

European  
University  
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Department of Political and Social Sciences

**Dangerous Transitions in the 'New West' –  
Youth, Work, and Unemployment  
in Post-Soviet Lithuania**

**Herwig REITER**

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of  
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

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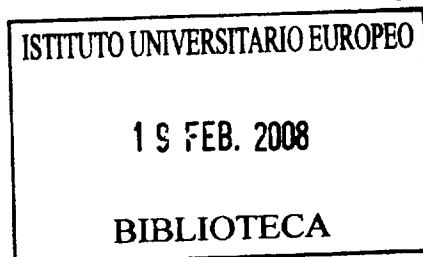








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## **Jury Members:**

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## **Abstract**

Unemployment is one of the most important new features of the post-communist world of work. Following the collapse of the communist regimes, the socio-economic reorientation of these societies towards market democracy brought an end to the 'communist taboo against unemployment' (Baxandall). Apart from organisational matters, unemployment now needs to be dealt with as an integral element of many individual and family biographies, and indicates the re-consideration of criteria of social integration throughout the life course. Young people hold a particularly delicate position in both the transformation of society and the accompanying process of knowledge renewal. First, unemployment has become an additional option in their transition to the world of work, which used to be rather linear. Second, it is largely up to them to negotiate 'old' and 'new' meanings and to carry them into the new society.

Against this background, the thesis, a qualitative-empirical exploration, studies emerging notions of work and unemployment among young people in the post-communist context of Lithuania, a country that represents a case of particularly rapid and radical transformation. In line with the two dimensions of unemployment mentioned above, the conceptual frame of reference consists of two sensitising concepts. On the one hand, the now available option of unemployment places young people in a situation of 'biographical uncertainty' (Wohlrab-Sahr). On the other hand, unemployment has become a new dimension of the '(mis)recognition' (Honneth) of a person's status in society. These two main axes of research conceptualise unemployment as an ambivalent moment of 'danger' (Douglas) that accompanies young people on their way to the world of work. Altogether, the study intends to contribute to youth sociology and to research into post-communist transformations.

The discussion of the empirical analysis, which is based on 30 in-depth interviews with young Lithuanians in linear and non-linear transitions to working life, is organised into three parts. The first discusses the reconstructed meanings of work and unemployment in the perspective of young people. The presentation of the findings follows the parties in an imagined triangle consisting of the individual, the state, and the 'other' (i.e. the unemployed), as well as their 'relations'. The second part reflects on a snapshot of the currently imagined gender-work relations and their consequences for anticipated family transitions in the perspective of young women revealing the landscape of perceived options. Finally, the third part introduces three patterns of youth transitions to working life (continuation, liberation, and trajectory) together with associated time perspectives of biographical uncertainty. The conclusion reviews the main lines of argumentation against the background of the initial sensitising conceptual frame of reference and identifies issues for further investigation.



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I consider it a great, yet ambivalent privilege that I had the possibility to produce a PhD-thesis about a topic as profane as unemployment in post-communism in a place as remote from this reality as the Badia Fiesolana. My gratitude therefore must go especially to all young people in Lithuania that have agreed to participate in this study. I have met only a few of them personally but admire their resilience; and I can just hope that I managed to do justice to their lives and perspectives.

I am extremely thankful to my small Lithuanian 'team' of interviewers and translators, who did a marvellous job: Laura Cubajevaite, Justina Jakavonyte, Edita Puzaitė, Rasa Zakeviciute. They may not agree with all of my 'findings' but I hope they can agree with me that our cooperation was a great experience for all of us. It is thanks to Irena Sutiniene and Jurate Ruzaitė that I had found them. I am indebted to Algirdas Augustaitis for always knowing who to call; and to Arunas, Lina, Liudas, Odeta, and Vidas for having been generous hosts and friends during my stays in Lithuania and beyond. A number of people from Lithuania have provided helpful insights concerning the particularities of the country as well as practical support. They include Prof. Vincentas Dienys, Prof. Boguslavas Gruzevskis, Linas Kukuraitis, Julija Moskvina, Prof. Arunas Povilunas, and Kristina Sliavaite.

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## Table of contents - short

1	Introduction and overview .....	7
<b><u>Part I - Conceptual frame of reference.....17</u></b>		
2	Work, unemployment and uncertainty in East and West.....	19
2.1	The norm of employment in the life course – 'East and West'.....	19
2.2	Uncertainty, unemployment and the changing biographical condition of the individual ....	40
3	Conceptual frame of reference of the exploration .....	47
3.1	Methodological prologue – 'sensitising concepts' and the status of prior knowledge and hypotheses in the research process.....	47
3.2	The sensitising concept of recognition.....	50
3.3	The sensitising concept of biographical uncertainty.....	55
3.4	The 'moment' of observation – the character of transitions .....	58
<b><u>Part II - Research design, method, process.....63</u></b>		
4	Research design and practice .....	65
4.1	The research interest and approach.....	65
4.2	Research tool – the problem-centred interview .....	66
4.3	Data – interviews with 30 young people.....	67
4.4	The research process .....	69
4.5	From data to representation – cases, categories and concepts .....	76
4.6	Limits of the study - an interpretive, explorative project.....	83
<b><u>Part III - Context matters: youth transitions from the planned to the market economy.....87</u></b>		
5	USSR – transitions to labour .....	89
5.1	Labour planning in the USSR.....	90
5.2	Soviet education for labour.....	95
5.3	Youth job placement - mechanisms and shortcomings.....	104
5.4	Concluding remarks .....	109
6	Lithuania – transitions to the labour market.....	111
6.1	Education for the market.....	111
6.2	Between education and the market – some figures.....	131
6.3	Concluding remarks.....	150

<b>Part IV - Dangerous transitions in the 'New West'</b> .....	<b>153</b>
<b>7 Meanings of work and unemployment between the West and the Past</b> .....	<b>155</b>
7.1 The post-communist paradox of desolidarisation and the triangle of (non-) solidarity .....	158
7.2 Work, unemployment and the figure of the unemployed – the case of SAULIUS.....	165
7.3 Conclusion .....	174
<b>8 The individual, the unemployed, the state, and the exit option – a heuristic typology</b> .....	<b>177</b>
8.1 Dimensions of the typology .....	179
8.2 Grouping of cases .....	183
8.3 A heuristic typology of perceived configurations in individual-state-unemployed relations ..	185
8.4 Discussion .....	202
8.5 Conclusion .....	211
<b>9 Gender-work relations in the perspective of young women</b> .....	<b>217</b>
9.1 Soviet gender order and regime .....	219
9.2 The gender order and regime in post-Soviet Lithuania.....	221
9.3 Towards an inductive classification of imagined gender-work arrangements among young women .....	231
9.4 Discussion .....	249
9.5 Conclusion .....	250
<b>10 Time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in youth transitions to working life</b> .....	<b>255</b>
10.1 Youth and uncertainty – two studies .....	257
10.2 Uncertainty in the time concepts of Schütz and Mead.....	266
10.3 Continuation, liberation, and trajectory - mapping time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions .....	276
10.4 Discussion .....	303
10.5 Conclusion .....	317
<b>11 Concluding remarks</b> .....	<b>323</b>
<b>12 References</b> .....	<b>337</b>
<b>13 Appendix</b> .....	<b>367</b>
13.1 Appendix 1 – Item battery qualitative interview.....	367
13.2 Appendix 2 – 30 cases, overview.....	368
13.3 Appendix 3 - Case classification and sampling in anchor case analysis.....	374
13.4 Appendix 4 – Case classification with cluster analysis .....	382
13.5 Appendix 5 – Qualitative sample - dendrogram using Ward method.....	384
13.6 Appendix 6 – Codes and code families.....	385
13.7 Appendix 7 – Interview SAULIUS, excerpt .....	387



## Table of contents - extended

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction and overview</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b><u>Part I - Conceptual frame of reference</u></b> .....		<b><u>17</u></b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Work, unemployment and uncertainty in East and West</b> .....	<b>19</b>
2.1	The norm of employment in the life course – 'East and West'.....	19
2.1.1	Employment, unemployment and the Soviet ideology of work.....	20
2.1.2	Employment and social citizenship – a Western perspective.....	27
2.1.3	A Western model goes East?.....	34
2.2	Uncertainty, unemployment and the changing biographical condition of the individual ....	40
2.2.1	Individualisation under the institutionalisation of the life course .....	41
2.2.2	Life course policy and the construction of certainty .....	43
<b>3</b>	<b>Conceptual frame of reference of the exploration</b> .....	<b>47</b>
3.1	Methodological prologue – 'sensitising concepts' and the status of prior knowledge and hypotheses in the research process.....	47
3.2	The sensitising concept of recognition.....	50
3.2.1	Unemployment and misrecognition .....	52
3.3	The sensitising concept of biographical uncertainty.....	55
3.3.1	Unemployment and biographical uncertainty .....	57
3.4	The 'moment' of observation – the character of transitions .....	58
<b><u>Part II - Research design, method, process</u></b> .....		<b><u>63</u></b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Research design and practice</b> .....	<b>65</b>
4.1	The research interest and approach.....	65
4.2	Research tool – the problem-centred interview .....	66
4.3	Data – interviews with 30 young people.....	67
4.4	The research process.....	69
4.5	From data to representation – cases, categories and concepts .....	76
4.5.1	Data analysis .....	76
4.5.2	Representation and choice of topics.....	80
4.6	Limits of the study - an interpretive, explorative project.....	83
<b><u>Part III - Context matters: youth transitions from the planned to the market economy</u></b> .....		<b><u>87</u></b>
<b>5</b>	<b>USSR – transitions to labour</b> .....	<b>89</b>
5.1	Labour planning in the USSR .....	90
5.1.1	Early roots and main institutions.....	90
5.1.2	Limited scope.....	92
5.2	Soviet education for labour .....	95
5.2.1	Education for labour – guidance, aspirations, and destinations .....	96
5.2.2	The three main tracks of Soviet upper secondary education .....	98
5.2.3	The main destinations of graduates.....	101
5.3	Youth job placement - mechanisms and shortcomings.....	104
5.3.1	The placement of graduates from vocational education.....	105
5.3.2	The placement of graduates from secondary-specialised and higher education .....	107
5.4	Concluding remarks .....	109

<b>6</b>	<b>Lithuania – transitions to the labour market.....</b>	<b>111</b>
6.1	Education for the market.....	111
6.1.1	Reorienting education – a general picture.....	111
6.1.2	From 'social usefulness' to the 'needs of the market' – the example of the reform of initial vocational education and training.....	113
6.1.3	The Lithuanian education system.....	119
6.1.4	Movement of students through the system.....	124
6.2	Between education and the market – some figures.....	131
6.2.1	Enrolment trends and youth activity.....	131
6.2.2	Outcomes of education.....	136
6.2.3	Youth transition indicators.....	142
6.2.4	The labour market.....	146
6.3	Concluding remarks.....	150

**Part IV - Dangerous transitions in the 'New West'.....153**

<b>7</b>	<b>Meanings of work and unemployment between the West and the Past.....</b>	<b>155</b>
7.1	The post-communist paradox of desolidarisation and the triangle of (non-) solidarity.....	158
7.1.1	Persistent solidarity in attitudes/values.....	159
7.1.2	Weak solidarity in action.....	160
7.1.3	Beyond the paradox of desolidarisation.....	163
7.2	Work, unemployment and the figure of the unemployed – the case of SAULIUS.....	165
7.2.1	Dialogue with the West.....	167
7.2.2	Dialogue with the Past.....	169
7.2.3	Conflicting perspectives.....	172
7.3	Conclusion.....	174
<b>8</b>	<b>The individual, the unemployed, the state, and the exit option – a heuristic typology.....</b>	<b>177</b>
8.1	Dimensions of the typology.....	179
8.1.1	The image of the unemployed.....	179
8.1.2	Citizenship – state-citizen relations.....	180
8.1.3	Response - exit options.....	181
8.2	Grouping of cases.....	183
8.3	A heuristic typology of perceived configurations in individual-state-unemployed relations ..	185
8.3.1	Type I – 'There are more of those people who are not lazy but cannot find a job.'...	186
8.3.2	Type II – 'They cannot adapt, in Darwin's words.'.....	189
8.3.3	Type III – 'People don't even look for a job, some of them.'.....	193
8.3.4	Type IV – 'Oh, look, he doesn't work, but he has money.'.....	196
8.3.5	Type V – 'My parents are at home. There is no work. Unemployed.'.....	199
8.4	Discussion.....	202
8.4.1	The unemployed – between stereotype and exception.....	203
8.4.2	The state – troubled and potentially irresponsible.....	204
8.4.3	Beyond the triangle – exit options.....	206
8.5	Conclusion.....	211

