of social policy space is created for and through these institutions? (b) Which pedagogical space is constituted in these programmes? How is 'caseness' established[54], maintained and

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[54] '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

transformed? (c) Who is adressed in which manner? What can be said, what is (not) problematised? (d) How are counselling settings arranged and intentions, aims and goals (i.e. integration into the labour market) of counselling (institutionally) processed and (interactively) negotiated?

3. No youth left behind? – Embedding Competence Agencies into the social policy agenda

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

Competence Agencies target young people under the age of 25. Established in 2002 as a pilot project, there are now over 180 of such agencies in Germany. They are financed by the European Social Fund through the Federal Government, but are locally adapted to the situation in every municipality and integrated into the local transition management institution(s). The Competence Agencies are clearly oriented towards the rationale behind child and youth welfare services incorporating modern social work methods, mainly case management. This rationale includes forming a 'working alliance', which is based on the agreement between social worker and client about goal and counselling tasks of the intervention and explicitly includes the personal bond that develops between them.

Competence Agencies are supposed to be a 'guide' through the transition sector (with its many commercial, half-commercial and non-commercial actors) for young people.
According to the Federal Ministry, the mission statement of Competence agencies is to:

> *"…support particularly disadvantaged young people in finding their way into an occupation and into society. They offer help for those who cannot - or cannot anymore - be reached through the existing system of interventions for the transition from school to work. Contact persons locate young people and jointly agree on an individual support and qualification plan. The social worker then guides the realisation of these plans. They accompany the young people on a long-term basis and involve their families and personal context. (…) The goal is to enable them to lead an independent life" (BMFSFJ 2012, transl.).*

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consequence a subject with its own life story and specific problems is transformed into a case, which can then be worked on (White 1999).

Competence Agencies combine streetwork and networking processes to gain access to young people with providing long-term support and counselling on their work orientation and transition into work. They act as guides through competence testing, case management and counselling. Many concepts of these agencies point out that this provides an opportunity to tailor interventions towards individuals, instead of trying to fit young people into pre-existing interventions. This is facilitated through contracts that are supposedly voluntary, with the Competence Agencies "offering help" and young people themselves taking the lead. Furthermore, their "families and personal context" are involved, so it seems not just to be about labour market related skills, but life conduct in general. Therefore, young people aged 15 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, case management should be about "individual career and life planning leading to labour market integration through comprehensible steps." This also implies that, although the measures should be tailor-made, the goal is the 'primary' labour market. Further on, the concept points out:

> *"Competence Agencies target especially disadvantaged young people who 'got lost' after school on the way to their vocation and who can hardly be reached by the different social support systems, viz. (vocational) school education, active labour market programmes and communal youth welfare." (BMFSFJ 2012, transl.)*

On this conceptual level it becomes obvious that a clear notion of a defensive social policy is put forth, addressing the danger of young people getting lost or being unprovided for ("Down, but not out"). This on the one hand reflects the idea of "no youth left behind" (quite similar to the idea of "no child left behind" in North American or "every child matters" in European child welfare; i.e. Garrett 2009). On the other hand, the idea (and sometimes myth) of a pedagogical feasibility to solve these (structural) problems on the individual level is purported. In this context, the issue of 'certificate poverty' plays a major role for the Competence Agencies: They are not meant to be an intervention themselves, but steer cases from a distance and network existing measures. As a consequence, formal qualifications cannot be obtained, which severely limits their scope of agency in terms of labour market integration – although it is not clear how adequate jobs could suddenly be created and made available to young people even if the had higher qualifications. The lack of formal qualifications and hence concentration on the more pedagogical (people changing) aspects of interventions is a major feature of most measures in the transition sector.

The risk of young people 'getting lost' is one of the dominant problematisations in this context legitimising the intervention on a social policy level. Accordingly, case management in the Competence Agency is also mandated to monitor the structural demand for

transitional measures on a municipal level and establish new interventions if necessary. 'Getting lost' can thus be seen as a complex and demanding problematisation social work has to react to.

As also stated in the concept, this programme aims to "empower young people for an independent conduct of life" which does not directly and at any cost lead to a school qualification or vocational training. Here, a clear notion of pedagogical premises and an explicit 'life-first approach' – in contrast to a purely labour market-oriented 'work-first approach' – are advocated. Nevertheless, in the expert interviews, the (bureaucratic) diagnostical terms of a "lack of apprenticeship entry maturity" or "multiple placement handicaps" are often emphasised and the professionals turn to a clear notion of integration into the labour market (which points to a work-first approach). The "lack of apprenticeship entry maturity" or the "multiple placement handicaps" are based on ascriptions from the perspective of the labour market, leading to a reappraisal of the dynamic correlation of ascription and personal growth. As was also stated in the expert interviews, this programme is not meant to be general life coaching, but remains job oriented counselling. Insofar, this programme is neither fully driven by a life-first nor a work-first approach. Furthermore, the question has to be raised whether and how the balance between a work-first and life-first approach is held in individual counselling. As in our opinion the conceptual relationship between these two is crucial for the question of how capability enhancement is supported by the institution, we will elaborate on this in more detail in the following chapter.

4. Empirical Findings

The empirical findings are condensed into three aspects: Beginning with the questions of which pedagogical space is constituted and how caseness is established, maintained and transformed (4.1), the issues of identity work and institutional selves within theses programmes are pointed out (4.2). Finally, the handling and negotiation of "realistic perspectives" is a crucial point within this work and a link between the institutional and individual levels (4.3).

4.1 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). People sustaining technologies attempt to prevent or retard deterioration in the personal welfare or well-being of clients; an example is the use of income maintenance programmes by municipal social services. Lastly, people changing technologies aim directly to alter clients' personal attributes to improve their opportunities and well being. These technologies include, for instance, psychotherapy or pedagogical and social work interventions.

Although these three dimensions cannot be exclusively assigned to specific organisations – rather, they converge in every social institution – the predominant working mode of the Competence Agency is people processing. In their own conception they call themselves "pilots or guides through the widespread transition system". After the assessment, the process of people changing is transferred to an intervention that is usually at the same time pedagogical and labour market oriented. The further development of the case is then monitored and evaluated by the case manager, who comes in again if modifications or changes in other programmes are needed.

When taking a closer look at people processing in the Competence Agency, it can be divided into the aspects of establishing, maintaining and transforming the case. Pedagogical aims are embedded into these processes to varying degrees such that Hasenfelds aforementioned 'technology' of people processing is not merely bureaucratic treatment, but always includes the reference to young adults' aspirations, desires and preferences. Hence, people processing is not a technology in the sense of a predetermined programme, but part of a negotiated order constituting a 'pedagogical space' in which young people themselves take part in constructing and managing their case.

Each of the social workers has about 100 cases in their databank, of which 40 are active cases and 15-20 cases demand more intensive attention (weekly contact). People processing starts with securing access to hard-to-reach young people based on an initially unspecified "need for help":

> „there are enough of those without support still scurrying about in X-town who would never go somewhere of their own accord and say help, I need help" (Marie, 72-74).[55]

After reaching them, they are offered long-term support (up to three years or even more) and counselling. A support plan is set up that regulates rights and responsibilities of all parties. This support plan encompasses more than work-oriented goals which is also crucial for the legitimation of the Competence Agency as a whole:

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[55] The interview partners are anonymised, the audio recording of the interviews have been transcribed,line numbered and translated into English by the authors; interviewers' interjections are shown in brackets.

„just to show everyone that we do good and successful work (hm) which cannot be evaluated simply through successful placement statistics (yes yes), success means something different for us (yes) [laughing] (Björn, 1356-1368).

Here, a demarcation is jointly drawn by interviewee and interviewer which creates a distance from societal demands and problematisations, namely the political fixation on placement figures. These are not completely rejected as indicators of successful work, but rather are relegated to the background and are not seen as the primary goal of the Competence Agency.

Bernd Dollinger offers a theoretical perspective on this common way of constructing cases in social work: „Social-pedagogical action entrenches in its clients the idea of a general legitimacy of the social order by pedagogically translating and flexibilising regulations and behavioural imperatives of superordinate institutions" (Dollinger 2011: 232, transl.). For the social workers, this translation and flexibilisation is a central characteristic of their work:

„Interviewer: So, this was also my impression that you are really pedagogically-minded, in a positive sense of course (laughing), so to speak…
Marie: That is indeed the case and the project Competence Agency really works pedagogically in contrast to the other colleagues, because they do a more pure counselling presenting facts. Of course they also look at what fits, but we also do this social-pedagogical work which is also important because if you do not solve the problem of the youngster somehow, you cannot look towards a job, an apprenticeship or whatever, that just doesn't work, their head is always full of other things" (Marie, 659-670).

In this longer quote, the self-conception of the Competence Agency is presented in a nutshell: It is about more than placement figures, namely about pedagogical relationship building in addition to the more prosaic, issue-oriented 'pure' vocational counselling. This perspective includes solving young people's problems in terms of life conduct, but at the same time, wage labour and apprenticeships remain the backdrop to this work on the individuals life conduct. To this end the "social-pedagogical work (…) is ***also*** important".

Taking a closer look at the case work itself, this professional demonstrates (when asked for a typical counselling process) an idea of people processing with its dimensions of establishing and processing caseness.

„ok in the first counselling session, at least this is the way I do it, mostly I look at, it's like somebody is sent because of a recommendation by someone or he already knows us and somebody comes and makes an appointment. Well, and then in principle the first counselling session is a bit about clearly determining what happened up to this point, and what brought this about and what does the adolescent want ehm what are his ideas and then I already end the first meeting" (Peter, 797-803).

First of all, this description begins with the constitution and establishment of the emerging case. The reason for their presence is clarified - mostly, the person is known and referred by other actors in the wider social support system -, first information is gathered and the case trajectory is reconstructed, notably including failures and breakdowns within the transition process. Within the next counselling interviews, a formalised case management logic emerges, characterised by a detailed anamnesis, a self-assessment by the young people complemented by an assessment by others and a process of care planning.

In respect to maintaining the case, "stabilisation" is seen as a central pedagogical aim in the Competence Agency.

> *The young adults just had extremely bad school experiences and it is difficult to lead them back and as I said before, stabilisation is the first thing that has to happen. They have to learn to be punctual in the morning, to appear there at eight, half past eight and to sit through a whole day, which they all don't manage (Marie 229-232).*

The issue of 'stabilising' their clients in the long run in terms of minor virtues (such as punctuality, reliability, discipline) points to a general problem that makes the 'working alliance' between client and social worker fragile: Its primary limit is the motivation of the young people, which is often emphasised as the basic condition of working with them (lack of motivation might also be a 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 point in time you have to say, ehm the adolescent does not want to be counselled by me anymore, the case is being closed for now" (Björn, 941-946).*

Although support by the Competence Agency is voluntary, understanding the relevance of the need for help is a necessary condition. "Troubled selves" have to be constructed, processible problems have to be identified and "untroubled selves" have to be opposed as an ideal type (Gubrium/Holstein 2000, see below).

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. Doing the right thing and being the right person out of one's own volition is the most important aspect of being an 'untroubled self' and a central precondition for the identification of capabilities. A 'pedagogical space' precisely consists in eliciting these volitions:

> *„I always try to give the young people the feeling they can decide for themselves and it only works like this, if I would just present them with something and say 'You have to do this', that doesn't work" (Marie, 989-932).*

It is noteworthy however that this is not only an ethical argument in the sense of not forcing anyone to live a life they do not want to live. Rather, voluntariness also has a functional dimension: Orienting and regulating young people's transitions 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.