<b>9</b>	<b>Gender-work relations in the perspective of young women .....</b>	<b>217</b>
9.1	Soviet gender order and regime .....	219
9.2	The gender order and regime in post-Soviet Lithuania.....	221
9.2.1	The post-Soviet Lithuanian gender regime .....	221
9.2.2	The post-Soviet Lithuanian gender order .....	226
9.3	Towards an inductive classification of imagined gender-work arrangements among young women .....	231
9.3.1	Pattern I – Exit to independence .....	233
9.3.2	Pattern II – Independence.....	235
9.3.3	Pattern III – Independence and mutual support.....	237
9.3.4	Pattern IV – Between independence and dependence.....	238
9.3.5	Pattern V – Responsibility and survival .....	241
9.3.6	Pattern VI – Reconciliation .....	243
9.3.7	Pattern VII – Sponsorship .....	245
9.4	Discussion.....	249
9.5	Conclusion .....	250
<b>10</b>	<b>Time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in youth transitions to working life.....</b>	<b>255</b>
10.1	Youth and uncertainty – two studies.....	257
10.1.1	Globalisation and uncertainty in youth transitions.....	257
10.1.2	Youth, time, uncertainty.....	260
10.2	Uncertainty in the time concepts of Schütz and Mead.....	266
10.2.1	The uncertainty of knowledge and the project of action – Alfred Schütz.....	267
10.2.2	The contingency of the future and the uncertainty of the outcome of action – George H. Mead .....	268
10.2.3	Towards a conceptual and empirical identification of time perspectives of biographical uncertainty .....	270
10.3	Continuation, liberation, and trajectory - mapping time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions.....	276
10.3.1	The Pattern of continuation and the time perspective of certainty production: MAGDALENA .....	277
10.3.2	The Pattern of liberation and the time perspective of contingency reproduction: FACE .....	282
10.3.3	The Pattern of trajectory and the time perspective of restoration: NATALJA .....	291
10.4	Discussion.....	303
10.4.1	The empirical space of the study – short case profiles.....	303
10.4.2	Synthesis of the three patterns.....	313
10.5	Conclusion .....	317
<b>11</b>	<b>Concluding remarks .....</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>367</b>
13.1	Appendix 1 – Item battery qualitative interview.....	367
13.2	Appendix 2 – 30 cases, overview.....	368
13.3	Appendix 3 - Case classification and sampling in anchor case analysis.....	374
13.3.1	Case classification I – based on case discussion .....	374
13.3.2	Case classification II – clustering.....	376
13.3.3	Case classification and sampling for case analysis .....	379
13.4	Appendix 4 – Case classification with cluster analysis .....	382
13.5	Appendix 5 – Qualitative sample - dendrogram using Ward method.....	384
13.6	Appendix 6 – Codes and code families.....	385
13.7	Appendix 7 – Interview SAULIUS, excerpt.....	387



## 1 Introduction and overview

When the former socialist countries<sup>1</sup> associated with the Soviet Union entered the process of transformation, the outcomes of these changes could not be predicted. After several years, and under the expert guidance of international organisations, it became more and more clear that some of them would very quickly transform into capitalist market economies and become economically and politically associated with, and, eventually, members of the European Union. Some scholars have conceptualised the process of transformation as 'delayed' or 'catch up modernisation' (*nachholende Modernisierung*); Zapf e.g. 1994) that, at its core, involves the 'successful' development of welfare and, more precisely, the following elements: competitive democracy, a market economy, welfare state, and mass consumption.

But the change from a socialist to a capitalist regime also implies the loss of the advantages of a regime of certainty – even though this may have been more ideological construct than empirical reality - and the transition to a regime of uncertainty where the gain of degrees of freedom is related to an increase in insecurity both on the structural level and the level of life worlds. One of the major changes is related to the world of work and employment. In the capitalist context individual labour is in principle commodified and the relation between the labour force (mostly citizens) and the state is mediated by a variety of mechanisms of decommodification. The frame of reference for a person's 'movement' from birth to death is an institutionalised life course, which enables the experience of continuity by suggesting a (temporally structured) order of status passages and probable patterns of growing up, working and getting old (Kohli 1985). Types of social policy regimes are associated with a variety of life course policies (Leisering/Leibfried 1999; Mayer 2001). While the life course serves as a means of social integration (Schwinn 2001), it is also a normative programme of life-long socialisation with employment and the family at its core. Recent developments in European social policy suggest the increasing significance of employment, alongside a certain trend, different in each country, towards the re-commodification, residualisation and individualisation of risks and responsibilities. Employment plays a crucial role in this process of redefining the relationship between the citizen and the state: the shift from passive to active forms of labour market policy, or the emphasis on flexibility or life long learning as a contribution to the solution of the gap between initial education and the skills need in the labour market are but two examples.

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<sup>1</sup> I generally use the terms 'Soviet', 'socialist' and 'communist', and, respectively, 'socialism' and 'communism', as synonyms and without reference to the distinctions relevant to certain academic discourses (e.g. Kornai 1992: 9-11).

In many ways these Western trends are radicalised in the catch up modernisation of the post-socialist countries. Although elements of the 'old' model were sometimes preserved, welfare is residual in most cases, and more and more linked to employment. Furthermore, the meaning of work is completely redefined. While the socialist 'economies of shortage' could, in general, guarantee full employment,<sup>2</sup> unemployment became a mass phenomenon during the transformation. Overt poverty and gendered differences in the access to the world of work are the result. Both the institutional and cognitive dimensions of this unique transformation from socialist planned economies to recognised market democracies within a few years establish these countries as a 'New West' within Europe.

The research project underlying this thesis is rooted in two interrelated main guiding hypotheses<sup>3</sup> that open up as well as delimit the field for the study and indicate two levels of analysis – a normative and a biographical level.<sup>4</sup> The first, *normative hypothesis* is that the western norm of an employment-centred life course (Kohli 1985), where participation in productive, formal employment is, whether explicitly or implicitly, the precondition for social citizenship, is now becoming relevant as a reference category for the orientations of young people in post-socialist contexts. It is assumed that the Western trend towards a certain package of mutual responsibilities between state and individual, and towards a tightening of the relationship between individual employment success, including the successful entry to the world of work, and recognition, is moving East and is reflected in the articulations of 'life management' (Bynner/Helve 1996) of young people. But, and this is the second, *biographical hypothesis*, uncertainties triggered by societal transformation and especially mass unemployment after the collapse of the socialist regime, and the non-existence of an established normal biography, in the sense of a conglomerate of patterns of orientation, put young people on their way to the world of work into a situation of biographical uncertainty. The lack of guidelines for orientation in an increasingly complex societal environment, the awareness of this complexity and the related feeling of uncertainty concerning self-status make individual lives and life plans essentially unpredictable.

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<sup>2</sup> Unemployment was 'negligible in scale' (Kornai 1992: 530) with the exception of Yugoslavia (with an increasingly high level of youth unemployment) (Woodward 1995; Primorac/Babic 1989).

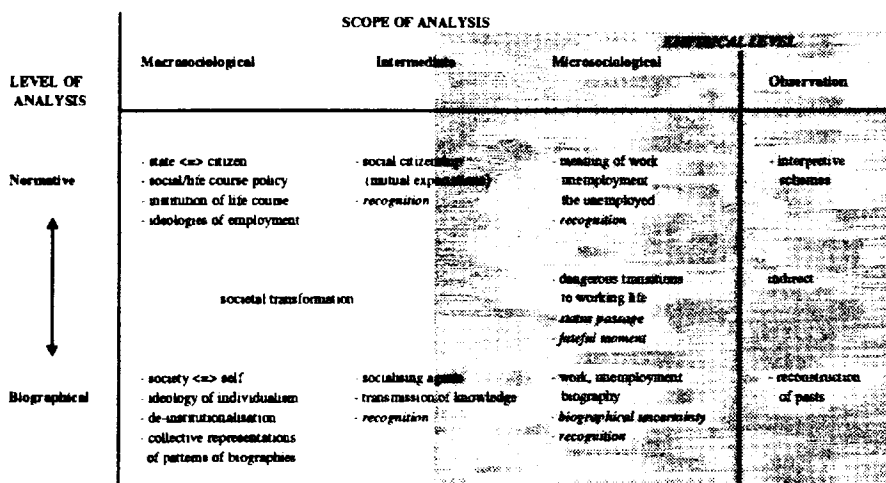
<sup>3</sup> For the status of the hypothesis in the research process see Chapter 3.1.

<sup>4</sup> The label 'normative' is used here to refer to the 'prescriptive' discourses and ideas associated with employment and unemployment; it does not here refer to theory. The 'biographical' level is essentially about the sociological relationship between the individual and society as mediated through work activities and the status of un/employment in this context. The originally added term 'ontological', that should underline the crucial status of work and employment in human 'being' in the societal context of advanced capitalism was abandoned due to its strong philosophical connotation. I want to thank Martin Kohli for critically commenting on this point.

These two main axes of research conceptualise unemployment as an ambiguous moment of 'danger' in the transition to the world of work in the sense of Mary Douglas' anthropological work – 'Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is indefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others' (Douglas 1996/1966: 97). On the one hand, unemployment in post-communism has become a potentially problematic moral outcome of the transition with regard to a young person's (citizenship) status in society. On the other hand, the precarious character of post-communist youth transitions constitutes the danger of 'uncertainty within'. Thus, danger refers to both label and experience; the latter with regard to biographies, the former in the context of communities characterised by moral solidarity.

The analytic and conceptual framework of the project to be described in Chapters 2 and 3 is summarised in Figure 1.1. The grey area indicates the empirical scope of the study on the basis of the empirical reference.

**Figure 1.1 – Analytic and conceptual frame of reference**



The newly emerging notion of un/employment in post-socialist countries gives youth transitions, which used to be highly pre-structured and predictable during the communist regime (Wallace/Kovacheva 1998), a completely new status within the life course. The exploration of this 'new meaning' of work and unemployment from the perspective of young people in transition to working life is the main aim of this study. The underlying research interest addresses the question of how the new phenomenon of unemployment is accommodated within the life-worldly accounts and reflections of young people in transition. The two main guiding 'sensitising concepts' for the two levels of analysis are that of recognition (Honneth 1992, 2002, 2003) and of 'biographical uncertainty' (Wohlrab-Sahr

1992, 1993). In order to explicate their heuristic potential for the present study, questions and research issues with regard to the present puzzle are identified on the basis of these concepts. Their quality as '*sensitising*' concepts in the sense of Blumer (1940, 1954) consists in the way they are used to inform and prepare the research without letting them dominate the process of establishing the findings (see Chapter 3.1).

The study adopts a qualitative-explorative research approach and investigates young people in transition to the world of work in Lithuania. The motivation for the choice of this context was twofold. First, Lithuania represents a radically changing post-Soviet context for growing up. Of the European section of the former USSR, the three Baltic countries have witnessed the most rapid economic transformation: within less than 15 years they have transformed into EU market economies, and the categories of work, employment and unemployment are (still) undergoing a fundamental shift in meaning. Of these countries, Lithuania went the furthest and, according to the criteria of the World Bank (2005), became one of worldwide top 20 economies for doing business, leaving many established EU countries behind. But Lithuania also suffered the highest unemployment rates of the Baltic countries. The Lithuanian youth unemployment rate reached its peak of close to 31% in the year 2001. The overall unemployment rate was 16,5% in that year.

This situation of high unemployment, however, did not persist to the end of this project. By 2005 the youth unemployment rate had dropped to 15,7%, with an overall unemployment rate of 8,3% (European Commission 2006). While this rapid decrease in registered unemployment does not, in my view, alter the relevance of the original questions, it did modify my perspective on the material: as one of the reasons identified for this development, the issue of people leaving the country en masse ('exit' in the sense of Hirschman 1970) was considered in the analysis without being represented in the original conceptual frame of reference (see Chapter 8). Furthermore, the topic of migration as a response to the unemployment problem was omnipresent in the data and requires a closer look at state-citizen relations in an exit perspective.

A second reason for choosing Lithuania as a setting for the research was a pragmatic one. In the frame of my involvement as a consultant for youth policy development to the Lithuanian State Council for Youth Affairs (Jasiukaityte/Reiter 2002), I had the opportunity to gain an insight into this society in transformation, which, in fact, triggered my curiosity. And only the contacts that I established during this work allowed me to consider embarking on such a research enterprise.



The interviewees, the units of analysis, are young people in their transition to work (in a broad sense). One group consists of young people in non-linear, 'uncompleted' transitions. A second group comprises young people in linear transitions; they are 'on track' and attend school or are in tertiary education. Biographical transitions are particularly interesting for the observation of processes of 'self-ascertainment' (Hoerning 1987). Furthermore transitions can be conceptualised as both 'fateful moments' (Giddens 1991) and 'status passages' (Levy 1991, Heinz 1996), again emphasising the contrast between biographical and normative aspects.

Although the project follows, in its overall design, an actor-oriented approach to youth research (Heitmeyer/Hurrelmann 1992) it does not study young people's accounts in the sense of representations of a distinct age group. The patterns of orientation of young people, as well as their experiences of the transition, need to be related back to social and cultural changes, and to the institution of the life course itself as it embraces all age groups and defines the interdependence of their experiences. Therefore the argumentation throughout the paper will, to a large extent, be informed by concepts and discourses that are not usually perceived as part of the narrow field of youth research. This is done on purpose and could have the desired effect of contributing to the expansion of youth research perspectives.

My approach is that of a qualitative-empirical exploration. The limits of such an approach are obvious – explanation and the formulation of statements with prognostic power do not have priority. Conclusions need to be read accordingly. In terms of substance, and in line with the units of analysis, the present study is first of all a contribution to the sociology of youth and only secondarily to the sociology of post-communist transformations. A sociology of the life course that emphasises the interplay of institutional programmes *and* biographical projects shaped the overall perspective of the study in terms of interest and core categories. In addition to the methodological and conceptual framing that all academic work requires, the study also tries to do justice to sociology as a 'humanistic discipline' (Berger/Luckmann 1967: 211).

Youth transitions to working life in European countries have been studied extensively over the last decade. Comparative research about the employment transitions of young people in the old 'West', the established Western European market economies (and beyond) was advanced to the point where (social scientific) transition research has nearly become a separate strand within empirical youth research. But even this narrow field manages to accommodate a broad variety of approaches, differing in research interests, level of analysis,

and methodologies/data, as well as funding institutions (e.g. Bynner/Chisholm 1998).<sup>5</sup> An assessment of findings across the boundaries of certain approaches reveals that the field is organised into different camps and networks apparently separated by exchange barriers or incompatible language. Orientations and drives are highly diverse. Some have strong leanings towards social or youth policy, and develop a comprehensive as well as interdisciplinary perspective on youth transitions: they are methodologically diverse and have a focus on disadvantaged youth (e.g. Walther 2000, Walther et al. 2002, López Blasco et al. 2003, Kieselbach 2000).<sup>6</sup> A second group of comparative youth transition studies is embedded in studies of life course status passages and has a strong theoretical foundation in socialisation and life course theory: it has an explicit interest in mixing, integrating and further developing different methodologies and methods and is primarily 'academic' in terms of both funding and self-understanding, and is less directly linked with policy making (e.g. Heinz 1999, 2000a). A third approach could be termed 'socio-economic youth transition research'. It is technically highly advanced, mainly quantities-based, and primarily concerned with the movement of individuals and cohorts through transition systems as well as with the changing institutional matching of outcomes of (vocational) education and training and labour market needs (e.g. Shavit/Müller 1998, Kogan/Müller 2003, Müller/Gangl 2003, Blossfeld et al. 2005). From my point of view, this approach is closest to efforts of top-down social or 'human engineering', as discussed by Mills (2000/1959: chapter 5) in his critical review of American sociology. This is certainly the favourite type of research for policy institutions such as the European Commission/CEDEFOP: it is partly funded by these institutions and, more recently, even managed to organise data collection for comparative research within the framework of the European Union labour force survey (Müller/Gangl 2003). All three approaches provide most valuable insights into the world of youth transitions, but they also set their own standards for 'doing it right'.

Comparative youth transition research in the 'New West', the post-socialist countries developing into market democracies, is still in its infancy, but respective research networks are already under construction. Pioneering research in the 1990s includes, for instance,

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<sup>5</sup> To be sure, studies into 'youth transitions to adulthood' are the broader field of research in the background of the studies of transitions to working life. In fact, the boundary is sometimes not explicit. Indicative references are, for instance, Buchmann (1989), Wyn/Dwyer (1999).

<sup>6</sup> The publications, here and in the following, are indicative but as they are edited volumes they refer to the individual members in the networks supporting each approach. The mentioned references are by no means exhaustive, and this is not the place for a comparative discussion. It is also important to note that many important, especially British contributions (e.g. Roberts 1995, Furlong/Cartmel 2003) cannot easily be classified under these stylised headings. This might point to a less compartmentalised organisation of British social research altogether.

Bynner/Koklyagina (1995), Koklyagina Nurse (1998), Roberts (1998), and Roberts/Fagan (1999). Recent research associated with the third approach in terms of both methods and networking include Toomse (2003), Kogan/Unt (2005), Saar (2005), Robert/Bukodi (2005), Katus et al. (2005), Blossfeldt et al. (2005). Studies of this kind covering Lithuania are still missing and a recent attempt to integrate it into a comparative analysis of youth transitions failed because of the poor data quality of the Lithuanian sample (Iannelli 2002). Studies in post-socialist youth transitions to employment associated with the second approach, which has its European headquarters in Germany, focus on the new '*Länder*' of former East Germany. The perspective is necessarily comparative, with West Germany as a reference (e.g. Sackmann et al. 2000; based on life course data only: Matthes 2002). Youth studies of the first kind currently take some of the issues further East in the frame of an EU funded project.<sup>7</sup> The respective underlying diagnosis of flexibilised youth transitions in post-socialist countries is summarised in Wallace/Kovatcheva (1998) and Kovacheva (2001).

I would characterise my own approach as primarily influenced by the second of those traditions described above. My interest in issues of work, unemployment and the biographical aspects attached, originates in youth studies like Alheit/Glaß (1986; eng. Alheit 1994), Nölke (1993), and Beathge et al. (1988). However, as outlined above I do not study patterns of coping with unemployment, nor processes of marginalisation associated with unemployment, nor the life concepts of young people and the status of work within. For an earlier project I did on the biographical time structuring of disadvantaged young people in non-linear transitions see Reiter (2003b).

The thesis is organised into four parts. Part I (Chapters 2 and 3) frames and contextualises the research by discussing changes in the notions of work and employment in the West and the 'New West'. Chapter 2 starts with a general discussion of the transformation of notions of work and employment and its consequences for the status of young citizens (normative level). After that, it introduces one possible conceptual perspective on the loss of the certainties of the old system with regard to the organisation of individual life courses (biographical level). These two lines of argumentation conceptualise unemployment as an ambiguous moment of danger at the intersection of norms and experiences. Chapter 3 takes these two dimensions further by introducing the explorative research perspective along the two 'sensitising concepts' of 'biographical uncertainty' (Wohlrab-Sahr) and 'recognition' (Honneth). This chapter is framed by a brief methodological prologue about the use of

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.up2youth.org/>

'sensitising concepts', and some remarks concerning the moment of 'danger' in youth transitions at the end.

Part II (Chapter 4) presents the research interest, approach and process. It introduces the technique of the 'problem-centred interview' and the 30 interviews collected, and informs on the organisation of interviewer training and supervision, and the translation of the interviews. Furthermore, this part opens the 'black box' of how case reconstructions and cross-case analysis led to the representation of the findings on the basis of the collected material. Here the links between the four empirical chapters (7 to 10) are explained, as well as the way, in which the overall story running through the thesis is told in different ways in each of them. This part concludes with a reflection on the limits of the overall explorative and interpretive approach.

Part III (Chapters 5 and 6) has the status of an excursus. It explores the organisational framing of the transitions to working life of young people in post-Soviet Lithuania via the transition of the underlying institutional programmes from the logic of planning to the logic of market matching. In order to provide some institutional contextualisation for this study into changing meanings, Chapter 5 reconstructs the previously valid Soviet transition arrangements and discusses some ideological and institutional aspects, while Chapter 6 outlines the developments in post-Soviet Lithuania, focusing on educational reform and the transition into the labour market. These two chapters illuminate how the transformation of the role of 'the state' towards western standards changed the status of young people in relation to the now more uncertain outcomes of transitions to the world of work. This transformation of individual-state relations and the new transition uncertainties is at the core of the assessment of young people's perspectives on work and unemployment discussed in the chapters of the next part.

Part IV is the heart of the thesis in terms of empirical substance. Chapters 7 to 10 exemplify one way of representing both the key findings from the analysis and the way in which these findings emerged from the dialogue of cases, categories and concepts explained in Chapter 4. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with meanings of work and unemployment in two different ways. Chapter 7 discusses the establishment of knowledge about the new figure of the unemployed person between the two frames of reference of 'the West' and 'the Past' on the basis of one case. Chapter 8 synthesises the results of the cross-case analysis on the basis of the categories and dimensions identified in the course of the single-case analysis into an 'empirically grounded', heuristic typology. The three dimensions of the typology are the

image of the unemployed, state-citizen relations, and the response to possible discontent in terms of 'exit'. In this sense the *specific* conclusions of Chapter 7 on the basis of one case are challenged with the more *general* conclusions of Chapter 8 based on all cases. Chapter 9 presents patterns of imagined gender-work relations in the perspective of young women in the form of a classification. After a brief review of the Lithuanian gender order and regime, the classification organises seven empirically available patterns, each illustrated with a constitutive example, into an imagined progression from female independence to female dependence. The three dimensions in the background of the classification are the configuration of work and motherhood, the configuration of work and partnership, and the configuration of work and livelihood. Chapter 10, finally, introduces three patterns of post-communist youth transitions to working life. By integrating time concepts of uncertainty into the discussions of three single cases representing these three general patterns it is possible to arrive at a conceptually and empirically substantiated account of time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions to working life.

The concluding Chapter 11 reviews the main lines of argumentation against the background of the initial sensitising conceptual frame of reference as well as related areas of research, and indicates issues for further research.



## **Part I      Conceptual frame of reference**

This first part introduces the research perspective of the present study in two ways. Chapter 2 establishes a general perspective on the transformation of the post-communist world of work and its consequences for the status of young people. Unemployment is among the most important new features of this post-communist world of work. After the collapse of the communist regimes the socio-economic reorientation of society towards market democracy established unemployment as one of the new social problems in the 'New West' of Europe, of which Lithuania is a part. Apart from organisational matters, unemployment also requires the re-consideration of criteria of social integration across the life course and needs to be dealt with as a novel element of many individual and family biographies underlining the end of certainty promises associated with the Soviet regime.

Chapter 3 translates this general account of the post-communist transformation of the world of work into an explorative research perspective based on two 'sensitising concepts' that orient the whole research process. On the one hand, unemployment has become a new dimension of the 'recognition' or 'misrecognition' (Honneth) of a person's status in society. On the other hand, the newly available option of unemployment potentially puts young people into a situation of 'biographical uncertainty' (Wohlrab-Sahr). These two main axes of research conceptualise unemployment as an ambivalent moment of 'danger' (Douglas) that characterises young people's transitions to the world of work.





## 2 Work, unemployment and uncertainty in East and West

### 2.1 *The norm of employment in the life course – 'East and West'*

The anonymous authors of the UNICEF-report about young people in Central and Eastern European transition countries (UNICEF 2000) open their chapter about the changing working life of young people in these societies with the following remarks:

The transition from school to work is a crucial phase for young people as they take on a larger and more independent role in society. A good start in the labour market can lay a strong foundation for personal and professional development through adult life; a poor start can seriously impair future prospects. (...)

As they come of age in the emerging market economies of the region, young people are facing considerably different work prospects than their parents did in the former centrally planned economies. Under communism, high school enrolments and full employment were usual, and the entry of youth into the labour market was closely controlled. Young people leaving school were not only guaranteed work, but were obliged to work, and those who did not work were stigmatized as 'parasites'. This structured system of job placement confined opportunities and choices for young people, but it also provided them with stability and social integration, offering immediate job and wage security, as well as broad access to benefits such as childcare, workplace health services and, often, housing. (UNICEF 2000: 63; emphasis added)

The authors acknowledge the persistent importance for young people of a successful transition to employment, and they stress the changing character of the relationship between youth and employment compared to the former communist regime, which provided very different contextual conditions for their parents' generation.

The same two topics are picked up again in the concluding remarks of the chapter, although in a slightly different way. The variation of the first theme, the importance of a successful transition to employment (quoted below), is remarkable, because it refers to the role of employment in the changing relationship between youth and society under the new conditions:

'A good start in the labour market is a key determinant of the participation of youth in society and of their future prospects. A poor start can inhibit and even thwart the participation and contribution of youth, sometimes with serious personal and social consequences' (UNICEF 2000: 81; emphasis added).