Counselling with its principles of voluntariness and respect for the autonomy of the consulter works on the knowledge young people have about themselves. To this end, knowledge producing methods are applied such as the obligatory competence testing at the first meeting. This is pedagogical knowledge as it is not merely about facts about the outside world, but about what the subject should know about itself to be able to act accordingly. The results of such testing are in turn processed pedagogically, as knowledge which can not be standardised and applied technologically, but is used for reflection on life plans and aspirations:

> *"or they have completed a longer internship and so on, and it is clear for him what he wants to do, then I don't need a Geva-test[56]. 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 about what to do with their life are imprecise. At the same time, it is always the institution that decides which wishes, plans and aspirations are to be worked on. The participatory dimension is central for this way of governing young peoples' lives: As Stefanie Duttweiler (2007: 269) has pointed out with regard to the ideal of counselling, it would be irrational to not align one's actions to knowledge that has been produced in a voluntary and open-ended discourse.

As could be shown so far, institutional and professional processes precede and frame the space for biographical reflexivity of the young adults as well as their aspirations within the counselling setting. However, as could also be seen, constructing the case in a pedagogical intervention indispensably includes the construction of the client and the production of pedagogical knowledge to this end. In the following chapter, we want to go deeper into this issue while at the same time retaining the institutional perspective.

4.2 Institutional Selves – Who is addressed in which manner?

The Capability Approach focuses on the possibilities of individuals to realise what they reasonably value. Accordingly, institutions of social work are ideally designed to offer a framework in which young adults can orient themselves in terms of forming and critically

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

reflecting their conception of the 'good life' (practical reasoning) and where they can 'translate' their concerns, aspirations, desires and needs into 'realistic life plans' and concrete steps and actions. The concept of biographical reflexivity seems to be adequate in this context, where the genesis of the individual biography and subjectivity are seen as a starting point for pedagogical 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 interactionist 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. one able to pursue a 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. Insofar it is a characteristic of pedagogical fields to attribute and label persons with a deficit that can be removed through learning processes. With this addressing of the person and the following identity work, new and specific options (of people processing and changing) are evoked.

In the context of taming aspirations, another basic problem in the view of the social workers is young people's unidimensional fixation on a specific aim like a school leaving certificate, an apprenticeship or gainful employment:

> „that is a very very rigid systematic, systemic perspective somehow, right, it works like this and not any other way and [bang] and then one has to crack that open, these thought patterns which many of them have internalised (hm), through school and also through their parents" (Björn, 771-774).

This citation emphasises the ambivalence of counselling within the transition process. "Nonproductive" aims and perspectives (here the fixation on specific aims) have to be broken up. New forms of reflexivity have to be anchored ("cracking thought patterns") and therefore, new possible courses of action can be established to accomplish what young people "really need" and even "desire". These new orientations mostly involve less pay and recognition, hence the young people need to be 'cooled down' to become an untroubled self, which very often takes the form of confronting them with 'reality' (see 4.3):

> „as I said before, at first you have to the basis, and then of course to jointly work on the self-conception of the individual, meaning which conceptions has the, does the person develop himself and then to link this to reality (hm) is it feasible (hm) that is to say to always clarify that is, a lot of things are feasible but not everything can be realised immediately, meaning to clarify the process again and again, (yes yes) that it needs a certain period of time to get there" (Peter, 840-847).

This idea of "jointly working on the self conception" points to the relevant aspect of oscillating between a troubled and an untroubled self. However, constructing troubled selves can be problematic when the "link to reality" and the existing resources and commodities ("is it feasible") are seen as indissoluble and thus the client has to be adapted to the current opportunities instead of widening their possibilities.

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 the professional task to reflect on these labelling processes and the underlying mechanism of social inequality needs to be institutionally embedded into everyday practice.

4.3 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 reflected in the topic of 'realistic perspectives'. Within the interviews, experts often describe young people as:

- *evaluating themselves in an "unrealistic" manner (Björn, 872),*
- *as being "unrealistic because they don't have any idea of the demands in the working world" (Peter, 534f.),*
- *having an "unrealistic conception of the labour market" (Björn, 922f.)*
- *"and one has to see, what is fitting to the youth and was is realistic" (Marie, 1275f.)*

These 'realistic perspectives' are adaptable to many dispositions exhibited by young people, as in the perspective of the social workers, it is not them who morally demand a change of attitudes and behaviour, but reality itself demands these changes, which can hardly be argued with. They are also multi-faceted as they have to be aligned to the self-concept and to the demands of the apprenticeship and labour market.

The code of 'realistic perspectives' can be read in two directions: in a positive version as the creation and support of a biographical reflexivity - or in CA terms as a condition for practical reasoning. In a negative reading it could be seen as a form of adaptive preferences (Steckmann 2008).[57]

In a negative interpretation, individual reflexivity is transformed through institutional practices with the aim of aligning individual aspirations with institutional demands. In this respect, aspirations and opportunities are curtailed by the adaptation to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of "adaptive preferences". As Otto/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 ones' preferences to prevailing circumstances is inevitable (unless 'pure', inborn aspirations, desires and preferences are presupposed), they might legitimate inequalities and suffering and potentially provoke passive suffering and a further curtailment of the capacity to act.

Nevertheless and despite the aforementioned aspects, there is a positive reading of 'realistic perspectives', which can be defined as necessary biographical reflexivity or in terms of the Capability Approach as "practical reasoning" (Nussbaum 2001: 42): "Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life." This entails "protection for liberty of conscience" and the negotiation of

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[57] Here, a reference to the concept of 'cooling out' is useful as well (cf. Goffman 1952, concerning the transition from school to work: Scherr 1997: 164ff; Walther/Walter/Pohl 2007). Within a "process of redefining the self" (Goffman 1952: 5), it has remarkable consequences for the client (called "the mark" by Goffman). "For the mark, cooling represents a process of adjustment to an impossible situation – a situation arising from having defined himself in a way which the social facts come to contradict. The mark must therefore be supplied with a new set of apologies for himself, a new framework in which to see himself and judge himself. A process of redefining the self along defensible lines must be instigated and carried along; since the mark himself is frequently in too weakened a condition to do this, the cooler must initially do it for him" (ibid. 5).

pedagogical aims and interventions. Corresponding to this, the CA emphasises the relevance of the "informational basis of judgements of justice" (IBJJ), which is in large part negotiated in counselling processes. The IBJJ is defined as "the set of information that will be considered as relevant when assessing a person, be it a worker, a welfare recipient or any other member of society. The IBJJ constitutes the yardstick against which people, their behaviours, wishes, beliefs, etc. are assessed and considered as legitimate or illegitimate. In the capability approach perspective, the selection of the informational basis should not be the prerogative of the government, public administration, experts, managers or shareholders" (Bonvin 2012: 12).

5. Reframing the case study through the three relevant capabilities

The aforementioned analysis already gives an indication of the conditions for what could be understood as capabilities in this particular context. Within this chapter, we examine three capabilities: (1) the capability for work, (2) education and (3) voice and thus reframe the empirical findings in the terms of the CA.

5.1 Capability for work

If we follow Martha Nussbaums reasoning, it is a governmental responsibility to secure the opportunity to live a dignified and flourishing life for all citizens. Everyone should among other things be provided with "Control over one´s environment". This capability includes: "having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others … in work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers" (Nussbaum 2001: 42). Therefore, "the main objective of public action in the field of welfare should not be to put people back to work at all costs (i.e. a functioning), but to enhance their real freedom of choice with regard to the labour market." (Bonvin 2009: 2) In our view two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of work.

(a) The dilemma of orientation within the employment-centred transition sector

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. 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.

(b) The unanswered question of what "good" work means on all levels

Within all interviews with stakeholders, professionals and clients, we asked for their idea of "good and meaningful work". Mainly, the response was silence, irritation, perplexity or just a questioning look. This circumstance indicates that a normative orientation - and institutional reflection on what 'good work' should and could be - is missing within the transitional sector. It shows that placement is the overriding concern and ideas of and aspirations for valuable work are not developed. The aforementioned normative yardstick of the Capability Approach in terms of work could provide an appropriate orientation in this context.

5.2 Capability for education

Even though the emphasis on education as an end in itself has been stated many times by scholars working in the framework of the Capability Approach, a sharp definition of the capability for education is hard to find. The conceptually important difference between capabilities and functionings is stressed throughout, placing the essential weight on each individual's "freedom to choose one kind of life rather than another". "However, the ability to exercise freedom may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach." (Sen 1989: 55) Therefore, in the words of Melanie Walker: "A just education would promote a good life constituted by what is reflectively good and valuable to individuals and communities" (Walker 2010: 913). In our view, two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of education:

(a) The inequality of the educational system and the aspect of "certificate poverty"

This case study concerns interventions on a municipality level that promise to prepare youngsters whose educational achievements in compulsory school are regarded as not sufficient and who have no upper secondary graduation that would grant them access to further education. Even preconditions for a graduation seem to be lacking in the eyes of providers and policy consultants. In this view, the youth in question have all "lost their track" in the transition from school to further education or work. In that sense, not very surprisingly, we find inequalities in the capability for *formal education* (cf. the statistical data of the two chosen measures mentioned in chapter 1) as discussed via the question of "certificate poverty". The question is whether this structural problem of unequal distribution of educational capabilities should be compensated at this later stage or rather be avoided at earlier stages of the educational path, providing in Walkers (2010) terms "a just education"? This could also mean to level differences in outcome in terms of status position (income and recognition) based on educational achievement, that is to equalise the remuneration of jobs that are socially deemed valuable.

(b) Practical reasoning and biographical reflexivity

The second notion is the aspect of capability for education as "Bildung". A precondition for processes of Bildung is to create a context for and stimulation of practical reasoning and the enabling of biographical reflexivity. "*Bildung* points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and aesthetic concerns. (…) It entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. *Bildung*, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the 'good life', of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creation." (Bleicher 2006, S. 365) The identification of these processes of Bildung would have demanded a vastly enlarged research design. Curiously however, the stimulation of practical reasoning and the enabling of biographical reflexivity could not be found as a goal of the working alliance, neither in the expert interviews nor in the interviews with the young people themselves. This is striking as conceptually, these processes seemed to be of major importance.[58]

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[58] Rather, processes of 'Bildung' in the sense of cultural self-formation were to be found in the way young people interpreted and dealt with the institutions they faced. Often, they exhibited a clear understanding of the problems and dilemmas of the interventions described above, nevertheless rationally trying to make the most of their situation. This mainly involved questions of remuneration and strategies to prevent interventions into their life conduct which they deemed to be too intrusive, thus widening their understanding of the world and adjusting their actions to retain or augment their agency.

5.3 Capability for voice

The concept of "capability for voice" designates the real freedom to voice one's opinion and to make it count within the public policy process on the one hand and social work practice on the other hand. "It implies that he/she can choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or exit so as to be able to escape these collective norms at an affordable cost (e.g. by refusing to take up a badly remunerated job without having to abide by excessive financial penalties imposed by the unemployment insurance)" (Bonvin 2009: 12). According to Hans-Uwe Otto and Holger Ziegler, this implies "the creation of places where individuals get the opportunity in public and social work action to express their own opinion, as well as the creation of a space for the 'meta-capability' of reflection [...]. This 'meta-capability' can be referred to the ability and opportunity to "form a conception of the good" (Nussbaum 2000: 79). It is also a basic precondition for processes of generating informed and considered decisions that matter to plan and shape one's life" (2006). In our view, two points have to be emphasised when looking at the dimension of voice:

(a) Participation and managerialism

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 (i.e. Arnstein's ladder of participation, cf. Schnurr 2001). But this process of democratisation is even more important when looking at the dominant practices of managerialism which implement formalised measuring tools meant to capture the quality of the pedagogical work that is done and enforce the processing of (un)troubled selves. As participation is necessarily an open-ended process and standardisation implies prefixed ends, managerialism is inherently hostile towards participation. Participation has to be implemented as a permanent phenomenon, so that in each step of the support process the client can choose between exit, voice and loyalty.