While the 'good start in the labour market' is, at the beginning of the chapter, associated with 'development', a highly individual category, it is, at the end of the chapter, associated with 'participation and contribution'. The pages between these two passages present rich comparative information about the major changes in youth employment across the region. However, first, the substantive difference between the status of work and employment in the two worlds of socialism and capitalism with regard to the question of social integration and citizenship is neglected. In addition, the potential impact of the shift from one meaning system to another on the biographical perspectives of young people is not considered. This is the point where I hope to continue telling the story.

The broader frame of reference of this development is the endeavour by the Baltic countries, and many of the former Soviet block countries, to 'return' to Western Europe after the collapse of communism. Since the Soviet occupation of 1940, the Soviet Union was 'the Other' that had absorbed the Baltic republics and from which they kept distinguishing themselves in their struggle for a 'Western' identity (Karlsson 2002).<sup>8</sup> This 'return to Europe' involves, on the one hand, the kind of catch up process mentioned in the introduction, although without necessarily repeating all the stages of the slow historical evolution of, say, Western welfare states. On the other hand, the experience of the Soviet past produced exaggerated expectations as well as discontent.

For the purpose of framing the puzzle in the background of the present research project this section starts with a rough outline of the status of work during the Soviet period. Then, a 'Western' perspective on the contemporary centrality and ideology of employment, as well as the relationship between youth, employment and social citizenship is developed. The third step considers the possible implications of the transfer of Western standards for organising society to the post-Soviet 'New West'.

#### 2.1.1 Employment, unemployment and the Soviet ideology of work

According to Soviet ideology and its interpretation of Marx's writings, work, under the ideal conditions of socialism, was above all a human need and a means for self-fulfilment; class domination, exploitation and finally alienation from work were ideologically associated with the capitalist context (Lane 1986). Besides its role in the ideological context, the sphere of work was institutionally central to socialist societies. The right *and* the obligation (later: duty)<sup>9</sup> to labour for both men and women – with the latter also holding family responsibilities<sup>10</sup> – was explicit in the constitution of the USSR. Some form of employment was guaranteed by the Soviet regime, both ideologically and practically. The two articles 40 and 60 of the USSR's 1977 Constitution included the defining features of the relationship between the state and the individual mediated by the sphere of work. The related issues of choice of profession, professional education, job placement, and the 'criminalisation' of non-participation in 'useful labour' are covered:

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<sup>8</sup> For the historical roots of the Lithuanian version of this struggle see for example Snyder (2003: part I), Lane (2001) as well as Abdelal (2001: chapter 4).

<sup>9</sup> For this distinction see Lane (1986b: 2).

<sup>10</sup> It was during the second Five Year Plan from 1933 that female labour of women was mobilised through both encouragement and financial pressure. Due to the growing emphasis on the family, this is the origin of the 'famous double burden of Soviet women – the obligation to work both inside and outside the home as a matter of course' (Christian 1985: 94). For gendered inequalities in socialism and post-socialism see, for instance, the contributions in Lobodzinska (1995).

Article 40. Citizens of the USSR have the right to work (that is, to guaranteed employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, and not below the state-established minimum), including the right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due account of the needs of society.

This right is ensured by the socialist economic system, steady growth of the productive forces, free vocational and professional training, improvement of skills, training in new trades or professions, and development of the systems of vocational guidance and job placement.

Article 60. It is the duty of, and matter of honour for, every able-bodied citizen of the USSR to work conscientiously in his chosen, socially useful occupation, and strictly to observe labour discipline. Evasion of socially useful work is incompatible with the principles of socialist society. (quoted from Prokhorov 1982: 9-19)

The state was the only official employer and all citizens were its employees.<sup>11</sup> Within the logic of an 'enterprise-centred social policy' (Kohli 1997) the workplace was simultaneously the major instrument of social control and the central platform for social protection. The provision of social services was mainly organised through enterprises: one of the reasons for the strong attachment between worker and workplace, which Deacon (2000: 147) calls the 'key access point to social benefits including social security and health care'.<sup>12</sup> This was one of the main reasons for which being without employment, as a form of detachment from an enterprise, and the resulting 'interrupted work record' were so problematic.

The constitutional guarantee to 'satisfactory' work was difficult to meet and resulted in a fundamental contradiction between the ideal of work and the work experiences of millions of former peasants that were forced to work in factories in the course of the industrialisation and modernisation of the country. Work was an individual necessity performed collectively that obliged the individual to contribute to the economic growth of the country, to the national income, and to the reproduction of society. The reality of working life had little in common with the ideological dimensions of work and its factual importance as the main institution of social integration. The productivity of Soviet labour was low and the 'relaxed working pace' was one of the concessions of the state in its 'tacit social contract' with the workers (Piirainen 1997: 88-93).<sup>13</sup> The socialising capacity of work and work organisation under socialism also needs to be assessed carefully; it is at the very least ambivalent. Romanticising notions of responsible work communities are contrasted by the instrumental character of the cohesion

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<sup>11</sup> Apart from certain 'gangs' or 'subcultures' of self-employment (Lane 1987: 55-59).

<sup>12</sup> For Soviet social policy see for instance Manning et al. (2000: chapter 2), McAuley (1979, 1981). Idealtypically for the 'classical socialist system' again Kornai (1992: chapter 10 and 13). For the changing citizenship under 'Perestroika' see Andrusz (1993).

<sup>13</sup> The common problem of motivation, productivity and work organisation as well as other features and shortcomings of work organisation are for instance discussed in Pietsch (1986), Rutland (1986), Lane (1987: chapter 5), Arnot (1988: chapter 4); Rainnie et al. (2002). For insider perspectives on low productivity, redundant labour, the problems of alcoholism and absenteeism see Gregory (1987).

within workers' collectives and the dissociation and alienation from actual work activities (see for the GDR, Kohli 1994: 49-51).

**The mobile 'principle of socialism', the Bible, and popular representations of the Soviet work ethic**

The notion (and the place) of the duty to work within the Soviet Constitutions of 1936 and 1977 underwent significant changes over time (Lane 1987: 15-17). While the earlier constitution (quoted below) stresses the human and social necessity of work, the later version (quoted above) incorporates individual interest and satisfaction.

Article 12 of the Soviet Constitution of 1936 declared: *'In the U.S.S.R. work is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.' The principle applied in the U.S.S.R. is that of socialism: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.'*

Furthermore, the 'principle of socialism', in the constitution of 1936 still associated with individual labour, changes place and appears, somewhat strangely, associated with state control over labour, consumption and taxation:

Article 14 of the 1977 constitution: *The source of growth of social wealth and of the well-being of the people, and of each individual, is the labour, free from exploitation, of Soviet people.*

*The state exercises control over the measure of labour and of consumption in accordance with the principle of socialism: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his work'. It fixes the rate of taxation on taxable income.*

*Socially useful work and its results determine a person's status in society. By combining material and moral incentives and encouraging innovation and a creative attitude to work, the state helps transform labour into the prime vital need of every Soviet citizen.'* (quoted from Prokhorov 1982: 9-19).

The reason for this shift may be that under 'mature and advanced socialism', and under the condition of consolidation, the powerful argument of the 'principle of socialism' changes its status: it is no longer used to justify coercion to work but the necessity of state control.<sup>14</sup> The author, who explains (sic!) the reasons for the adaptation of the constitution in 1977 in the related article of the 'Great Soviet Encyclopedia' writes: *'With the building of mature and advanced socialism and the adoption of the political ideology of the working class by all strata of the population of the Soviet Union, the state that was formed as a dictatorship of the proletariat became the state of all people'* (Kutafin 1982: 2).

Two additional remarks on the principle of work duty in the Soviet constitution of 1936:

First, the principle of the duty to work as used in the Soviet constitution has unmistakable Jewish-Christian roots as it literally refers to the Bible text passage 2. Thessalonians 3.10: (see also Conze 1972: 158-160).<sup>15</sup>

Second, there were publicly accepted forms of ironising the principle of the duty to work. For instance, the first episode of the film comedy 'Operation Y and Other Shurik's Adventures'<sup>16</sup>, a Soviet 'blockbuster' released in 1965, is an open critique of the system's inability to motivate its workforce (Milic, Internet). A man sentenced to corrective labour at a construction place is generously provided with a big meal for his lunch break after having tried to avoid any kind of work all morning. During the break he turns to Shurik, - the main character of the film, a part-time student construction worker with the task of supervising him, who obviously has to content himself with a very poor snack, - and says: 'He who works, shall not eat'.

The 'treatment' of labour was not much different from what is understood as the 'commodification of labour' in capitalist societies. Kornai (1992: especially chapter 10) analyses the process of labour allocation under 'classical socialism' and concludes that, despite the primacy of the bureaucratic coordination of labour, a kind of quasi-market as well as wage differences did exist and had an influence on labour allocation. Chronic labour shortage (i.e.

<sup>14</sup> For the struggle during early socialism for an appropriate connotation of the principle of socialism, which apparently anticipates the quest for its right place in the Soviet constitution, see Conze (1972: 196-205).

<sup>15</sup> I want to thank Michael Vorisek for pointing this out.

<sup>16</sup> Original: 'Operatsiya Y i drugiye priklucheniya Shurika' (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059550>; 18.04.2005)

more jobs than people searching for jobs)<sup>17</sup> was a common phenomenon and guaranteed full employment. In order to achieve and maintain full employment and to force growth, labour surplus was mobilised and, if necessary, absorbed by the public sector. Three 'inducements' were required to make sure that the potential labour force entered or re-entered employment relationships: first, actual work opportunities; second, the chance to meet financial needs as well as the interest in permanent jobs; third, 'bureaucratic compulsion'. The latter had far-reaching consequences for the organisation of society: 'The socialist countries lay down by law not only the right but the duty to work, and that means in practice (...) the duty to work for the sector in public ownership. Those who fail are legally harassed as 'parasites' and forced by the authorities to work' (Kornai, 1992: 207-208).<sup>18</sup>

Ioffe/Maggs (1983: 254-259) maintain that, in practical terms, there were two employment systems in the USSR. First, the system of executive job placement controlled by the Party organisations partly followed secret regulations. Access to certain high as well as comparatively low rank positions (an estimated four million jobs including managers and school directors) on a special list ('*nomenklatura*') was limited to people approved by the Communist Party. Party members had to accept assignments to work and were exchanged according to the Party rationale. Second, the employment system that applied to the mass of Soviet workers was characterised by relatively high job security; here, the principle of job placement applied firstly to the military, labour camps and educational graduate systems. Rural labour and members of collective farms were tied to their farms; they could not be fired, but could be expelled. Young people born on a collective farm were expected to join the farm at the age of 16. For rural labour, mobility was in principle restricted due to the Soviet residence permit system. However, collective farm members were a primary target group for state agencies recruiting people willing to move to work in remote and unattractive areas.

Once unemployment was abolished in the early 1930s full employment was rated as a fundamental achievement of the system, and had the status of an irreversible 'acquired right' of the worker (Kornai 1992: 210) The reason for maintaining this policy was a self-reinforcing pattern, as Baxandall (2003, also 2004) notes. Rational choices kept the full

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<sup>17</sup> For labour shortage in the Soviet labour market, the (modest) impact of reform attempts and the development of unemployment during the 1980s as well as for a confrontation of Soviet and Western views see Oxenstierna (1990); also Marnie (1992). For an alternative term to labour shortage, that of 'overfull employment', see Granick (1987).

<sup>18</sup> In plain language the last 'inducement' could sound like the following statement taken from an interview passage, where members of a poor Slovak family refuse to identify themselves with other benefit claimants apparently unwilling to work. Referring to socialist experiences one of them says: 'That wasn't in the past. Then, if someone was not working, they put him in jail' (quoted in Kusá 2003: 229).

employment strategy alive. Officials, leaders and workers could, equally, support the norm against unemployment, because they all profited from its maintenance. Officials and leaders, on the one hand, were not interested in abandoning full employment because it had been labelled a 'success'. On the other hand, for workers employment as a norm and right could hardly become problematic as an administrative precondition for receiving social benefits.