The question is whether young adults have the capability for voice in these arrangements. As shown before, referring to young people's aspirations is central to the Competence Agency. However, the restrictions of the available opportunities severely delimit what can be the object of negotiations and thus voice. The case study unveils that young people in these institutions often need to learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market and, more frequently, in the transition sector. Thus, loyalty seems to be the most plausible option, as the price for exit is relatively high and the voicing of one's concerns remains without consequences. In effect, participation is not fully realisable considering the whole support process. Furthermore, these restrictions are often anticipated by the young people leading to an adaptation of their aspirations and curtailing the number and quality of concerns that could be voiced, leading to the issue of a sense of constraint.

(b) Sense of entitlement or sense of constraint?

Voice is enhanced by something Annette Lareau (2003) defines in her study 'Unequal Childhoods' as a „sense of entitlement" (which especially shows in middle and upper class kids) on the basis of Pierre Bourdieu's notions of field and capital. It is a self-conscious expectance of young people that institutions and their agents respond to their own desires, needs and expectations. Lareau opposes a „sense of constraint", which is typical for underclass youth (and our target group as well). They are not seeing themselves in the position of demanding anything and remain sceptical and doubtful towards agents of social institutions. Furthermore, they tend to comply with the decisions and actions of these authority figures and do not expect that their needs and requirements are a legitimate basis for social work interventions. According to the concept of a 'capacity to aspire' (cf. Appadurai 2004) this points to the pivotal role aspirations and the exercising of voice play with respect to social and public issues. Concerning disadvantaged groups, there is a need of strengthening the capability for voice "to debate, contest, and oppose vital directions for collective social life" (ibid.: 66).

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, if institutions in the transitional sector are to enhance capabilities, they need to take seriously their pedagogical task of creating a space where young people can reflect on their concerns and enter an open-ended process of grappling with the realities of the labour market. At the same time, structural conditions have to be set up that make opportunities to function in the desired ways (as a 'productive worker' and as a citizen) a real possibility. This demands first and foremost the democratisation of processes in the transition sector so as to avoid cooling out mechanisms and open pedagogical spaces in which the realisation of young people's reasonable concerns can become the paramount aim.

On a societal level, a further fundamental question has to be raised: Is the (German) transition sector an institution of social mobility or is it merely about class-based allocation to status positions through pedagogical means (down, but not out)? Are young people provided with real opportunities and a perspective for a good life? If valuable options and choices are effectively missing, the processual dimension of freedom within public and social work action turns out to be a chimera.

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Higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job

Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice from the Perspective of "the Less Employable" University Graduates.

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Abstract: This paper examines how young university graduates with difficulties in finding a job corresponding to their education perceive their education in terms of capabilities for education, work and voice. Main methods used were interviews with a group of young graduates with a weak labour market attachment. The results indicate that the young graduates appreciate their education as an enhancing experience regarding capability for education and voice, but not for work. The conclusion drawn is that the main constraints stem from a lack of conversion factors related to the higher education system as well as the labour market – conversion factors that would enable the young graduates to convert available resources into capabilities for work.

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1. Introduction

During the last decade the benefits of higher education has been challenged from a utility perspective (Garrick & Rhodes 2000). According to the utility perspective the primary aim of higher education is to provide the labour market with a skilled work force and there are voices raised, questioning whether this goal is achieved (e.g Almerud et al. 2011; Korpi & Thålin 2009; Sahlén 2010). This idea is closely related to "employability" that has become an aim that governments around the world have imposed on national higher education systems to varying extents (Yorke 2006). However, employability is by no means an unambiguous concept – there are many interpretations, but Yorke (2006) states that most of them can be broadly subordinated under one of the three following categories: employability as demonstrated by the graduate actually obtaining a job; employability as the student being developed by his or her experience of higher education; 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. A main point of departure in the official debate is that young people are not provided with the "right" possibilities to make educational choices that will give them a prosperous life (Almerud et. al. 2011; Sahlen 2010). The underlying notion is that non-instrumentals choices, such as choosing an education that not obviously lead to a job, is a kind of un-informed mistake on the part of the student. Carrying the matter to its extreme, the measure suggested to prevent the "straying from the rational path" is that educations not obviously in demand on the labour market should not be offered or that the size of study allowance should be reduced for "unprofitable" educations (Fölster et al 2011).

In the present study the experiences of "less employable" university graduates are explored by applying a capability perspective (see Sen 1992, 1999). The concept "less employable" will henceforth be used when referring to the target group of the study, which is broadly defined as young graduates not yet employed in a job corresponding to their educational qualifications within a reasonable time after graduation[59]. Although having a university

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[59] 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.

degree puts the individual in a general favourable position compared people with lower education, the situation of the "less employable" graduates is nevertheless relevant. The overall issue is the same; to what extent are young people provided with opportunities to form their lives based on what they have reason to value. The present study will focus on whether "less employable" young graduates appreciate their education as a capability enhancing experience and if not, what aspects they define as constraining.

To some extent, the study sets out from the "utility-assumption", i.e. 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, attention will be paid 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. Hence, in contrast to the utility perspective reviewed above, the point of departure in the current text is that choosing a university education might be based on economic as well as intrinsic values (Walker 2009).

The capability approach (CA) is a useful tool for exploring people's expectations and their possibilities to realise those expectations in general. It is also a helpful tool for capturing a wider aim and meaning of higher education. In doing so, the distinction between capabilities (the extent to which a person is free to lead a life she has reason to value) and functionings (what a person actually is or does) is crucial. Although "not obtaining a job" (functioning) is the core principle defining the target group of the study, the focus is on young graduates' experiences of capabilities and here, the distinction between resources and capabilities is important as well. The availability of resources necessary for specific outcomes is crucial but does not automatically result in freedoms; the relation is heavily influenced by conversion factors, i.e. factors affecting the possibility to convert resources into capabilities. The significance of conversion factors highlights the social embeddedness of individual agency. For instance, resources in terms of an open and accessible higher education system do not mean "equal access". The individual's real freedom to enter higher education will be influenced by personal, social as well as environmental characteristics - e.g. self-confidence, family traditions and norms, infrastructure etc (e.g. Robeyns 2005).

Although resources solely is not enough they still constitute an important basis framing what opportunities there *might* be and with the purpose of "setting the scene", an account for available resources for education, work and voice will be given before the research questions are presented.

2. Context

That all education should be available to everyone on equal conditions irrespective of gender, social background and place of origin is a prevailing idea within the Swedish education system, an idea transformed in the extensive expansion of higher education since the middle of the 1990s (SOU 2007:81). In line with this, higher education is free of charge and there is a fairly generous state governed allowance system available, securing possibility to study for everyone irrespective of social background and financial situation. There is a variety of ways to achieve graduation both regarding content (variety of subjects), form (vocational programmes, general programmes, single courses) and organisation (distance learning possible, change of seat of learning/location, possibility to take a year off etc). Consequently, the *educational resources* could be defined as propitious.

Resources for work in the context of the study are closely related to educational resources. On a general level, having an academic exam is definitely a resource in itself since high employment rates and favourable working conditions are aspects proven to be positively associated with educational level. However, it is also known that there are differences related to kind of education (Wennström 2009; National Agency for Higher Education 2010b). Several studies, mainly conducted by student organisations, unions and other interest groups suggest that unequal access to labour market contacts during the time of study and qualified career and study counselling are the main reasons for the differences (Jusek 2011; Gemmel et al 2010; SSCO 2009). It is also stated that some fields of education are relatively unknown or underestimated on the labour market, i.e. employer's knowledge about what skills and competences the education provides, is assumed to be insufficient (Jusek 2011; Schoug 2008; Projekt Athena 2011). Consequently, the measures proposed by these organisations are more labour market contacts during the time of study together with more and better career and study counselling.

Since the suggestions mentioned above are proposed by interest groups, unions and the like, acting on the behalf of students and graduates interests, the *voice dimension* is highlighted. On a general level capability for voice could be described as the ability to express one's opinions and to make them count in the course of public discussion, commonly with reference to groups of individuals involved in social work practice (Bonvin & Farvaque 2006; Bonvin 2012). Hence, a crucial aspect of voice is whether the individual can choose between loyalty to the prevailing norms and prescriptions or voice in order to negotiate the content of the measures provided (Hirschman 1970). Looking at the target group of the study, the service and measures provided to unemployed and the regulations framing these measures is a relevant social work context. Still, the main focus concerning "the less employable" university graduates is resources necessary for voicing their opinions and to make them count within the higher education system, on the labour market and

within the politics of education and work. According to Bohman (1996) the prevalence of collective actors such as trade unions or other interest groups is a crucial resource for creating genuinely public space where one's concerns might be taken into account. As reviewed above, there are such actors highlighting the situation of the "less employable" and in fact, the politics of higher education has taken their arguments into account. For instance, a political initiative was taken in 2009 when the Swedish National Audit Office was assigned to scrutinize the *measures promoting employability*[60] taken by the authorities concerned (RiR 2009). Another example of resources for voice is that all seats of learning are obliged to carry out follow- ups on student's views on their education 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).

Information about labour market options associated with different educations is another resource for voice. Such information is necessary for young people's ability to make a conception of "the good" (Nussbaum 2000, p 79) and to make educational choices in line with this conception. In Sweden, it is regulated by law that students should be given access to study – and vocational guidance and that the education providers should ensure that anyone who intends to begin an education have access to the information needed about that education (Higher Education Ordinance §3, ch 6). To meet this requirement, there is at least one study counsellor employed at every department within the higher education system.

3. 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 in the present study is whether the "less employable" university graduates perceive their education as an experience enhancing their possibilities to lead a life they have reason to value. More specifically, the questions raised are: Was their decision to enter higher education considered and based on aspects they had reason to value? Were their motives to enter university related to future job opportunities or rather pure educational values? Do these people resist the utility agenda or have they internalised it, but made the "wrong" choice of education? Do they consider that their educational experience come up to their expectations or not? If not – what is missing and what could have been done differently?

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[60] The Audit Office does not explicitly define employability, but state that enhanced employability through better development and career opportunities on the labour market are probably important motives behind people's choice to apply for higher education.

4. Methods

In the following section, the target group of the study will be described as well as the procedure for case selection. Thereafter, an account for the data collected will be given followed by a presentation of the methods used.

Target group and case selection

Although education generally means improved labour market prospects and reduced risks for unemployment (OECD 2011, Jusek 2011: National Agency for Higher Education 2010a), the labour market of 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 (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, 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)[61].

Graduates with individually composed exams within the humanities and the social sciences are among the categories traditionally hit by less favourable labour market options and this group was selected to represent "the less employable". The sampling was made 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. Accordingly, the target group had completed their education between two to four years previous the study, which is an interval within which it could be expected that a fairly stable labour market situation could have been established.

For the purpose of selecting relevant cases, a small inquiry, asking questions about their working situation since graduation, was sent to everyone who was under the age of 31 years (totally 140 individuals). 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

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[61] The analyses referred to do not distinguish between general programmes and exams composed by single courses, probably because the establishment of general programmes is a quite recent trend.

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 on taking part in the subsequent study were contacted. Finally two male and seven female graduates aged between 26 and 30 agreed to take part in the study.

Data and methods

Exploring capabilities for education, work and voice from the perspective of "the less employable" university graduates requires 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 were interviews and document analyses. Document analyses were mainly used for identifying available resources (reviewed in section 2: Context). In order to reveal how these resources are put into practice, five university employees at the university where the young graduates completed their education were interviewed. Four of them were mainly dealing with strategic issues, whereas one of them worked as a career advisor. Since the view of labour market representatives constitutes an important conversion factor when focusing the transition from (higher) education to work, the labour market perspective concerning the target group and their education was taken into account by interviewing four employers, one union representative and four officials at the employment office[62]. 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 proposals of these organisations 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 nine university graduates selected were interviewed with the purpose of exploring their sense of capability. This is an issue that 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). Accordingly, the study sets out from the assumption that it is possible to get access to people's lived experiences and emotions, an assumption that can be defined as an emotionalist point of view (Gubrium & Holstein 1997; Silverman 2006: 123). The primary issue for an emotionalist is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences, which is quite in line with the conditions required if revealing someone's sense of capability is the question at stake.

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[62] 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 labour market of Sociologist – conditions and conceptions" (2011), internal document; department of Sociology and Work Science, Gothenburg University

Commonly, the main way to generate this kind of data is through the use of unstructured, open ended interviews (Silverman 2006:118), which was the tool used in the present study. The unstructured 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).

With the purpose of being able to give full attention to the respondent and the situation, all the interviews were recorded and the empirical data consists of interview transcripts. The technique used to give the material analytic meaning was coding (Glaser & Strauss 2006). The categorization was based on the purpose of the study, which means that the overall categories, education, work and voice were predefined. At the same time, it was important to be open minded and sensitive for other aspects and any meaning that the interviewees ascribed to their experiences.

5. Results and analysis

By way of introduction, there will be a short description of the nine university graduates' current situation. Thereafter, their experiences of capability for education, work and voice will be reviewed and analysed. For the purpose of readability, the interviewees have been given the following feign names; Tomas, Karin, Anna, Lisa, Louise, Erik, Sara, Eva, Maria.

Except for Anna and Erik, all the interviewees were in some kind of transitional phase at the time for the interviews. Karin's goal was to get an employment in a non-profit organisation dealing with the issues she was dedicated to. That the organisation stands for the "right" values was more important to her than the content of the job. Despite her rather low ambitions, she had so far not been offered any employment. Maria had experienced periods of unemployment mixed with a couple trainee jobs, mainly organised and supported by the employment office. At the moment, she held a post with conditional tenure working with unqualified tasks. She was not satisfied with her job, but she expressed great hopes in having an internal career within the company. In that sense, her current job was not only a means of livelihood, but also part of a strategy possibly ending up in a desirable work situation. Tomas, Lisa, Louise, Sara and Eva had continued their studies. Tomas and Sara was studying a master programme which was more or less a part of their educational plans at an early stage and to some extent based on expectations of improved labour market opportunities. For Lisa, Louise and Eva, the decision to apply for further studies was mainly a consequence of the hardships met in finding a job. All of them were actively looking for work after their graduation and they all had experiences of shorter employments; either in desirable jobs but with temporary contracts, or employments in jobs not corresponding to

their conceptions of a desirable working life. Lisa and Eva finally decided to enter a vocationally oriented university programme, whereas Louise studied a master course.

Capability for education

Capability can be defined as "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being" (Sen 1993, p 30). For the group of young people interviewed, to study at the university was indeed a valuable act and their stories indicate that there were no obvious obstacles restricting their freedoms to participate. On the contrary, the opportunity to study was more or less taken for granted. That the Swedish higher education system is open to everyone, 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) points out, our subjective preferences and choices are shaped by material as well as cultural circumstances. Our understanding of what opportunities that are available to us is deeply shaped by the social context and therefore, that all interviewees stated that they 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 they create self-confidence and a desire for knowledge.

> "*To enter higher education at some point was always a matter of course. I've always liked to study and I was quite ambitious during both compulsory school and upper secondary school*". (Lisa)

Capability for education not only concern opportunity to study or not, but also whether people are able to choose the kind of education they have reason to value. Since all the interviewees except Maria stated that their choices were driven by personal interests all the way, at least up to bachelor's degree, the results indicate a strong sense of freedom to study based on personal preferences.

> "*I have absolutely only studied out of personal interests and I have always been convinced that to do something you are committed to will pay off in one way or the other*". (Louise)

Capability for work

For a majority of the interviewees, labour market expectations were not obviously a motive for entering higher education in the first place. If anything, increased employment chances could be described as a latent motive, something that was unconsciously regarded as a given consequence of education. Crucial to the capability approach is the process for people

to come to a decision about what they have reason to value (Sen 1992, 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. For everyone except Eric, this expectation was not met and the interviewees' freedoms to actually enjoy the lives they had reason to value were 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 constrains related either to the education provider or the labour market, which will be described below. The role of the employment office is also discussed.

Constrains related to the provider of education: In line with previous research (Jusek 2011; Gemmel et al 2010; RiR 2009; SSCO 2009) difficulties in entering the labour market were primarily explained by the educational system's shortcomings in providing measures facilitating the graduate's transition between education and work. Lacking elements mentioned were labour market contacts, guidance and a way to translate and communicate educational skills in a way that correspond to labour market demands. There is also a stress on the need for information on what you *are* in terms of vocational competence and identity, and what kind of jobs you can apply for.

Some of the resources mentioned were in fact available at the time when the interviewees studying but the conversion into freedoms was constrained by different factors. Although the university offered a practice course, the interviewees either had no information about it or expressed a strong critique against that it was offered first at master level and that it was poorly 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 had to find a proper employer and settle the agreements for the practice, and the lack of structure and support from the university seems to have 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 constrain regarding the possibilities to convert resources such as study counselling and career advice into capabilities. At the time for their studies, the graduates knew about the existence of the study counsellors but did

not recognize that their future working life was an issue for her/him. At the university, there was also a specific unit for career advice (Career Centre), but the interviewees had either no knowledge about it or thought that the service was designed for vocationally oriented categories of graduates. Bearing the support in mind that after all was within reach, it is stated that the resources ought to be made more visible to the students:

> "I had no idea at all that it (Career Centre) existed. Maybe I had heard about it a long time ago, maybe I had seen a small note somewhere or maybe someone once mentioned it incidentally, but I never gave it a serious thought. Then, a friend told me that a friend in common had been there and she thought I should check it out. So I went there and they have lots of good stuff…. I didn't get the information that there was someone there who could help me. That ought to be more involved at department level." (Louise)

This suggestion is quite in line with the view of the career adviser who was interviewed. She states that students and graduates who look for support at the Centre usually have no idea regarding how and where their educational competences might be of any practical use. Most of them also seem to think that they are the only ones feeling that way and they are ashamed about their ignorance. In order to reduce those negative experiences the adviser advocates that some of the service provided at the Centre should be included *during* education instead. The adviser also highlights her own problem of having to rely on the study counsellors at each department in order to reach out with information to the students. Students' access to information about available resources is thereby heavily dependent on whether the counsellors are committed to the "work-issue" and on whether the counsellors are heard by their colleagues. According to the adviser at Career Centre, 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 educational programme.

Erik is clearly of an opposite view when it comes to labour market connections. He takes up a critical attitude towards any politics aiming at "economization" of higher education. He regards himself as "spared" since he escaped these kinds of elements during his time of study. It should be noted that Erik is the only interviewee describing the transition between education and work as completely unproblematic. Still, one of the university employees 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 humanities for instance, resist being imputed with a commercial way of thinking about education. Some of them have deliberately chosen an education based on pure interest and they do not expect that the knowledge acquired will be transformed into professional skills.

Constrains related to the labour market: Other aspects constraining the opportunity to convert the academic exam into capability for work were the graduates' experiences of the labour market's "resistance". A notion expressed is that their educations are not in demand because employers lack knowledge about the skills acquired through their specific educations. This notion is based on the fact that employers rarely look for professional categories corresponding to their educational profile: concepts equivalent to their studied disciplines do not occur in recruitment contexts. This is then experienced as something constraining the possibilities to market themselves as someone having the right qualifications.

> "W*hen you have a general exam, it is not that easy to write the words, or to convert it to something that fits into what the labour market demands. It is not self-evident when you don't study a vocational education or something that more obviously fall into place within an occupation.*" (Eva)

The labour market representatives tend to confirm these misgivings. According to one of the employment office representatives, employers cannot "decipher" what skills and competences some job seekers have since they lack knowledge about their educations. She states that this is particularly true for exams composed of single courses where the subjects do not clearly correspond to relatively established occupations. Consequently, the less known education one has the greater demands on your ability to market both your education and yourself.

An increasing focus on personal characteristics might also be defined as a constraining factor. For instance, the ability to present oneself in a way that fall the employer in taste is highlighted by several labour market representatives as well as the adviser at Career Centre. This is connected to a general surplus of job seekers with adequate skills; in order to sort and sift through all the applicants with qualifications corresponding to the demands, employers tend to look at more personal criteria. The focus on personal characteristics could imply a reduction in the relative importance of formal merits and by that, individuals with a less known education could benefit from such a development. But the present study indicates that the phenomenon has the opposite consequence. Interviews with labour market representatives indicate that employers tend to transfer a perceived ambiguity or vagueness of the less known educations *on* to the individual; since the educations are not perceived as having a clear direction towards a specific professional field, it is assumed that individuals who have these kind of educations are indecisive about their career and it is assumed that they will not as easily go into a role as an employee compared to someone who has an occupational training. When talking about individuals who have put together a general education package without a clear professional profile, one of the employment office representatives state that:

"There is always a fear that these academics will fixate too much on problems or new ideas, that they will call everything into question and that they will not be productive". (Employment office representative)

A related tendency is the increased importance of social networks that is brought to the fore, preferably by the graduates. This is not viewed as a positive development – far from it! Louise names the phenomenon "the recommendation society" and is quite upset since being nice and attending to the social network seems to be more important than being educated:

"You have studied for five years and you are damned good and skilled and then you realize that people get the job just because they are nice at the coffee break." (Louise)

Despite her critical attitude, Louise and everybody else pay a lot of attention to their social networks. On the whole, every single social interface is looked upon as a potential source of employment options. This also holds for the social contacts established through the non-profit organisations most of the interviewees are committed to. Although the basic purpose is not to improve the list of merits, or to establish work related social connections, the interviewees regard the experiences received and the social contacts established within these organisations as significant opportunities to get a job.

The employment office: A last court that possibly could serve as a factor converting education into capabilities for work is the public employment office, which is the national authority assigned to match available competence with labour market demands. However, the confidence in the service offered by the office is very low. A majority of the graduates had not been looking for their support at all; either because they felt no need for it or because they thought it would be a waste of time. Karin, Eva, Anna and Maria actually did get in touch with the employment office, but their encounter could foremost be described as a constraining experience since no ways to overcome their hardships were proposed. A dominant experience reflected on is a reduced self-confidence as a consequence of the encounter. Karin and Eva state that, if anything, they were 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)

Capability for voice

The interviewees understanding of why they are facing problems in getting a desirable employment and what actions that should be taken to reduce the obstacles is very much in line with the view expressed by student organisations, trade unions and interest groups who more or less directly act on the behalf of students and young graduates. In that sense, the interviewees seem to have capability for voice. That their opinions count in the course of public discussion is also indicated by the fact that the issues and measures defined by these groups have been highlighted on national level, leading to political initiatives aiming at equalising the availability of *"employability promoting elements"* (RiR 2009:28). The voice of the students is also confirmed by one of the university employees interviewed who state that several of the resources that actually are in place (work place located practice course, services provided by Career Centre) are measures taken by the universities at least partly in order to meet students' requirements.

Still, to be able to convert "*employability promoting elements*" into capabilities requires that the students have knowledge about their existence and a notion of the relevance of using them. The interviewed graduates express that this was not the case. Here, the question of individual responsibility is brought to the fore. The capability approach understands people to be agents, i.e. a dignified and responsible human who critically reflects and make worthwhile life choices from alternatives that are available to her (Walker & Unterhalter 2009, p 15). Here, it could be argued that it is the individual's responsibility to seek relevant information, but most people are quite young when they set off for university studies and it could be questioned whether it is reasonable to expect that labour market prospects would be of such interest that the students actively would look for information. This notion is also put 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 nativity or light-heartedness - an attitude that most of the interviewees refer to when recalling their thoughts and emotions during their first years of studies. Another reason for not reflecting about the future is a (unconscious) conviction that a university degree more or less guarantees good job opportunities. According to some of the interviewees, taking the significance of education for granted was also reinforced by the fact that work related issues were never mentioned by teachers or other university representatives during the education: the value of education seemed self-evident from the university's perspective as well.