As in so many other areas the official line did not fully match reality and unemployment, according to a Western understanding of people changing jobs or a mismatch between jobs and jobseekers, *did* in fact exist in the Soviet Union. Unemployment was banned from all public discourse, it was not counted and institutions of *unemployment* like labour exchanges or unemployment registration did not exist.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the phenomenon as such attracted the curiosity of Western scholars. Once arguments in favour of the actual existence of a 'labour market' (e.g. Granick 1987) had been approved, evidence, in the form of economic models, estimations and interviews with former Soviet citizens, was collected.<sup>20</sup> Forms of frictional or temporary unemployment, structural unemployment (i.e. the lack of demand for certain types of labour), regional, rural or localised unemployment, indirect unemployment (i.e. supplementary work), and even 'concealed' unemployment (i.e. people with jobs but without sufficient work and adequate earnings) were identified.<sup>21</sup> Depending on which of the unemployment types was considered, the resulting unemployment rates were between about 1,5% for frictional unemployment only (e.g. Lane 1987: 67) and 6,2% for all types (Adirim 1989). Spells of unemployment were also estimated and differentiated by social groups (especially Gregory/Collier 1988). Younger workers had a higher incidence of unemployment, which is explained with inefficient placement mechanisms or tensions between individual interests and jobs offered.<sup>22</sup> Unemployment was similar for men and

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<sup>19</sup> What existed were institutions of *employment*, or re-employment. Job placement bureaux (JBP) were re-established in 1969 and helped to absorb laid off workers and to decrease the problem of unplanned labour mobility after the economic reform of the 1960s (Malle 1987). See Chapter 7.

<sup>20</sup> I refer to Granick (1987: especially chapter 3), Lane (1987: chapter 4), Oxenstierna (1990: 222-228), Adirim (1989), Gregory/Collier (1988), Marnie (1992), Porket (1989). For youth unemployment see Oxenstierna 1990: 226-227.

<sup>21</sup> Porket (1989) stands out with his systematic study of Soviet unemployment in the USSR under the label 'open unregistered unemployment'.

<sup>22</sup> It is worth quoting the original passage where Gregory/Collier (1988: 621) struggle for an explanation for this phenomenon. It is a good example of how individualising arguments are applied to explain unexpected findings that could be structural and to make sense, at the same time, of (individualising) findings for the USA. It also shows how unconsidered and inappropriate it can be to force two essentially different societies into a direct comparison:

'Given the elaborate Soviet administrative machinery for placing young people in jobs, our finding of a relatively higher unemployment incidence (and longer duration) for younger Soviet workers was not entirely anticipated. (...) While young and mature U.S. workers use basically the same job-search methods, young Soviet workers find their jobs through official 'matchmaking' and mature Soviet workers primarily use private matchmaking (networking). Furthermore, 'job search' seems better to characterize U.S. workers (who to a very large extent find

women as both were subject to 'antiparasitism laws' and even mothers with young children were obliged to work. Finally, and somewhat surprisingly at least for Western standards, there was a 'positive' relationship between education and unemployment, explained by inefficient placement, moments of self-actualisation, and a general 'over-investment' in human capital.

From my point of view, the reliability and usefulness of such estimations is questionable and the fact that unemployment was banned needs to be acknowledged. Information about the existence of people searching for or changing jobs, entering the employment system, or not having the right qualifications for certain activities might have been important in the context of symbolic battles in the economic sphere during the Cold War. Yet this should not obscure the fact that various forms of economic inactivity were considered as essentially different from 'unemployment'.<sup>23</sup> The criminalisation of non-participation in labour and its association with social outcasts was the most immediately perceptible feature of the 'communist taboo against unemployment' (Baxandall 2000).<sup>24</sup> If nothing else, it was social pressure or the institutionalisation of a certain pattern of 'misrecognition', to use the notion of recognition theory described below, that forced people into work. Marcinkeviciene/Praspaliauskiene (2003) capture some of the scope of the misrecognition of being out of work in their paper on prostitution in Soviet Lithuania after World War II. Prostitution was prohibited but tolerated as long as women were engaged in official employment and fulfilled the image of the 'worker-mother'. Yet society's full suspicion hit women out of work:

An unemployed woman in Soviet Lithuania aroused such deep suspicion that not only officially unemployed prostitutes but also women who had nothing to do with this activity were condemned in the press. (ibid. 655)

Nevertheless, through necessity many people had more than one source of income, or were involved in other informal economic activities (Portes/Böröcz 1988; also Dyker 1981: 63-65).

The permanent labour shortage, the commitment to full employment, and the constitutionally guaranteed right to work that was repeatedly reinforced and maintained till the late 1980s (van den Berg 1990) led to generally high job security for workers. Dismissal

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jobs by directly contacting employers). The main point here is that Soviet official placement has not completely offset the strong tendency of young people to have a higher incidence of unemployment (due to less experience at finding jobs and 'shopping for jobs' associated with career search).'

<sup>23</sup> Gregory/Collier (1988: 614, Fn 9) quote Kotliar (1983: 9): 'Under conditions of socialism, the condition of being without work (*nezaniatosi*) is not a synonym for 'unemployment'. It means only an interruption of work caused by reasons of private character (family circumstances, changes of location).'

<sup>24</sup> A view on the practical side of the work obligation and the difficulties in tracking down 'parasites' is provided by Granick (1988: 23-28).

was restricted and tied to certain grounds (see Ioffe/Maggs 1983: 257-258). However, Soviet labour relations were 'heavily influenced by informal understandings and reciprocal favours' (Lampert 1986: 273). The management could apply a defined set of disciplinary measures and did in fact find ways to get round official regulations without having to expect too much resistance from trade unions or sanctions by courts. Lampert (1986) writes about the ultimately informal character of labour relations and the dependence of the individual on 'good relationships' with management:

The importance of informal understandings means that, on the one hand, employees are more protected than the legislation intended; the management acts indulgently towards formal violations of labour discipline. On the other hand, people are less protected than the law intends. They are highly dependent on the good-will or ill-will of the boss. One can break the written rules and get away with it. But in the event of a breakdown in personal relationships, an employee who has fallen out of favour cannot expect indulgence' (Lampert (1986: 273).

The universal emphasis on the socialising function of work and the fundamental meaning of employment in the life course policy of the socialist society resulted in highly standardised life courses.<sup>25</sup> Young people, during their school to work transition, were particularly affected by the systemic need of the command economy for a 'close functional fit between labour demand and labour supply' (Wallace/Kovatcheva 1998: 85-86). Soviet education has been criticised for over-educating people in relation to the labour requirements of the system. But labour planning was not entirely coercive, and wages (as well as education and family background) did play a role in the distribution of jobs (Dyker 1981).

Although attempts were made to make the system more flexible and 'liberal' (e.g. Marnie 1986), dissatisfaction and frustration were the obvious consequences of generally low or controlled labour mobility, especially among graduates. The established 'Youth Placement Commissions' (Lane 1987: 50-51) were not just institutions for informal job exchanges. And the interplay between '*Orgnabor*' (organised recruitment) and the *Komsomol*, the Communist Youth League, moved many young people into industrial labour or, in the context of programmes for 'population redistribution', into less favourable regions (see Chapter 7).

Altogether the Soviet version of social citizenship put the right and obligation to work at the core of the 'social contract' (Adam 1991).<sup>26</sup> It was one of the major determinants for the Soviet relationship between the individual and the state:

The notion that people have a right and a duty to work is one of the most firmly bedded, 'taken for granted' assumptions made by citizens and policy-makers in the USSR' (Lane 1987: 16).

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<sup>25</sup> For a comparison of life course policies in different welfare-state regimes including the 'authoritarian model' in socialism see Leisering/Leibfried (1999), discussed below. For a discussion of the relationship between work and life course in the German Democratic Republic see Kohli (1994).

<sup>26</sup> For changes to the 'social contract' during the reform in the 1980s that marked the beginning of the end of the job guarantee see Chapman (1991).



The major difference as compared to systems of welfare capitalism, as will be discussed later, was that this regulation required *explicit* commitments. The state was the only official employer and the vast majority of the citizens were 'worker-citizens' (Offe 1996: 235), employed workers or farmers.<sup>27</sup> The relationship of dependence and control was narrow because the workplace was both a platform for many social services and for welfare. The authorities' concern about unemployment and job security was not motivated by a fundamental concern about poverty but by concerns over the social aspects of unemployment, as Granick (1987: 73-76) concludes in view of certain categories of poor people that were excluded from such concerns.<sup>28</sup> In accordance with the systematic 'refusal to recognise uncertainty and innovation as essential aspects of economic life', as Arnason (1993: 103) characterises the logic of central planning, the lives of the people were comparatively predictable. In the terminology of life course theories, life courses were highly institutionalised (Kohli 1986ab).

Young people were, to a considerable extent, channelled through institutions like the all-encompassing youth organisations. Youth transitions were highly structured: this was reinforced by job allocation programmes (see Chapter 5 and Reiter 2006). At the same time, youth was, in its communist version, a politically highly ideologised social category that was instrumentalised within the permanent reproduction of the communist ideology (Wallace/Kovatcheva 1998).

## 2.1.2 Employment and social citizenship – a Western perspective

### *The centrality of employment*

What is described in the following as the 'centrality of employment' in welfare capitalism must appear as a relatively subtle connection between work and social integration compared to the status of work in the socialist context. In fact, it is the problem of unemployment as a predictable consequence of the capitalist work organisation (Ashton 1986), together with its quantitative dimension, its ideological potential and its different role in processes of marginalisation that seems to justify such an assessment.

Growing up in a capitalist welfare society at the beginning of the 21st century means growing up in a well-organised system of interdependencies. One of the abstract mechanisms of social integration is the life course, the process by which the relationship between states

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<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of the multiple functions of the socialist state as owner of enterprises, employer of people and 'political' actor and redistributor of welfare see Szelenyi/Manchin (1987).

<sup>28</sup> Namely, part-time workers, 'overqualified' people finding a job, mothers with child rearing responsibilities and no institutional access, people of 'pensionable' age and 'underemployed' farmers.

and individuals is mediated (Schwinn 2001). In the context of particular welfare arrangements, individuals in modern societies are subject to specific 'life course policies' (Leisering/Walker 1998, Leisering/Leibfried 1999, Mayer 2001) which create, shape and institutionalise the range of probable patterns of growing up, living an adult life and growing old. Given the life course as an institution (Kohli 1985, 1986ab), youth and old age are bound together in different models of 'normal biographies' (Levy 1977) where employment and the family are the spheres of the major individual contributions to the economic and human reproduction of capitalist societies.

From a normative (socialisation) perspective, childhood and youth are the periods of preparation for working life through education and learning. As welfare entitlements after retirement are still essentially based on individual careers, adult life is characterised by 'family work' and some 30 to 40 years of active participation in the employment system. This is the major precondition for keeping state welfare systems functioning and for having a third period of life (retirement or the 'Third Age'), where the remaining years can be enjoyed without the immediate pressures of physical or intellectual productivity. In this way, welfare arrangements referring to old age, which make it possible to become and to be old, simultaneously have an impact on the shape and content of young people's lives.

However, the predominant frameworks of welfare arrangements, presented here in a simplified way, and with them the validity of the life course as an institution, seem to be fading (Kohli 1989, 2000, 2003; Wohrab-Sahr 1992b). The changing nature of the labour market, early exit and retirement, the increasing participation of young people in further education, as well as flexibilised and increasingly discontinuous employment relationships indicate a fundamental change in the middle phase of the life course. This is the period where it is still expected that individuals actively contribute to the maintenance of the welfare system through paid employment. This middle period is becoming shorter, so that there is a need for an intensification of labour and an increasing pressure for productivity during this period.<sup>29</sup> This period is also becoming individualised and less predictable in its course, so that individuals have to increase their mobility and flexibility to adapt to new challenges, and, of course, it affects both youth and old age. For example, the first phase of the life course, childhood and youth, also seems to be extended and individualised.

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<sup>29</sup> The 'end of work' (Rifkin 1995) is not yet upon us; historically the organisation of employment and its relationship to other spheres of life are changing (Kocka 2001). For a substantial discussion of work as a sociological key concept see Offe (1983).

Moreover, the requirements for what constitutes membership in society are changing. The definition of membership and, implicitly, social citizenship as the 'core idea of the welfare state', as Esping-Andersen (1990: 21) notes referring to T. H. Marshall, depends on certain welfare regimes and how access to social rights is regulated. Even in the social-democratic regime-type, where, according to Esping-Andersen's (1990) analysis, de-commodification is a universal principle and entitlement is based on mere citizenship, employment remains the overarching issue in social policy and full employment is a major policy aim. The 'fusion of welfare and work' is the outstanding characteristic of this regime and individual contributions through employment (or wealth) are a moral obligation: 'All benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay' (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28).<sup>30</sup>

The hypothesis of the centrality of employment is empirically supported for individuals. In his analysis of the Eurobarometer 1996 Employment Survey, Gallie (1997: 83-86) finds clear evidence for high levels of employment commitment across all European Union member countries. On average nearly two thirds of the unemployed and nearly half of the employed would want to work even without financial necessity. Additionally Hult/Svallfors (2002) find that the concern that comparatively generous welfare states such as the Scandinavian countries might undermine the work orientation is not empirically justified. This confirms Esping-Andersen's (1990) assumption concerning the high work ethic in social-democratic regime types.