Age as a constraining factor regarding capability for voice is also highlighted by Maria in her experiences of encountering the employment office. After graduation, she contacted the office since she had difficulties in finding a job. At that time, she was young enough to be 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 Marias, e.g. drop outs from compulsory school or upper secondary school. Maria tried to make her needs clear to the staff at the office but her efforts where fruitless.

> *"I was defined as youth due to my age. Therefore, I was placed in the same group as people who recently left upper secondary school or even had dropped out from it. I almost felt that they offended me intellectually. … I tried to explain that I needed support in my efforts to find a job, not a lecture in how to behave on the labour market…I asked if I could see an official in charge who worked with adults rather than youth, but that wasn't possible."* (Maria)

There were no real opportunities to negotiate the content of the measures and since the collaboration with the employment office is a prerequisite for economic benefits for those lacking other sources of income, exit was neither an option (Hirschman 1970; Bonvin & Farvaque 2006; Bonvin 2012). From Marias point of view, lowered self-confidence and mistrust regarding her competences are salient experiences connected to the general resistance she has met in her efforts to find a desirable job. The "help" offered by the employment office did not contribute with neither practical, nor emotional support – quite the opposite:

> *"…for one thing, it was the practical part, that you sort of didn't get any help, and then it was the emotional part, that you were in a situation when you started to doubt whether you were as good as you thought, and I felt that they (employment office employees) added to that feeling rather than helped me to put up with it".* (Maria)

Before concluding, some final remark should be made. All the interviewees except Maria, and to some extent Lisa, state that they are pleased with their education and that they would choose the same education today despite all the uncertainties and troubles they have faced. Above all, pure educational values and ability for voice, such as personal growth, a widening intellectual horizon, ability for critical and analytic thinking, self-confidence, are aspects put forward when talking about the positive meaning of their education.

> *…for my own part it has contributed incredibly much in terms of personal growth so to say, in terms of my understanding of the world and other people."* (Louise)

Still, at the time for the interviews, the dominating perception of a valuable life among the interviewees includes university studies guided by personal interests <u>and</u> enhanced opportunities to get a desirable job. To make both ends meet raises some obstacles. The question then is what to do? Who ought to shoulder the responsibility and in what way?

6. Conclusions and recommendations

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 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" need to be taken into account in order to enable *all* students to be real agents, to make informed choices and to shape their lives in the light of goals that matter.

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. Furthermore, 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 with less favourable conditions in terms of educational as well as social and personal resources.

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 this kind of education. Consequently, the current study points to a need for an increased knowledge and appreciation of these educations among employers, staff at the employment office and other labour market representatives. It also seems necessary to combat negative attitudes towards specific groups of academics. To do this, the higher education system, employers and other labour market representatives need to extend and renew their cooperation.

It could be argued that the main message conveyed in this study is a call for an equalization of opportunities between different educational paths concerning access to employability enhancing resources and conversion factors. This is an important issue, but as a final comment, I want to emphasize the risks posed by focusing on higher education as a means for work. A lot of young people study out of pure educational and personal interests and it is very likely that the single course route within less vocationally oriented subjects is the path of their choice. So far, the possibility to make this choice is quite good, but the current focus on getting a job as a given outcome of university studies is threatening this possibility. If a narrow employability perspective will unfold and further imprint the politics of higher education, the risk is that the supply of education will be governed by shortsighted labour market needs at the expense of wider social and political benefits such as personal development, enhanced civic participation etc (Walker 2009). To get these seemingly contradictory aspects together (to maintain the generous educational system providing opportunities for individuals to study out of interest (capabilities for education) and at the same time equalize the *possibilities* to transform the education into something in demanded on the labour market (capabilities for work), I think we need to make an effort to restore the value of non-vocational/"Bildung-oriented" disciplines and knowledge on the labour market and in society at large.

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CHAPTER 6:

A COMPARATIVE COMMENT ON THE CASE STUDIES

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Abstract: This paper brings up some central aspects from the case studies and brings them briefly together within an analytical and heuristic framework of the capability approach. We argue that the Capabilities for Education, Work and Voice should be considered as the main fertile capabilities in the studied domain. These three theoretically and empirically driven concepts are addressed one by one. At the end we broaden this further with the awareness that these capabilities have to be understood in their relational dependencies, conditions and consequences as well as in relation to the contextual differences they operate within. Hence, the mentioned set of capabilities is regarded as an important relational frame that can "enable young people to act as capable citizens in European societies" (according to the WorkAble objective), and besides of that it can be used as an evaluative framework raising questions which social and institutional conditions are necessary for young adults.

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1. Introduction

This paper is the first step in the comparative and cross-sectional work within the EU project Workable and therefore has to be read as providing comments and preliminary answers to a range of ongoing questions. It aims to pick up some central aspects from the aforementioned case studies[63] and brings them briefly together within the analytical and heuristic framework of the capability approach. We want to conceptualise the *capabilities for Education, Work and Voice* as *fertile Capabilities* (referring to Wolff 2009) which have positive effects on other central human capabilities[64] – and can be seen as a subject and field oriented adaptation of the capability approach. Still, these three theoretically and empirically driven concepts will be addressed one by one. Towards the end of this article, we will broaden this conceptual focus by analysing these capabilities in their relational dependencies, conditions and consequences as well as in relation to the different contexts they operate within. Hence, the mentioned subset of *capabilities* is regarded as an important *relational framework* that can "*enable young people to act as capable citizens in European societies*" (according to the WorkAble objective). Furthermore, it can also be used as an evaluative framework raising questions as to which social and institutional conditions are necessary not only to keep young people in the labour markets, but also to maintain their autonomy and freedom of choice.

The target groups in the WorkAble project can be seen as 'vulnerable' in terms of lack of capabilities. Secondly, these vulnerable groups represent particular problems to policy (and practical implementation) in their national contexts and therefore have been identified as exemplary but crucial issues within the transasitional regimes from school to work or referring to basic problems of the educational regimes (such as drop-outs). That is why the case studies in this volume can be differentiated in several aspects. They are:

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[63] The case studies are presented in this volume, but this article built as well on further empirical insights brought up through the project phase as well as the extended versions of the case studies (available at the project website http://workable-eu.org/images/stories/publications/4_1_final_report_april_2012.pdf). For these proceedings a common grid for juxtaposition of the case studies has been developed.

[64] Martha Nussbaum's conceptualisation of a list of 10 basic capabilities (2001) seeks to figure out "*an objective account of human well-being or flourishing. The aim is to identify all of the functionings needed for human flourishing. For each of these functionings, the ideal is that each person should be sustained in the capability to engage in every one of these functionings at a satisfactory or good enough level*" (Arneson 2002). In her earlier writings she follows the question: "*what are the forms of activity, of doings and being, that constitute the human form of life and distinguish it from other actual or imaginable forms of life*" (Nussbaum & Glover 1995: 72) and brought up an argumentation for the central human capabilities. Our specific focus on three capabilities should not be understood as a departure from Nussbaums notion that: "*all ten of these plural and diverse ends are minimum requirements of justice.*" (Nussbaum 2007: 175); but in a later writing she states as well: "*Much depends on our purpose. On the one hand, if our intention is simply comparative, all sorts of capabilities suggest interesting comparisons across nations and regions, and there is no reason to prescribe in advance: new problems may suggest new comparisons*" (Nussbaum 2011: 29).

- embedded in different educational and transitional regimes, which provide general, occupational/industry-specific or firm-specific skills (Atzmüller in this volume, Walther 2006),

- tackling basic mechanisms of social inequality and fundamental questions of poverty, class, race and gender, (see i.e. Sztandar-Sztanderska/Zieleńska 2012)

- focusing on diverse target groups, such as: early school leavers, young unemployed, young adults with no qualifications in secondary education and finally (as a part of theoretical/purposive and contrastive sampling) unemployed young higher education graduates (Albeit the comparative EU project started with these broad and unspecific target groups, one of the first insights was, that these groups are converging in several transitional regimes and they are hard to differentiate from one another),

- bringing in different research methods and different ways and approaches of analysis *(*cf. Hollywood/Egdell/McQuaid/Michel-Schertges in this volume) etc.

Though, in this chapter we will shed light on *some* of the questions and discussions emerging from the comparison of the individual case study findings. It is obvious that a research this expansive raises new questions to be researched further. Due to the enormous amount of empirical findings, other (sub)conclusions and comparisons could have been drawn and presented. Here we concentrate on the central topics that are crucial from the perspective of the capability approach when shaping the basis for further policy making and renewed professional practice.

Making capabilities work in empirical case studies

Capability research has shown to be a powerful orientation when capturing the often very complex relation between societal conditions and the individual´s freedoms and their actualization of these at the specific time and context. The exercise of agency and the realisation of freedoms one reasonably values - the core of the capability approach - is always bound to the social context in which people live and act. Therefore, capabilities have to be explored in relation to structures and agency. However, before the process of realising valued *beings and doings*, aspirations are formed and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where they can be achieved. Consequently, the different resources and commodities that the individual has access to have to be taken into account. In the following we try to capture this by using the distinction between an *empowerment* and an *opportunity to choose dimension* of the capability approach. As Kjeldsen and Bonvin argue, it is *"the combination of these two dimensions that makes for the originality of the capability*

approach: while liberals insist only on freedom to choose without caring to empower people (and thus fall into Marx's objection of formal freedom), radical versions of social democracy insist only on empowerment and fail to adequately guarantee freedom to choose (as could be illustrated by some contemporary workfare programmes)" (Kjeldsen/Bonvin 2010: 2).

To build an empirical bridge between the societal level and the individual's perspective a case study approach has been applied. 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 divergent actors (such as professionals, addressees, social service managers and the organisations in a whole) are at the centre of investigation, and the range of possibilities in which this collective structure can reproduce itself. It is clear that neither of these research perspectives can do without the other: individual agency cannot be explained without a conception of social selection mechanisms, 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; moreover, opportunity structures and institutional restrictions are analysed. Hence, *"it is important to bear in mind that our preferences and choices are deeply shaped by the structures of opportunities available to us"* (Bergström 2012: 232). For this reason, central to the operationalisation of the capability approach in the case studies were the perspectives and choices of the young people. While mainly focusing on individual accounts and subjective perspectives, the aim of the comparison of the case studies was to consider how these preferences and orientations are influenced, constrained or even enabled by institutional factors, which translate central policies into local practices. Therefore, an aim of the case studies was to research the status of capabilities on different levels: the *micro*, *meso* and *macro level*.[65]

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[65] In the beginning of the comparison it has been useful to differentiate and locate these capabilities and their consequences on the micro, meso and macro level. In a broad working definition we use the *Micro perspective as the subjective, professional and interactive level.* This analytical level refers to individuals and their opinions, views, attitudes, patterns of interpretation, individual codes of ethics, skills, physical traits, etc. and interactions between them. These are for instance situated in the classroom and the interaction between teachers and pupils. *The Meso perspective contains the interactive, institutional and conceptual level.* This level of analysis is placed at the level where program implementation occurs as well as focuses on organisations that operate on the *basis of the rules set at the macro leve*l. Furthermore it refers to organisational cultures, institutional codes of ethics and standard pathways and routines. At this level we for example find the institution and the interactions between administration, teachers, social workers and families and young adults, but from the perspective of the institution or organisation. Finally, the *Macro perspective considers the political and societal level.* This stage covers the level where institutional rules are defined – e.g. through norms and laws – and transitional regimes are pre-structured. This level is constituted by regional/national policy-making (in some case studies represented through the perspectives of main stakeholders; but see as

2. The Empowerment dimension

The empowerment dimension is differentiated between capabilities, resources and commodities as well as individual and social conversion factors[66]. For now we will mainly focus on the commodities and conversion factors. Although it is not possible to uncover the mechanisms of social inequality and how these resources and commodities intervene and interrelate in the long run with social and individual conversion factors in these qualitative case studies, we captured them briefly to frame the findings and not to fall behind insights from inequality research.

A key issue is to identify the resources and conversion factors which pertain to this configuration and their impact on capability for work, education and voice. What resources or commodities are provided (money, time, infrastructure, social services etc.) and to whom (schools, families, third sector association, etc.)? Because one of the main objectives in WorkAble *"should be to identify what this bundle of resources and conversion factors is at empirical level, and to assess to what extent it actually promotes (or maybe obstructs, insofar as so-called conversion factors can also act as obstruction factors) the enhancement of young peoples' capabilities"* (Kjeldsen/Bonvin 2010: 8). Hence, in the case studies we therefore scrutinised the context in which capabilities might be realised, based on the assumption that educational organisations and institutions in the transition from school to work intend to act as enabling structures.

2.1 Resources and commodities

All *goods, services* and *income* available for the single young person in question we conceptualise as *commodities.* As stated in Kjeldsen and Bonvin (2010), it is important to bear in mind the commodities possessed by the single individual, but also take notice of those commodities that the individual has access to (that they could potentially use Some important commodities function as prerequisites for educational support, and thereby the resources held on the an institutional level (educational organisations for instance) greatly influence the individual's possible outcome. When for instance the lack of resources result in overcrowded classrooms with more than 30 pupils (France), or when the young people live in disadvantaged areas with limited opportunities (UK) and the educational programmes do not compensate for this, this directly (or indirectly) influences the individuals' freedoms. The importance of this type of commodity is often bound to a certain time and place. This

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well Work Package 3 in the Workable Project, where an institutional mapping was prefaced), but is interdependent with the other levels and thereby with interactions between policy makers, administration, schools, professionals, families and young adults. For pragmatic reasons, these three levels have been taken into account when drawing the first comparative conclusions from the case studies. However, for easier reading we will present the stages without this differentiation.

[66] For a further interpretation of the two dimensions within the Capability Approach see Kjeldsen & Bonvin "Capability Approach, Education and Labour Market" (under contract)

influences the possibility for cross country comparisons in this situation, but as the different case studies reveal, the young persons' freedom to choose their life - a life they themselves value - require the presence of a whole configuration of context specific commodities and often, if one is missing, capabilities are equally missed or the capability is reduced from a real opportunity to a formal, but not accessible, "right". This tension represents the empowerment side of the capability approach. But as the case studies reveal: *"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."* (Sztandar-Sztanderska/Zieleńska 2012: 65)

The mentioned resources should not be distributed in equal shares to the young persons. Instead, it should be taken into account that because of the differences in individual conversion factors, every young person requires the access to different shares of these resources to achieve the same level of *functioning* in regard to the three capabilities. If this is not taken seriously, the equal sharing to all would in the world of real opportunities (capabilities) result in unintended inequalities. Therefore, across the contexts it is important to provide resources for (occupational) orientation and secure that young adults can experience and explore possible professional choices and experiment how to lead one's life (Austria). Providing the informational basis for choice making is of importance, not only for those who deviated from the educational main track at an early stage, but also for 'well-educated' young people where a lack of information on the part of the university constrain the students' access to the information that would make well informed choices/actions possible (Sweden). All this is found to be complex and interrelated. Nevertheless, resources for local transition management, guidance or follow up classes do not seem sufficient to compensate for inequalities in outcome of earlier schooling (see especially Germany). In particular, we will now present some of the different factors that have a decisive influence.

2.2 Key conversion factors

Social and structural conversion factors[67] impact both positively and negatively on the individual's opportunities in actualising capabilities for education, work and voice. They are often related to the individual conversion of resources and services at hand into valuable states of beings and doings. In relation to the informational basis for life-course choices, experiencing autonomous and individual decisions are core issues and it seems to be the case that young people perceive only a few socially acceptable "life scripts" (i.e. Austria). We will focus on some aspects, namely the role of families, peers and the role of the

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[67] Several case studies identified a range of individual conversion factors; but as they are very diverse and even more related to the measures, their target groups and the specific (national) contexts, we will focus on the social and structural conversion factors here.

professionals, seen as social conversion factors in relation to the individuals decision making in regard to possible "life scripts".

1) **The role of the families and peers:** The degree of (non)involvement of a young persons' family, social network, peers, etc. influence the choices of youngsters (France, Austria, UK). Also in Italy: *"the families play a key educational role: on one hand often because it's the parents (usually the mothers) who go to the helpdesk […] 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."* (Bifulco/Monteleone/ Mozzana 2012: 87). When making choices, the young persons are in different ways dependent on their parents and peers, which influences the life transition to becoming an 'independent' adult. In some cases, parents serve as moral references for the young adults (Germany) and thereby the family becomes a social conversion factor in relation to the freedom to choose a life (work and education) the individual values. Hence, the role of the family and peers becomes ambiguous. As an example of this found in the Swiss case: *"The role of peers appears is more ambivalent: they are sometimes presented as possible obstacles towards entering or successfully achieving an apprenticeship […] but they are also considered as important counsellors at an age where peer recognition is decisive in the construction of one's personality."* (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein, 2012: 181) On the one hand, it may be supportive in the attitude towards education and serve as an important source for information and emotional support as a "stability factor", but on the other hand it may also constrain the individuals' free choice or even promote certain preferences. For the professionals, parents are supposed to be important figures even for those close to adulthood and they declare that it is promising and necessary to "take them on board". The role of the family in reproducing educational outcomes has been studied in educational sociology for decades. The findings point to the influence of the family as a social conversion factor in the transition periods from a life-course perspective. This needs further investigation with respect to the contextualisation of this influence from the perspective of young people.

2) **Professionals' norms and practices:** The skills and values of the professionals that provide the mentioned services also influence choices of young adults (see tutors in Italy, social workers/ project workers in Germany, Switzerland and UK, teachers in Denmark and France, Trainers in Poland, Austria etc.) This raises the question whether they *"encourage young people to choose a life they have reason to value, or do they encourage young people to choose a life as defined as valuable by social norms or project workers/organisations?"* (cf. Hollywood/Egdell/McQuaid/Michel-Schertges in this volume). An empirical example of such norms and beliefs are gender stereotypes about vocations and learning skills, according to these existing

norms (not empirical facts at all!) there are some vocations exclusively for men and for women, for example that men are better in the natural sciences and women in the humanities (Poland). The professionals are often placed in an intersection between the actualisation of formal rights (e.g. choosing education, occupation etc.) and active labour market legislation. Thereby, they become a social conversion factor with the task of translating formal rights into actual *functionings*, which is in turn influenced greatly by structural conditions. As an example, these conditions forces that *"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* [Public Employment Service] *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"* (Haidinger/Kasper 2012: 152). Insofar, they become 'gatekeepers' for the space of opportunities the young people have at their disposal. Because of the placement between different - often incommensurable - interests (i.e. organisational standards, external market conditions and the professional relationship to the young adult), their major tasks are often reduced to "motivate for work". In this concept, motivation is regarded as an individual disposition which has to be worked on. But motivation has to be understood systematically as the responsibility of all different actors and can then lead to processes of recognition (Germany). In this way, professionals are negotiating the choices and aspirations the young person has in the first place and thereby seek to stifle what they believe are unrealistic aspirations or what they believe does not fit with given social norms. To give an example from Denmark, on the formal level, pupils enrolled in the Basic Vocational and Training programme (EGU) should be given influence on the area of occupation that their individually planned education aims at (an occupation they have reason to value). In practice, however, this only happens if it is possible to attune these ideas to actual internship possibilities at hand. Different professionals become social conversion factors for the capabilities of education in other ways, too. For example through *creaming*, that is focusing on the students with the best results thus reproducing inequalities in terms of capabilities or even reinforcing them by symbolically and financially awarding the best instead of awarding the progress of the individual and taking into account unequal points of departure. One of the case studies showed that some of the professionals tend to divide students into an "elite" and an "unable to reform"/"unchangeable" group (Poland).

We only highlighted some aspects from the range of the different case studies. In summary, it became clear how resources and commodities as well as social conversion factors are shaped by and shape capabilities and the opportunities of young adults.

3. The freedom to choose dimension

In the following, we will present some of the main issues addressed in relation to the three capabilities in question. They are related to essential ressources and commodities, incorporate enabling and constraining aspects and integrate an explicit normative orientation (see table 1). They are all interdependent, but we will start from education to work and at the end emphasize the decisive weight of *voice*.

Fertile Capabilities According to…	Capability for Education	Capability for Work	Capability for Voice
Resources & Commodities	Inequalities in educational regimes / certificate poverty	Sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs /activities	Voice as a substantiation of citizenship and social rights
Constraints & Enablings	Negative schooling experiences	Prevention of discriminatory practices and labelling processes	Dominance of people processing
	Misregognition of informal and non-formal learning	Infrastructure and (material) resources of the measures in itself	Invisibility of exit options
	Education as 'Bildung'	Work-first vs. life first approaches and the "realistic" reference to the labour market	Participation within the support process
	Informational base for choice making in a professional working alliance	Enabling of adequate skills vs. realistic perspectives	Democratisation of social service organisations
Normative orientation (for institutions)	Capacity to aspire	Good and meaningful work	Sustainable capability space

Table 1: Dimensions of the capabilities for education, work and voice

3.1 The capability for education

Capability for education is on the one hand the real freedom to choose a (formal) education or training program one has reason to value (and even includes the choice of not being educated); on the other hand this concepts entails the idea of being adequately empowered to make such a choice and therefore calls for processes of *practical reasoning* and "Bildung". In relation to this capability we find the following issues relevant to take notice of:

1) **The role of inequalities in educational regimes and the issue of certificate poverty**

The youth in question have "lost their track" either in the transition from school to further education or from education to work. With respect to the latter, not very surprisingly, we find inequalities in the capability for *formal education* as discussed via the questions of "certificate poverty" (Solga 2011)[68] and "educational inflation" (Hansen 2003; Jensen/Kjeldsen 2012: 143)[69]. Should this structural problem of unequal distribution of educational capabilities be compensated at this later stage (see the question of early school selection in Austria)? Or should inequalities rather be avoided at earlier stages of the educational path, providing in Walkers (2010) terms "a just education"? This could also imply equalising differences in outcome in terms of status position (income and recognition) based on educational achievements, that is to equalise the remuneration of jobs that are socially deemed valuable (see Germany).

2) **Negative schooling experiences as a dominant issue**

In nearly all case studies we find that one of the threats against aspirations for (further) learning, job-related desires and ideas of future prospects are negative schooling experiences (i.e. Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, France). As The swiss case study sums up: *"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"* (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 177).[70] The young people adapt their aspirations and

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[68] Heike Solga defines „certificate poverty" on the one hand as a absolute minimum of formal education achieved through basic compulsary school and on the other hand as a relative minimum of education which is much higher due to the increase of higher education and increased (technical) requirements in the working world. For Germany in example, this can be illustrated by 10% of young adults not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education (early school leavers) as well as those 15% of young adults who can not obtain a training position in the course of their transition process (cf. Solga 2011: 415).

[69] According to Pierre Bourdieu's idea of "diploma inflation" where "the cheating of a generation" can be found because of the "disparity between the aspirations that the educational system produces and the opportunities it really offers" when "newcomers to secondary education are led, by the mere fact of having access to, to expect it to gite them what it gave others at a time when they themselves were still excuded from it" (Bourdieu 2007 [1979]: 143).