### *The ideology of employment*

In her critical assessment of the concept of social exclusion within Western European social policy Levitas (1996) describes the European project to build a 'long-term social consensus' as being driven by a biased understanding of social integration. Based on an analysis of policy documents by the European Commission, she concludes that 'the possibility of integration into society through any institution other than the labour market has disappeared' (Levitas 1996: 12). The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which saw the formal recognition of the centrality of work, underpins the continuing central importance of paid work for EU social policy. Though Levitas's conclusion is radically critical and certainly too narrow to cover all dimensions of social integration, it distils the essence of the understanding of integration in capitalist society, dominated by a 'Durkheimian hegemony' (Levitas 1996).

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that there are differences in the emphasis that national welfare systems put on employment based contributions as requirement for entitlements (e.g. Begg et al. 2001). What is important here is the fact that within welfare capitalism the individual is assessed primarily in relation to his/her employment performance.

In a quasi-organic understanding of society, labour markets have become those subsystems of market economies where individuals can be accessed as resources and become functionally integrated.

From the perspective of the state, the notion of work underlying such un/employment discourses is necessarily narrow, referring only to formal employment that contributes to tax revenue and social insurance funds (Grint 1991).<sup>31</sup> Therefore non-work in the sense of 'unemployment' first of all signifies being out of formal employment and out of the work-welfare context sketched above. However, the explicit or implicit obligation to work as a requirement for full membership in a society makes unemployment a social problem with consequences other than the immediate suffering on the level of individuals, families and communities.<sup>32</sup> Work in the sense of paid work, and with it unemployment in the sense of non-participation in socially recognised employment, are essentially related to issues of citizenship. Through working individuals participate in and become 'members' of communities, while non-work implies the danger of social isolation (Gallie 1999). Work can be regarded as a citizenship right or obligation (Leisink/Coenen 1993, Leisink 1997, Pixley 1997).

In a wider frame of reference the phenomenon of unemployment has gone through many semantic changes since its 'discovery' in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several histories of unemployment and the changing ways in which unemployment has been posed as a problem by political powers could be written (Walters 2000). For instance, one history could be that of the problematisation of the unemployed individual: it would reveal a 'contingently shifting set of norms, objectives, values, obligations, rights, responsibilities which have been expected of, demanded by, imputed to unemployed people' (ibid. 146). The contemporary equivalent of such a history would be the aforementioned discourse on the 'employability' and 'skills' of the unemployed. What is new is not the topic but the manner in which the problem of skills deficiencies is now associated with concerns related to competitiveness in a global or

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<sup>31</sup> I use the terms employment, work and labour synonymously to signify wage labour and paid work; this reduction in meaning seems to be justified for the purpose of introducing the specific problematic of this project. Different approaches to work are integrative elements of the classical sociological theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim (see for an overview Grint 1991, chapter 3; Ransome 1996). For a philosophical-anthropological account see Arendt (1958); for historical accounts see Conze (1972), Strath (2000b), Kocka/Offe (2000). For a substantive reflection on work, labour and employment within the scope of policy see Standing (1999, especially chapter 1).

<sup>32</sup> For a classical reference and milestone for a range of studies on psychosocial consequences of unemployment up to the present day see Jahoda/Lazarsfeld/Zeisel (1975/1933).

internationalised economy. Adaptability and flexibility seem to be the universal job requirement nowadays.<sup>33</sup>

Another history is that of the problematisation of unemployment itself. Historical perspectives differ from ethical, macro- or micro-economic perspectives, although each of these 'discursive frameworks are connected with ways of governing' (ibid. 148). The contemporary equivalent of this second type of history is the 'rhetoric of globalisation and competitiveness' (Weiss 2000). Its constitutive discourse figures are the 'depoliticization of socio-economic fields of activity' and the 'passing of the welfare state' (48). In line with 'neo-liberal arguments' this politically driven discourse aims, first, at deconstructing unemployment as a political problem and, second, at transferring it from the sphere of politics to that of the market. The problem of unemployment, and of high unemployment rates as its popular representation, is omnipresent. But unemployment does not refer to an economic or political reality only. It rather facilitates and apparently justifies unpopular political decisions and is thus part of a legitimacy game of the European Union. Weiss/Wodak (2000) identify 'fear' as one of the central categories of political rhetoric associated with the phenomenon of unemployment. Based on their discourse analysis of documents related to European Union employment policy, their conclusion with regard to the impact of such a policy on the construction of unemployment related fears is as follows:

'The rhetoric of globalization and competitiveness has become an argumentative vehicle for disciplining the aims of social justice and welfare by economic arguments. (...) The process of disciplining works essentially on fear. Here a certain degree of distinction must be made between the primary experience of unemployment (i.e. immediate experience affecting oneself, or a partner, or a family member), and secondary experience (i.e. indirect or acquired experience that there are more and more unemployed, that society is running out of work, and that it could affect me at any time). This uncertainty and fear of losing one's job is spreading everywhere, its undermining self-respect and disturbing social relationships even in the most private domains. To put it slightly cynically: the fundamental problem that undermines a society is not an unemployment rate of 10% but the *fear of unemployment* in the other 90%. Instability and uncertainty are becoming a norm' (Weiss/Wodak 2000: 203; emphasis in the original).

But globalisation is not just a buzzword of political rhetoric. As a 'real' phenomenon of internationalised competition it has an impact on national and international policies. Together with economic liberalisation and the changing face of capitalism, globalisation undermines the autonomy of nation states, re-defines the power-relations between politics and the market; and it requires a re-conceptualisation of social citizenship. Crouch et al. (2001) diagnose a 'new triumph of the market over citizenship' on an economic, cultural and political level that is driven by international agencies like the OECD. They state that, for the sake of securing

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<sup>33</sup> For the many relations of the notion of 'flexibility' to employment and unemployment see the contributions in Strath (2000a). Wagner (2000) provides a historical account of 'flexibility'. For the use of a 'flexibility index' for the unemployed across Europe see Gallie (1997: chapter 4).

future employability, 'more and more policy areas are being declared off-limits to democratic influence and passed to the control of market forces and private business. The task of democracy is reduced to legislating the privatisation and deregulations which make this possible' (ibid. 10).

There is no reason to believe that such a decline in national sovereignty and the transition to a new organisation of membership in society in relation to life course positions will not affect young people. On the contrary, one expects such trends to affect the future labour force and young people earlier than other groups. How then can youth citizenship, and social citizenship more generally, be conceptualised in the context of changing welfare states, and what are the indicators for the new definitions of the status of young citizens in relation to the labour market as the central platform for social integration?

### *Youth, employment, citizenship*

With its roots in the formation of nation-states and the establishment of universal membership rights for people in a distinct territorial, political and cultural spaces, the classical and evolutionary notion of citizenship was formulated by T. H. Marshall (1950) in the context of the post-war development of the British welfare state. Marshall conceptualises the development of citizenship as an historical accumulation of rights related to civil, political and social elements. The civil element represents basic individual freedoms and justice; the political element is associated with participation in democratic decision-making and the exercise of political power; and the social element includes the right to receive economic welfare and security and to live according to the standards prevailing in society. The institutions associated with these rights are the courts, the parliament and the welfare system.

The recent discussion about citizenship, stimulated by the debate between the liberal and communitarian camps (Honneth 1993), has brought a gradual semantic change due to the introduction of a specific notion of 'active citizenship'. Although the term has different meanings according to different political traditions, it broadly implies the revival of the essentially 'unmodern' term 'duty' (Preuss and Everson 1996: 547). Hvinden and Halvorsen (2001), for instance, distinguish three traditions. In a social-liberal reading active citizenship is connected with an emphasis on duties. In the libertarian conception, the responsibility of active citizens for their behaviour, their decisions and choices in a market situation is stressed. In a republican tradition, finally, active citizenship is essentially related to the actual use of possibilities for active participation. Whilst all three positions focus on the question of the active role of the individual, the current dominant meaning of active citizenship emphasises

the individual's responsibilities and obligations towards society rather than access through rights to participation. Lister (2002), for example, laments this redefinition of the relationship between rights and obligations as well as the residualisation of social rights (i.e. narrowing entitlements, and encouraging individual provisions through private insurance) as one of the recent key trends in European welfare state reforms.<sup>34</sup>

Youth social citizenship must also be re-conceptualised in light of this re-calibration of European welfare states towards recommodification and the re-evaluation of citizens' duties. As welfare citizenship depends on a certain 'normative definition of good behaviour', which in many countries distinguishes on the basis of 'contributions' between those entitled to and those excluded from welfare benefits,<sup>35</sup> the only way for young people who have not yet had the opportunity to make such contributions is to show their abstract willingness to participate in the welfare state (Jones 2001).<sup>36</sup> Considering demographic developments in Europe and the increasing quantitative imbalance between young and old, the commitment of young people - an increasingly scarce human resource - to the idea of the social contract or other and 'new forms of solidarity' between the generations will be crucial for social cohesion (European Commission 2002a: 12). Active labour market policy measures for young people are part of those 'institutional arrangements' that 'reflect, and in other cases help to establish, what counts as normatively appropriate behavior' (Breen/Buchmann 2002: 303). Such measures, which constitute the first contact of huge shares of youth cohorts with the world of work (Dietrich 2003, Harslof 2005), can be regarded as the provisional arenas where young people's readiness to demonstrate 'good' behaviour and 'contributability' is assessed.

When welfare benefits are generally considered to be a reward for contributions from work and employment, the obvious problems for young people result from their more likely involvement in casual and informal or atypical and part-time work, which fails to give them access to full benefits (Wallace 2001). The main reason for the popularity of such forms of employment among young people consists in their economic advantages for entrepreneurial interests rather than in the individualised life-style that appears to be attached. Youth (social)

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<sup>34</sup> For a critical discussion of the relationship between rights and responsibilities in the context of youth citizenship see France (1998).

<sup>35</sup> Social citizenship understood in a narrow sense as de-commodification automatically excludes specific social groups, as it 'has relevance only for individuals already fully and irreversibly inserted in the wage relationship' (Esping-Andersen 1999: 45). Among those not or not yet commodified are, apart from young people, women.

<sup>36</sup> 'The policy expectation is that young people should learn social responsibilities before they are granted welfare rights, and even political citizenship should be constructed as the responsibility to vote rather than the right to do so' (Jones 2002: 37).

citizenship thus remains second-class citizenship particularly with respect to the labour market (Jones and Wallace 1992).

If one conceptualises (Western) social citizenship in a sociological way as a set of mutual expectations between the state and the individual, one can conclude that this relationship is asymmetrical, particularly for young people. In a life course context, the relationship between state and citizens is redefined in particular in periods of transition by status passages. Following Kohli's (1985, 1986ab) classical notion of the tripartite life course these would be the transitions from education to employment and from employment to retirement. For young people post-educational transition and the positions finally achieved with regard to education and employment are crucial for a lifelong employment career, which will, as one can now expect, equally shape the quality of citizenship over the life course. On the other hand, in view of the trend towards a de-standardisation of youth transitions, it has become more difficult to meet the tightened criteria for recognition. The outcome of flexibilised and diversified ways to achieve is less predictable and transitions altogether more uncertain.

### 2.1.3 A Western model goes East?

It is difficult to assess and classify the character of the transformation in Eastern Europe with regard to theoretical explanations, and it is certainly not the aim of this study to do this.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, when thinking of the normative features of at least the second part of the Eastern European transformation, which suggested the targeted development of many former socialist countries (especially the EU accession countries) the term 'catch up' modernisation (*nachholende Modernisierung*) introduced by Zapf (e.g. 1992: 12; also 1994, 1996) seems appropriate. In this version of modernisation theory 'modern Western societies and their institutions' serve as models for societies in transformation. The core elements of the legitimacy of such 'modern societies' are, according to Zapf (1992: 16), mass consumption and a welfare state.

Although a certain direction of change became evident for accession countries like Lithuania, it is still premature to regard the development of social policy and welfare and, thus, social citizenship in the post-socialist countries as a development towards a certain established 'model' or 'regime'. Existing differences and the permanent process of differentiation do not indicate the predominance of a single model, as is the case for Western

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<sup>37</sup> The literature on transformation is vast. For a review of different theories of transformation see Kollmorgen (1994). For a comparative assessment of transition outcomes including reference to theories see Lane (2002).



European countries (e.g. Arts/Gelissen 2002). In addition, enlargement itself may also have an impact on the landscape of the political economies within the European Union (Sykes 2005). Historical legacies and the scope of impact of international organisations in certain countries, as well as the common problem of the instability of governments in transitional periods, result in a divergence in the development of and the struggle for social protection systems.<sup>38</sup>

According to Ferge (2001) four trends in post-socialist welfare policies can hypothetically be distinguished. The first is a transfer of a strongly liberalising agenda including residualisation and deregulation as a reaction to the perceived consequences of globalisation. A second trend combines the first with 'country-specific and government-specific' forms of 'conservatism', including the revival of the Church, the family and nationalistic values. Third, in a context of path-dependency former structures have a sustained impact on current developments in whatever direction is promoted. The fourth trend is related to a 'near-collapse' of the state. Here the establishment of an effective 'welfare state' of any kind cannot be expected in the near future. While the impact of such supranational policies on national developments essentially depends on national political actors and is, thus, still difficult to assess, Ferge's review of welfare reform indicators suggests that the first of the trends mentioned above, the trend towards residualisation, is dominant.

Deacon (2000) discusses the potential impact of globalisation on the development of welfare states in Eastern Europe and identifies political, not economic, globalisation as the main driving force behind many elements of welfare reform. The roles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), both of which traditionally promote a very liberal version of economic policy, were important. Deacon (2000: 156) states that a 'tension between the aspiration towards a European-style social-market economy (or conservative corporatism) and a budget-induced and IMF-World Bank-backed residualism was evident and continuing in the late 1990s'. But, as the World Bank and the IMF lent money on condition that strategies of privatisation, residualisation and deregulation were adopted,<sup>39</sup> many actions leading to a decline in welfare were taken by post-socialist governments because they seemed

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<sup>38</sup> The divergence in the development of post-socialist social protection systems is described for instance in Ringold (1999), Barr (2002), Deacon (2000), Ferge (1994, 2001), Thomas (1997), Standing (1996b), Cook (2002), Lourdelle (2002), Offe (1996). For Lithuania see Lazutka (1994), Medaiskis (1999, 2001, 2002), Kairelis (2002), Aidukaite (2004).

<sup>39</sup> For the deregulation of labour market relations see Standing (1997a). For some insight into World Bank assistance policies given by a consultant involved see Thomas (1997). For the role of international organisations in post-communist social policy development in general see Deacon/Hulse (1997), for Lithuania De La Porte/Bob Deacon (2004) and World Bank (2004). For an ambivalent evaluation of World Bank assistance policies for transition economies and a discussion of alternatives see Svejnar (2002), Kogut/Spicer (2004), and Galenson (2004).

politically, not economically, necessary. Altogether it is not surprising 'to see in some countries ministries of finance taking over full responsibility for social security reforms', as Rys (2001: 186) notes.<sup>40</sup> The situation in Lithuania during the first years of the transition was no different from this general trend. For instance, Mygind (1997) provides a lively impression of the interplay between international pressure and the political opportunism of national actors in Lithuania:

'As a result of tough expenditure cuts the Lithuanian government achieved a budget surplus in 1992 (...). However, it was difficult to implement a tough incomes policy in Lithuania. After IMF pressure, real wages were first cut in the second half of 1992. The target was a fall of around 30-35 per cent but, according to the World Bank (...), the fall was even steeper. This was bad timing for the government. The election was held at a time of sharply falling real wages and with inflation still out of control. The new government promised to stop inflation and to improve real wages. In spring of 1993 wages were increased several times although not completely adjusted for the increase in prices. It was not because of a tough incomes policy that inflation was stabilised in early summer of 1993, it was because of a change in monetary policy' (Mygind 1997: 35-37).

In my opinion, this look behind the curtains at the struggle for social protection regimes is crucial for the present study. It helps to increase awareness of the fact that the redefined social citizenship and state-citizen relationship in these countries must partly be attributed to the outcome of this highly ideological battle. The new problem of unemployment is at the core of this redefined relationship as can also be seen from un/employment policies that try to exclude people from unemployment statistics (e.g. Standing 2002). As in Western European countries, unemployment has rapidly become an issue in the discourse of political legitimacy. Catchwords that are part of the 'Western' discourse on unemployment like 'employability' or the call for active labour market policies are readily assumed by accession countries. While it is easy to change policy discourses, however, it seems to be more difficult to implement the related policy, as Lehmann (2001) shows in a first evaluation of active labour market policies in Central Europe.<sup>41</sup> Despite commitment, active measures are not implemented because money is absorbed by passive measures. Where active measures were implemented, their contribution to the lowering of the unemployment rate was marginal.<sup>42</sup>

The scope of the problem of unemployment in the 'New West' is huge. What was considered to be a temporary phenomenon at the beginning of the transition has become long term. Only recently have unemployment rates started to decrease, a trend that is partly

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<sup>40</sup> This development leads to debates about the now necessary liberation of the state from powerful economic groups in post-communist countries (e.g. Bruszt 2003).

<sup>41</sup> For an earlier assessment see Scarpetta/Reutersward (1994). For active labour market policy programmes in Lithuania see Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2002: chapter 4); for youth labour market policy Jasiukaityte/Reiter (2002: 98-100).

<sup>42</sup> For a critical view of labour market policies and statistical cosmetics in the context of transition, for instance, Standing (1997b).

accounted for by emigration.<sup>43</sup> Employment activity decreased because of increases in early retirement, disability pensions, 'discouraged workers' (people withdrawing from the labour market), returns to education and employment in the informal sector. Women were disproportionately affected; many left the labour market altogether and dropped out of the unemployment statistics. Young people, and in particular those with low educational levels, were most affected by the sharp decline in employment that has made access to the labour market extremely difficult (e.g. Genov 1999, 2000; Vidovic 2002; Nesporova 2002; Riboud et al. 2002, Cazes/Nesporova 2003; European Commission 2003; Kolev/Saget 2005).<sup>44</sup>

Lithuania and other post-socialist countries were 'catching up' with the 'West' at a moment when the (European) 'West' was faced with both an apparent welfare state crisis and high unemployment. In view of an increasing mismatch between the contributing population and inactive welfare recipients, the promises of a post-war welfare state, originally formulated under the conditions of full-employment and a high level of labour force participation, seem outdated, and a redefinition of social citizenship for an 'age of structural inactivity' (Hemerijck 2001) necessary. At this very moment of preparing to 'return' to Europe, the message received from the European and, especially, the North-American West in terms of policy advice and guidelines for rebuilding society included proposals for establishing a certain kind of social citizenship. The side effects of the 'shock therapy' prescribed for economic reform – described as a sequence of price and trade liberalisation, tightening of monetary and fiscal stabilisation policy, the introduction of a social safety net and mass privatisation (Standing 1996, 2002; also Gligorov 1995)<sup>45</sup> – intensified social policy difficulties expected with the transition to a market economy. Analysing the impact of this post-communist 'shock therapy', King (2002, 2003) classifies the result of this ill-considered neo-liberal intervention as 'an unprecedented peacetime disaster' (King 2002: 5) with adverse effects on both people and economy.<sup>46</sup>

Amongst the post-Soviet countries Lithuania went furthest down the 'Western' road. A recent World Bank report (2005) entitled 'Doing business in 2005. Removing obstacles to growth' announces that Lithuania, together with Slovakia, 'broke into the list of the 20 economies with the best business conditions as measured in this year's report' (ibid. 2).

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<sup>43</sup> I will come back to this issue of emigration in Chapter 8.

<sup>44</sup> For labour market changes in the early period of transition see Boeri (1994) and Blanchard et al. (1994).

<sup>45</sup> A comparative overview over the economic reforms in the Baltic countries during the first years of the transition is provided by Mygind (1997).

<sup>46</sup> For an account of the impact of the shock therapy of privatisation and people's responses in a rural community in Lithuania see Juska et al. (2005). Some of the many unintended consequences of 'shock therapy' and 'the ways people and their communities absorb, manipulate, or reject the new market parameters of action' are uncovered in Burawoy/Verdery (1999).

However, it seems the liberalisation did not only bring advantages. Recent EUROSTAT statistics (Bardone/Guio 2005) assessing poverty risks for employed and unemployed people show that in Lithuania, as well as Slovakia, more than 40% of the population over the age of 15 at risk of poverty are actually employed. The EU15 average is 26%. With regard to unemployment, Lithuanian labour exchange offices started to register the unemployed in March 1991, and in October 1993 the official unemployment rate (register data), which did not include some categories, was 1,7% (Lazutka 1994: 35).<sup>47</sup> In the year 2001 the Lithuanian youth unemployment rate (age 15-24) reached its peak of 30,9% (men: 34,4%; women: 26,3%), the highest among the Baltic countries. In the same year the overall unemployment rate was 16,5% (men: 18,6%; women: 14,3%); the long-term unemployment rate was 9,3% (men: 10,8%; women: 7,7%) (European Commission 2006).<sup>48</sup>

In all three former Soviet republics the impact of the reforms on the populations was massive and penetrated not only the world of work but all layers of society (UNICEF 2001).<sup>49</sup> The low level of social benefits together with a massive decline in employment, alongside the emergence of the new phenomenon of mass unemployment undermined the traditional expectations of citizens towards the state. Whether this was inevitable or not, it necessarily resulted in a redefinition of the state-citizen relationship that should manifest itself in the orientations of the people. I would argue that a similar process of redefinition of the status of citizens and of the importance of employment participation is going on in the 'West', albeit a more moderate and transparent one.

On the one hand, I assume that this abrupt change in post-socialist countries implies a higher degree of awareness and a more immediate impact on self-definition. Because unemployment, its meaning and experience, have become part of this new arrangement between state and citizens, the meaning of (formal) employment as a life course category changed. Employment is still a 'key access point to social benefits including social security and health care', as Deacon (2000: 147) describes it for the socialist system, the efforts necessary to enter and remain gainfully employed are incomparably higher in a capitalist

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<sup>47</sup> For readjustments of labour statistics in transition economies see Chernysev (1997). Füllsack (2001) discusses the reliability of the statistics in transition in Russia.

<sup>48</sup> I come back to Lithuanian labour market issues in the context of a discussion of changing youth transition arrangements in chapter 6.

<sup>49</sup> This is not the place for a comparative in-depth assessment of the Lithuanian version of economic and societal transformation. The literature on Lithuania alone is vast and growing rapidly. Apart from policy reports like UNDP (1999, 2000, 2001), OECD (2002, 2003), World Bank (2002a), Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) and Statistikos Departamentas (2000a) see for example Lazutka/Sniustiene (1995), Haavisto (1997), Samonis (1996), Eidukiene (2001), Gylys (2002), Jasiukaityte/Reiter (2002), Kairelis (2002), Aidukaite (2004), and De la Porte/Deacon (2004) for inside and outside perspectives.

context.<sup>50</sup> In view of the omnipresent risk of poverty I would therefore expect the importance attached to employment by young Lithuanians to be very high.

On the other hand, as a rival hypothesis, one could assume that after the collapse of the old regime, employment never gained a particularly high status because a 'Western' image of unemployment never emerged. In response to the question of why the sudden occurrence of high unemployment in post-communist countries was politically accepted and did not result in a crisis of legitimacy, Baxandall (2003)<sup>51</sup> searches for answers related to changes in the political meaning of employment. Low wages, low pensions and low benefits encouraged people to work informally. The significance of the status of being employed was eroded by declines in post-communist wages: as employment did not provide enough to live on the distinction between employment and unemployment lost its importance. Furthermore, social policies tended to blur the distinctions between different labour force statuses. Unemployment programmes and the administration of unemployment benefits were instead targeted at driving people out of the labour force and into the informal economy. Programmes for retirement, sickness and disability had similar effects.<sup>52</sup> Another strategy was a change in the way successful employment policy was framed. Entrepreneurship instead of full employment was established as a policy aim. For individuals it was not the kind of employment that counted, but simple existence of some source of income. In this context, surveys that showed that household-incomes were usually composed of revenues from both informal and formal activities could be politically instrumentalised. The 'Second Economy', a traditional source of additional income for poor, unskilled and rural workers already during the communist regime, was embraced as a solution to unemployment without reflection on the economic realities. As a consequence, 'employment' was understood as a combination of different sources of income. Finally, post-communist unemployment was not necessarily more strongly associated with poverty than other predictors like poor education or the lack of opportunities for supplementary economic activities. It is thus unsurprising that registering for unemployment benefits together with involvement in additional economic activities was, and still is, a

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<sup>50</sup> This shift in meaning is important but does not necessarily imply the decreasing significance of work. Therefore I would rather not share the supposition expressed by Rainnie et al. (2002b: 28) when they write: '(T)he sphere of paid work was ideologically and institutionally central to the workings of state socialism. (...) Accordingly, the end of the Soviet system may well be accompanied, enforced or otherwise, by an end to the centrality of paid work to societies in ECE and the former Soviet Union.'