[70] Even more examples from the case studies: As one of the interviewees in the Austrian case study utters: *"The teachers simply were a pain in my neck."* (Haidinger/Kasper 2012: 152) which is quite similar to a young person in the Danish case study who said: *"I've been picked at and I have been chopped down by all of my*

preferences to what they assume to be within their reach (caused by negative experiences and low self-esteem). For institutions mainly handling the transition from school to work, these experiences are not only a precondition for their work but a constant phenomenon they have to cope with and overcome.

3) **Education as *Bildung* and the misrecognition of informal and non-formal learning**

An important notion is the aspect of capability for education as "Bildung", which has been emphasised in several case studies (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria etc.). A precondition for processes of Bildung (understood here as cultural self-formation) is to create a context for and stimulation of practical reasoning and biographical reflexivity. *"Bildung points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and aesthetic concerns. (…) It entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. Bildung, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the 'good life', of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creation."* (Bleicher 2006: 365) This definition of education as Bildung entails a wider perspective on *informal* and *non-formal*[71] learning and points to artistic, creative and non-standardised experiences and can be path breaking for the orientation, formation and the recognition of young adults (Switzerland, France). In fact, artistic expression is often not acknowledged as a resource due to the dominance of labour market employability. But apart from the intrinsic value of artistic expression, there is a risk that focusing on hard skills will turn out counterproductive in relation to aspirations for education and learning? (Nussbaum 2010)? In terms of the CA again, education can be understood as an end in itself concerning 'a truly human life' – a part of Nussbaum´s capability for: *"Senses, Imagination*

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teachers through three to four years and also in the technical school, I really do not know what they had against me" (Jensen/Kjeldsen 2012: 129). And the German case study reveals *"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")"* (Düker/Ley 2012: 32).

[71] The understanding of life long learning and the differentiation between formal, non-formal and informal education can be found in EU commissions' communication on: "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" (COM (2001) 678) where the: *"Members States will be encouraged to provide the legal framework to implement more widely the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning."* (ibid.: 17). The three terms are defined as. 1) **Formal learning**: *"Learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective"* (ibid.: 32). 2) **Non-formal learning**: *"Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective."* (ibid.: 33). 3) **Informal learning**: *"Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or "incidental"/random)."* (ibid.: 32). For a more comprehensive discussion and literature review on the these three types of learning see (Colley/Hodkinson/Malcolm 2002) or (Hodkinson/Colley/Malcolm 2003)

and Thought." which is: *"informed and cultivated by an adequate education"* (Nussbaum 2011: 33) and to finally support and achieve democratic citizenship (cf. Nussbaum 2006).

4) The informational base for choice making in a professional working alliance

Different guidance services, such as study and career counsellors already in the compulsary schools and in the transition from school to work or further education, should strive for equipping the individual with a *comprehensive informational basis for making choices.* This should not only pertain to the transition, but also to employment-related aspects as well as the potential decision to return into education for a certain period (life-long education). For the group of vulnerable young citizens, this service could also include that the professionals in these services mediate between the youngsters and the company or training placement when problems occur in the relationships. For instance in the Swiss case study: *"[t]he coaches also play an important role in relation to employers. They act as intermediaries and/or mediators between the youngsters and their bosses"* (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 191).[72] In this way, professionals could help to avoid a rupture in the internship / apprenticeship placement (see also Denmark). Furthermore the case studies demonstrate that it is important to go beyond the sole question of getting full access to information. Moreover, education to choice and decision making is a fundamental aspect of this crucial process and can only be established within a trustful and persistend working alliance between professionals and addressees (France, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland).

5) Capacity to aspire as a normative orientation (for institutions)

Institutions can make a major difference if they facilitate a *capacity to aspire* in young people*.* The capacity to aspire indicates the desires for and imagination of the future and the normative frameworks from which they take form (Appadurai 2004). Thereby, institutions can become the main driving force behind the development of positive attitudes towards learning and becoming *capable citizens in European societies*. This could entail to discuss with young people in vocational training to the possibility of continuing on in higher education in a later period of their working life. We found that one of the main drivers against positive future prospects are the dominant *negative schooling experiences.* Of course, the capacity to aspire has its limits when expression of limited educational aspirations is not the outcome of adaptation to a limited set of opportunities. Partly, the capacity to aspire can be helpful when persons characterised by very negative schooling experiences are brought into situations where they experience themselves as "able to learn". Therefore, it is of paramount importance not to lower the educational expectations for youngsters at risk. Education is a full capability when standards are not torn down and

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[72] They further find that: *"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"* (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein 2012: 192).

when youngsters have the feeling to succeed the same level of expectation encountered by others youngsters. The role of institutions is then to function as enablers so that the learning process becomes empowering.

3.2 The capability for work

Even though there are several similarities to the aforementioned capability for education – indeed both are close to the subject matter and field the case studies are oriented at – the capability for work is the main objective of the researched institutions and encompasses future oriented opportunities for young adults. Hence, the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activities (including as well informal care work etc.), that one has reason to value. This central capability includes: *"being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition"* with others (Nussbaum, 2011: 33-34). It encompasses being free to choose ones' job or activity without being forced.[73] This entails already a crucial link to the capability for voice, which will be addressed below.

In relation to the capability for work we find the following issues relevant:

1) **Sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs and/or activities**

As it can be seen in many of the case studies, the lack of internships, practice or work opportunities in terms of available jobs is not only a question of resources, commodities and social justice in general, but is also the condition and the predetermined corridor wherein the institutions and measures have to navigate (i.e. Germany, Denmark, Austria, Italy); if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, professionals are not able to create a broader and deliberative information basis and are trimmed to external market conditions. Moreover, the free choice of occupation is often formally granted, but if the related internships or apprenticeship positions are not guaranteed it remains merely an empty formal right with no possibilities for realisation. Just to mention an empirical fragment from the German case: For the real freedom to choose an occupation, a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants should be secured (cf. Federal Constitutional Court), but with a current ratio of 89.9 to 100 this resource is not provided. This has an impact on the capabilities for work and education. Therefore, enabling youth to actualise their voice and choice in the selection of placements cannot be achieved without taking the services' external context into account such as local labour market conditions, funding issues, the

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[73] There should be at least some entitlement to be inactive without unbearable costs. Again, passive empowerment matters – e.g. the issue of available cash benefits for inactive people and their conditionalities, i.e. what kind of inactivity is socially recognised and compensated for? What kinds of inactivity are not? etc.

social responsibility of companies and the wider policy environment. For now this may serve as an example of how a capability can be missed when a needed *commodity* is not obtainable. In this regard the Austrian government passed a so-called "training guarantee" for all young people under the age of 18. The aim of the guarantee is to provide every school leaver, who cannot continue school-based education, with an apprenticeship place. The main instrument for this is to replace existing ALMP measures that mainly served to prepare young people for an apprenticeship in the regular labour market with so-called supra-company apprenticeship. (see Atzmüller in this volume and the Austrian case study as well) Despite the differences in national transition regimes this policy can serve as a practical answer to the growing crisis in VET, but only if the earned certificates are not devaluated due to their misrecognition*.*

2) The prevention of discriminatory practices and labelling processes with regard to measures and institutions

Keeping in mind that the target group in this project has been designated as being 'vulnerable' in terms of a lack of capabilities, the question of labelling processes becomes apparent and questionable at the same time. On the one hand, the individualisation and contractualisation of programmes is one of the objectives in several institutions and seems to be conducive due to the variety of biographical transitions. On the other hand this promotes the idea (and sometimes myth) of a pedagogical feasibility to solve (structural) problems on the individual level (see Germany, Denmark, Switzerland). As the swiss case illustrates,*"the move towards contractualisation is intrinsically ambivalent. It potentially opens the way towards social policies fostering individual emancipation, but at the same time, it also makes access to welfare benefits more constraining and selective"* (Bonvin/Dif-Pradalier/Rosenstein in this volume) and induces a transfer of responsibility from society to the youngster. Furthermore within measures discriminatory practices became evident (see Poland).

3) The infrastructure and (material) resources of the transition measures in itself

The infrastructure and (material) resources of the transition measures in itself is a yardstick for practical learning and the encouragement for participating in constructive - in terms of productive, useful and tangible - learning processes. According the Austrian Case Study, it became obvious that [t]he motivation for learning and working was positively influenced by youngsters' chance of doing something productive, useful and tangible. This involves several features: Learning processes in apprenticeship training must imply the production of something visible and a useful outcome (1). The production process itself is not only physically or psychically tiring but also makes youngsters aware of their capacity to form and shape raw material into something of completely different appearance (2). The production of things for daily usage opens up immediate alternatives of agency and 'empowers' them in daily life – as professionals and as social agents. Youngsters not only learn for an abstract exam or for the commodification of their labour but for the application of their skills in daily

life (3). Finally, taking on responsibility for entire production processes – their supervision and self-determined organisation – strengthens the motivation to learn and consequently enhances the development of capabilities (4)" (Haidinger/Kasper in this volume). Here, the importance of a practical and supportive work environment in helping young people sustain their work placement and educate them about the world of work becomes essential.

4) Work-first vs. life first approaches and the "realistic" reference to the labour market

One of the research questions in the case studies was: Which skills are seen as relevant and how are they enabled? In several case studies, the question of "realistic" reference to the labour market became crucial. A follow up question would be: do professionals refer to concepts of employability and do they go beyond this instrumental perspective? This involves how each measure is structured (work-first vs. life first approach) and which opportunities they provide. Whereas in some case studies there is direct and concrete link to the working world (see Austria, Poland, UK) in other studies the working world is dominant but more virtual (see Germany, Denmark, Sweden). Both can be an empowering and constraining at the same time, whereas on the one hand this transition phase can be a space for manoeuvre in both ways (as a safe space or as a leeway for creativity) and on the other hand the working world and the labour market can be an objective which problematically becomes very dominant in the interactions between professionals and young adults. So while it may be important for the young adult to be integrated into society partly through meeting their wider obligations to others and society, only some of these may be met through (paid) work in general, and the young people should not be explicitly or implicitly forced into a particular type of work when other forms of work or activities may be more appropriate and valued.

5) The enabling of adequate skills vs. realistic perspectives

The findings of the case studies provide useful insights into what kind of work young people find reason to value. On the other hand, it sometimes turned out that 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 (positive) social mobility in the sense that measuring progress is by the extension of freedom (Sen 1998: 8), which is at the heart of the capability approach. This also implies that the constraints of the labour market and aspirations for valuable work may not be developed because of a lack of education or a lack of knowledge about working life due to the biographical backgrounds and social networks in which the young person operates. Furthermore, the type of work that young people value is not static and preferences change over time.

"Realistic perspectives" and their handling and negotiation became a crucial point within several case studies (see Germany, Denmark). This can be read in two directions: in a

positive version as the creation and support of a condition for practical reasoning, in a negative reading as a form of adaptive preferences. In the negative interpretation, individual reflexivity is transformed through institutional practices with the aim of aligning aspirations with institutional demands. In this respect, aspirations and opportunities are curtailed by the adaptation to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of "adaptive preferences". However, "realistic perspectives" are not inherently a bad thing - indeed they are inescapable - but if the adaptation leads to a massive displacement from a person's original inherent concerns, young people are forced to cope with alienation – an eminent issue in this context. Our assumption is that young people's concerns are already supported by reasoned valuations – which themselves are bound and adapted to their context. This dialectic of respecting and regulating young people's aspirations (and sometimes even wishes and desires) has to be coped with institutionally.

6) Good and meaningful work as a normative orientation

In a normative reading, capability for work entails a social definition of "good and meaningful work" (i.e. those jobs that are recognised as valuable by society at large) and ought to be wide-ranging enough to encompass all types of activities that young people consider as valuable. This means that the definition of what is a "valuable job" should be wide enough to take into account the wishes and desires of all young people. This normative idea of good and meaningful work becomes relevant on all levels. It does not only pertain what could be desirable for each young adult and which aspirations are favoured (and socially accepted), but also to the opportunities the transitional sector itself offers - as an institution of social mobility or as an institution tending only to the demand side of the labour market and thus activating young people for employability. In several institutions and transitional regimes the idea of what constitutes good and meaningful work is lacking (i.e. Germany, Italy).

3.3 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 2012). On a subject oriented (but not individualistic) level, capability for voice is the real freedom to express one's wishes, expectations, desires, etc. and really make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made. In relation to this capability we find the following issues relevant:

1) Voice as a substantiation of citizenship and social rights

The capability for voice becomes relevant on the societal level when looking at questions of citizenship and social rights within national transition regimes. Being in a (material and facing) situation in which the transition from school to work is seen as a developmental

space and is socially perceived as less problematic, would be generally desirable and a productive normative orientation for youth policy. Nevertheless in employment centred regimes disadvantaged young people are - quite paradoxically - even more pressured to make decisions on their future that might have only partly predictable consequences by applying practical reasoning, but without the preconditions for practical reasoning being met (such as access to all relevant information, time for reflecting one's conception of the good in the light of available options etc.).

2) The dominance of people processing and the invisibility of exit options

Looking at the institutional level, the main objective of public action is - in the words of the CA - to create a broader (and deliberative) informational basis on the one hand and open up new opportunities on the other hand. Within the case studies, critical questions were raised about whether the dominance of people processing technologies and a narrow view on employability within Active Labour Market Programs (ALMP) is constraining these aims (see especially Germany). Furthermore, in several local transition institutions the possibility of an exit option[74] was not made clear or even not assumed, and the young adults felt like having the last – and not very likely – chance to jump on the bandwagon to the labour market. As the Austrian case study puts it: "the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of 'getting lost on the street', becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living" (Haidinger/Kasper in this volume). Therefore, the assumption of voluntariness within the programmes and the aspect of agency in general have to be challenged.

3) Participation within the support process and the democratisation of social service organisations

Within the case studies, it was asked to what extent young people are able to have voice in the design and delivery of the institutions and measures. In almost all case studies, 'voice' options are mainly available in the young adults' relationship with local agents and professionals. Insofar, participation within the support process becomes crucial. This does

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[74] Bonvin states that "in the capability perspective, the achievement of this processual dimension of real freedom requires the equal availability of three alternatives (Hirschman, 1970) for each and every individual: he or she should be able to choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or nego- tiate 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 public employment agency). The effective availability of these three options features as a necessary condition for the enhancement of his or her capability set" (Bonvin 2012: 12)

not only entail that multiple opportunities and aims are possible and made transparent in the support process, but also that youngsters are involved in the process of decision-making and perceive themselves as part of a working alliance. According to Lareau (2003), a "sense of constraint" can typically be observed in working class and 'underclass' youth. First of all, many young people may have very narrow horizons in terms of what type of employment they aspire to, partly shaped by gender stereotypes and a lack of role models, but still: *"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."* (Hollywood/Egdall/McQuaid 2012: 220). Secondly, they are not seeing themselves in the position of demanding anything and remain sceptical and doubtful towards agents of social institutions. They tend to comply with the decisions and actions of state agents, at least on the surface. Moreover, they do not expect that institutions meet their needs and requirements. Insofar, a "sense of entitlement" has to be institutionally enabled and subjectively enacted aiming at fulfilling young peoples' self-conscious expectation that institutions and their agents respond to their needs and aspirations. Here we traced the basic question of adaptive preferences and the code of realistic perspectives (see above and as well the German and the Swedish case). There was even less evidence that programmes sufficiently involved young people in the development and implementation of the programmes (see every case study).

4) The need for a sustainable capability space for young people

In this respect, basic questions of self-determination and agency have to be raised within this concept of the capability for voice (i.e. Zimmermann 2005). This pertains to methodological issues as well as to the evaluation of transition processes and finally to a normative orientation in transitional regimes and society in general.

Understanding youth as a specific transition period can be seen as an important aspect when securing the opportunity to re-make choices made within this time of transition either from school to further education, from school to work or even from early youth to adulthood. This period could be conceptualised as a sustainable capability space (see Denmark, Germany in detail but other case studies as well). In our conceptual understanding a sustainable capability space preserves a period and a space for flourishing in a supportive and developing environment..Whereas adolescence is often seen as a delay or suspension of an activity or a law – which would point to stagnation – the concept of a sustainable capability space refers to a time of growth and human flourishing, wherein the young persons have time and space to express their desires, develop their aspirations and life plans they have reason to value. This is therefore a new kind of understanding and it fits well to the dynamics of the capability approach: *"This amounts to seeing a person in as it*

were, an 'active' rather than a 'passive' form (but neither the various states of being nor even the "doings" need necessarily be 'athletic' ones)." (Sen 1990: 44)

Accordingly, job orientation could be understood as a long-term issue and leave acknowledged "space" for trial and error as a part of a period of self-determination. In the case studies, young people often experience a lot of time pressure in terms of decision making (Austria). In this sense the resources provided by schools aimed at equalising skills of their students, catch-up classes and individual consultations (see Poland) could become a part of a sustainable capability space. The informational basis likewise seems of importance as it influences unintended programme drop-out (France).

It appears that voice was a crucial element of some projects. A capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate. More generally, a project will be enabling if its operation is one of value in the eyes of the young adult and they for that reason chose to participate. Young people should not be compelled to participate in experimental programmes; rather they should be invited to get involved which requires that they are well informed. According to this, we can say that among the studied projects, very few if any, pay special attention to the capability for voice *per se*. Capability for voice is not explicitly an end or a means to be achieved by the projects.

So far we can state that the capability for voice can be seen as a 'transmission belt' for the other two capabilities and perhaps as a link between them. On the one hand, having a voice only becomes crucial when (real) opportunities of education and work are provided; because if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, this processual dimension of freedom turns out to be a chimera and can be stated as a biographical reflexivity without embodiment and materialisation. On the other hand these opportunities are in need of a practical reasoning for being able to form a conception of the good, to engage in reflection about the planning of one's own life and in the end to value educational and occupational choices.

4. Conclusions - A meta understanding of combined resources, commodities and capabilities and their conversion factors

Means and end confusion in relation to education and work

Education and certificates gained through educational programs are supposed to be necessary prerequisites for work opportunities and thus related to the capability for work. As can be seen from the case studies, however, in some cases learning on the job is the best way for some of the youngsters. Therefore, one may call education a *means* for another

end, namely the freedom – or capability – to seek the work position one has reason to value and as a result have the freedom to shape one kind of life rather than another and *vice versa*. In many of the cases, work and education are situated in bi-dimensional relations. Within the relation between capability for work and education we find that education often assumes an instrumental role and is devoted to a substantial capability, namely the capability for work. Capabilities for education become valuable because being successful at school is important to guarantee the realisation of what the youngsters we met valued. If this cannot be achieved, it leads to unbearable situations: "without studies, no work and your life is ruined". Therefore, the capability for education is not seen as an end in itself but rather as a means for access to a chosen life. As a result of the empirical investigation it has become quite clear that one of the three single valuable capabilities should not be promoted at the cost of the others. The studies show that the capability for education in particular is an important necessity for the good life in other domains. In the French case, for example, students' diplomas matter in different situations. The Baccalauréat (A-levels) is envisaged here as a conversion factor, increasing the young persons' positive ability to achieve something worth doing. The social norm does indeed favour this qualification in order to access the job market more securely. Thus, formal educational achievements act as a social conversion factor. This has important implications for the young people that will not be encouraged or even given the opportunity to choose the life they have reason to value. Instead, they are being persuaded to pursue a kind of life conduct which is valued according to external norms. As can be seen from the Polish case, this is outside their real influence and thus: *"In this sense, it is connected to Bourdieu's assessment that its role is to reproduce social order and legitimise this reproduction."* (see Poland) The reproduction of inequality through education is by no means ground breaking or an unexpected finding. In a sense education forms ones: *"ability to exercise freedom"* and the individual freedom *"may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach"* (Sen 1989: 55).

A strong relationship between the capability for education and work

As mentioned earlier, there is a conceptual and important difference. We can observe in the different case studies that education is often closely connected to the capability for work. This double perspective on education in relation to work and the good life one has reason to value raises several problems for vulnerable young people within Europe, especially when the certificates and qualifications are unequally distributed and thereby cause inequalities in the space of other valuable capabilities, such as the capability for voice. Therefore, on a macro level, this causes several paradoxes and counterproductive practices particularly in life-course transitions whether from finished education into the labour market or from compulsory education to further job-qualifying education. For instance in the case of Germany, when leaving lower secondary school it is obvious that finishing school with a general qualification for apprenticeship entrance is by no means an absolute guarantee for a

job and training placement. Therefore it can be stated that to foster the capabilities for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. We find similarities across several different contexts as risks when facing these transition periods.

The capability for voice as a just negotiation with exit options

When making informed professional and political decisions within this field of interest it seems of relevance to have in mind the relation between resources (commodities) and the different structural and individual conversion factors. The decisions made need to secure what could be called a *just negotiation with exit options* between youth services and families with the young persons' aspirations, wishes and needs at the centre. *Just negotiation with exit options* would imply that a young person is not forced to adapt his or her choices to the counsellors or families idea of „realistic perspectives" in relation to the labour market situation at the present. Real freedom to choose in this matter requires that the choices the young individuals make do not result in discrimination when it comes to valuable social and professional integration. On the other hand this does not indicate that the young person should not reflect his or her wishes in relation to the *de facto* structures in the labour market or educational system, but they should be equipped with *an adequate informational basis for making choices*. In this manner, just measures will tend to allow youth on a well informed basis to choose what type of education they have reason to value. This opens up for a double sided understanding of education, both as a means for *good and meaningful work* and as an end in itself. In addition, the Frence case study highlights that the capability for voice can be developed through education and thereby the capability for education becomes fertile for the development of young people's ability to voice their concerns. When: "*The interviews show that developing capability for voice is at the very heart of the educational approach"* and *"a weak performance at school is generally related to a poor capability for voice",* then the three capabilies have *"transversal characteristics"* between each other (Berthet/Simon/Castets-Fontaine 2012: 106, 107, 111). Then again, "the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education. A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two other capabilities. On the one hand, claiming and voicing requires some self-confidence and skills provided by education. Capability for voice is not given per se but comes out of a formal and informal education. On the other hand, the access to the labour market and a valuable job is in France strongly dependent on the kind of degree gathered in education" (Berthet/Simon in this volume).

The mutual dependencies of the *empowerment* and the *freedom to choose dimension* go hand in hand with the finding that *"programmes that were most 'successful' tended to be those that were holistic, multidimensional and integrated in their approach to addressing youth disadvantage"* (Hollywood/Egdell/McQuaid/Michel-Schertges in this volume).

At last, if the above is brought into perspective, it could be discussed whether *enabling young people to act as capable citizens in European societies* in a just educational (transitional) system would entail a *sustainable capability space* for young adults that would secure:

1) through a manifold service system that each young person not only has access to information, but can form their own *informational basis for choice making in relation to education and work,*

2) the real freedoms and not merely the formal entitlements (veto or exit opportunities and necessary commodities for their actualisation) in relation to transitions between employment and education *vis a vis*. This implies that the voice of the young is seriously taken into account,

3) *interventions based on individual needs and resource alignment* for all young citizens that secure the real opportunity to enjoy the capabilities for voice, work and education meeting or exceeding a threshold determined through a democratic political process.

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