<sup>51</sup> Though the empirical evidence given here refers almost exclusively to Hungary, the explanations found for the changing meaning of employment can, in my opinion, be considered relevant to all countries in transformation, at least as a hypothesis in the process of data collection and analysis.

<sup>52</sup> For some of the strategies in Russia see (Standing 1996a: chapter 2).

common and necessary strategy for survival (e.g. Bridger/Pine 1998; Manning et al. 2000: part III; Roberts et al. 1998; Rutkowski 2006; for Lithuania: Dilba 2000).

For these reasons, it may be assumed that the messages young people receive as a basis for assessing the new meanings of formal employment and unemployment are ambivalent. On one hand, the individual orientation towards successful employment performance and a continuous contribution to the social security system has become a new 'requirement' both for the reproduction of the system and for individual well-being. For the individual this would imply a long-term or at least medium-term time perspective, possibly covering the whole life course. On the other hand, and according to the given opportunity structures, formal employment is defined as only one option for survival, and survival necessarily implies a permanently short-term time perspective. The resulting confusion concerning formal employment may well be a natural part of this change of scope.

## ***2.2 Uncertainty, unemployment and the changing biographical condition of the individual***

The collapse of the Soviet regime marked the beginning of a social change that was, at first, characterised by an extensive de-institutionalisation (Lepsius 1997). Unlike the German Democratic Republic, where West-German institutions were adapted, the temporary 'institutional vacuum' in other transformation countries was filled more slowly and asymmetrically. The validity, relevance and scope of newly established or transformed institutions<sup>53</sup> are yet to be evaluated: this creates insecurities, uncertainties and disorientation across all layers of society.

The life course as a reference category for biographical planning and acting is one of the institutions that underwent a process of redefinition. This process particularly affected young people, both negatively and positively. They grew up in a period when the highly standardised life course defined by the guarantee of employment as suggested by the socialist model was replaced by open and ambivalent processes of individualisation and de-standardisation moving towards a release from societal constraints. The increase in degrees of freedom, a consequence of 'modernisation', was considerable and enjoyable even under precarious circumstances, as Roberts et al. (2000) found for young people growing up in this ambivalent situation. Nevertheless continuity expectations that were available for these young people's parents, a major socialising agent, were missing, making their status passage to adulthood questionable.

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<sup>53</sup> Lepsius (1997: 58) defines institutions generally as 'processes that structure social behaviour and relate it to values'.

In the following I will briefly reflect on different notions of the institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation of the life course. In a second step I will discuss the construction of normality, continuity and security by life course policies including the life course model of the authoritarian welfare-state.

### 2.2.1 Individualisation under the institutionalisation of the life course

The institutionalisation of the life course is a mode of sociation (*Vergesellschaftung*) (Geulen 1991) that convinces the individual that his or her life may be planned, their experiences projected. On the level of the self, it contributes to the 'ontological security' that is described by Giddens as the 'confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' (Giddens 1990: 92; see also 1991: chapter 2). With regard to biographical expectations of continuity, three notions of institutionalisation related to the life course can be distinguished. Each of them represents a specific perspective on individualisation and develops a distinct argument with regard to its biographical relevance.<sup>54</sup>

In the Durkheimian tradition, the life course (understood here as '*Lebensverlauf*') is the product of social differentiation (e.g. Mayer/Müller 1986, Mayer/Blossfeld 1990, Blossfeld/Huinink 2001). The integration of different segments of life is first of all an accomplishment of the state and its institutions. The individual is conceived of as a citizen, and equipped with rights and responsibilities. Consequently, individualisation is seen as the result of public concessions and increasing individual chances to make rational use of given opportunity structures. Individualisation is not understood as the establishment of individual life courses beyond collective patterns, but as a diversification of essentially predetermined pathways through the social structure. Starting positions (class) and performance (individual life histories) are determining factors within an 'endogenous causal nexus'. This position moderates individualisation in the sense of a release from constraints; rather it emphasises increasing options and life chances due to the increasing importance of institutions. The succession of different life periods is standardised, and the connecting transitional elements are essentially those periods where risks are negotiated: (un)successful individual behaviour or failure in passing through these as well as decisions related to these periods are decisive and irreversible.<sup>55</sup> While life histories reflect individual movement through contexts of

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<sup>54</sup> I follow especially the comprehensive summary and comparison in Wohlrab-Sahr (1992b). For a comparative presentation including the North American tradition in life course research see Ecarius (1996) and Heinz/Krüger (2001).

<sup>55</sup> This empirically supported statement comes close to what is usually referred to as 'path dependency'.

determination, biographies in the sense of individual projects drop out of sight. The establishment of comprehensive life projects is not likely, as decision-making seems to follow rather a situational than a holistic logic. The priority in this approach for quantitative longitudinal methods is evident.<sup>56</sup>

The proponents of this first position consider themselves in opposition to a second notion of individualisation suggested by Beck (1986: chapter 5), who never really elaborated a concept of the life course. This opposition may have its cause in a misunderstanding, as Wohlrab-Sahr (1992b: 6) notes. Beck does not neglect deterministic dimensions, but argues instead that individualisation and institutionalisation go hand in hand.<sup>57</sup> He shares this opinion with the Durkheimian school, but the emphasis is different. For Beck individual positions depend on secondary institutions, i.e. institutionally variable life course patterns (like access to and exit from education and employment and other 'externally' pre-determined categories) which replace more stable traditional bonds like class and family. Individualisation, or the dissolution of traditional contexts, is the precondition for the institutionalisation and socio-political shaping of life courses. Beck concedes an immediate connection between these developments and changes in biographical patterns. Individuals are not *a priori* conceived of as rational agents, but as managers of their own lives. They have to appropriate socially available biographical patterns by making decisions and choosing between options, and they recognise their shared responsibility for consequences (among them unemployment).

The third position, associated with Kohli (especially 1985, 1986ab, 1988), integrates elements of socialisation theory, concepts of developmental psychology, and a distinct action-theoretical perspective. On the basis of a historical analysis of changing life patterns, Kohli (1985) finds the process towards an institutionalisation of the life course to be characterised by a 'temporalisation' (from stable membership to a dynamic biography), a 'chronologisation' (standardisation, normal life course), individualisation (release from traditional bonds), organisation around employment ('tripartisation'), and a sequential order of positions related to the structure of biographical horizons. In the process of modernisation the life course loses some of its contingent elements and becomes to a large extent predictable. The ideal of a normal biography (Levy 1977) with employment at its core is associated with the expectation of an idealised continuity, which is enabled and supported by the public rights and

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<sup>56</sup> For a summary of the methodological position see Mayer (1987). The further development of this approach towards a comparative analysis of life course patterns and links to welfare state typologies is particularly interesting (Mayer 1997, 2001).

<sup>57</sup> Schroer (2001) classifies Beck's position as that of an 'ambivalent individualisation' in the Simmel tradition.



responsibilities in a welfare state context. Individualisation is a result of trends leading to the de-standardisation of the universal validity of the life course as an institution. It means that individuals turn away and deviate from a certain chronology as an expression of the cultural need and 'obligation' to organise one's life teleologically and as an act of self-realisation towards a certain biographical 'vanishing point' (Kohli 1988: 40). This trend is, in turn, equally enabled and facilitated by the institutionalised life course itself. Kohli's notion of the institutionalisation of the life course appears to describe a basic prerequisite for any kind of individualisation – i.e. only the previous establishment of a pattern of normality (that exists empirically in the form of variations of an 'ideal type') allows its successive modification. For Kohli, biographical patterns of orientation are those kinds of 'data' where the individual structuring of the life course is observable. On the one hand, they allow access to the cognitive activity of constructing a biographical perspective, and the evaluation of the present in light of the past and the future. On the other hand, the individual's contributions to the concrete realisation of a given or 'probable' life course can be observed.<sup>58</sup>

### 2.2.2 Life course policy and the construction of certainty

Although these positions share some basic assumptions, they represent three different 'schools' of life course theorising. Yet their alleged incompatibility appears to be artificially maintained for the sake of distinguishing theoretical and methodological profiles. Leisering/Leibfried (1999: especially 23-53) seem refreshingly ignorant of such animosities and bring the commonalities of these three positions together in their socio-political conceptualisation of the life course as an institution. They distinguish different models of life course policies that correspond to certain welfare regimes, with a common normative model of the life course with employment and the family at the centre. The 'contents' and duration of the main stages of life - childhood/youth, adulthood and old age – are more or less predefined (in terms of probabilities) and correspond to Kohli's (1985) idea of the tripartition of the life course. The life course can be understood as a mechanism that forms individual lives (including inequalities) and structures and integrates these three stages representing interdependent clusters of life experiences. Individuals, on the other hand, are conceptualised as agents, 'life-course runners', who have the chance to change their conditions. They are not simply 'processed' by welfare institutions.

Due to variations in the emphasis placed on the three components of life course policy (i.e. education, risk management and provisions for old age), national regimes can differ in

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<sup>58</sup> For Kohli's empirical approach see Bertaux/Kohli (1984) and Fischer/Kohli (1987).

the way and intensity with which they shape individual life courses. Leisering/Leibfried (1999: 47-53) distinguish four types of life course policies under different welfare regimes and give idealised country examples. First, in a residual welfare state (e.g. USA) the direct connection between social policy and the individual life course is marginal. The provision of minimum (residual) benefits encourages the return to work as soon as possible and therefore establishes the norm of a work-centred biography: the life course thus tends to be 'fluid' and equally characterised by 'good opportunities' and 'high risks'. Second, in the citizenship provision model (e.g. Sweden) the distribution of welfare is more detached from contributions. However, especially active labour market policies nevertheless emphasise the norm of a lifelong working biography. This standardisation of the life course, where 'good opportunities' are accompanied by 'low risks', is in principle valid for both men and women. Third, the insurance-based welfare state (e.g. Germany) prescribes a 'gendered normal biography'. Uninterrupted working careers are rewarded and transitions between different statuses are more rigid and strongly standardised. 'Good opportunities' tend to be unequally distributed despite the standardising effect that keeps individual risks low. Fourth, in authoritarian welfare states (e.g. the GDR) the full employment of both men and women is the norm, and highly standardised life courses are 'pre-planned and actively controlled'.<sup>59</sup> Because of the interventionist state, life chances and altogether 'poor opportunities' are not a question of choice: the advantage is the low degree of risk and insecurity (see also Diewald et al. 2006).

The degree of complexity and diversity of the social realities within the countries of this last type is (and was), of course, much higher. For instance, although work and employment had a central status in the life course policy of socialist countries like the GDR, it was impossible, especially within the logic of an economy of shortage, to exercise anything like 'totalitarian control' over the individual worker. On the contrary, workers had a relatively strong position due to the chronic shortage of labour and the high level of employment protection (Kohli 1994: 49). Similarly, as Wingens (1999; also Windzio/Wingens 2000, Mayer 2006) shows for the GDR, the stereotype of a socialist society consisting of passive and entirely dependent people within a system of total control would be inappropriate and empirically untenable. The practice and reality of job allocation and transitions to

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<sup>59</sup> For the sake of a differentiated discussion it seems important to note that the association of the term 'welfare state' with socialism is contested. Due to the priority of economic development (especially heavy industry) in socialism, Chen (2002), for instance, suggests the use of the term 'economic state model'. Social welfare was provided in the frame of an 'occupation-based welfare system'. This perspective is also interesting with regard to recent Western trends towards the deconstruction of the 'welfare state'.

employment as well as between workplaces did not match official policy.<sup>60</sup> Elements of communist propaganda, ideology and even organisation could not fully penetrate the deepest layers of everyday negotiations. Distancing oneself from the officially promoted image of the socialist person was already the rule rather than the exception amongst young people most exposed to propaganda (Lenhardt/Stock 1997: 198-202).<sup>61</sup>

However, there is no doubt that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the people of the former republics like Lithuania lost some of the 'advantages' of an authoritarian welfare-state model. The freedom they won was accompanied by the loss of the achievements (and shortcomings) of the socialist model. The above described centrality of work in the socialist ideology forced people into employment and provided them with a predictable 'one-phase employment-centred life course' (Leisering/Leibfried 1999: 201). Over the decades, individual lives were characterised by biographical continuity and the norm of an unbroken working career that was equally an obligation and a right. The 'link between work history and social security' that should encourage the maintenance of a 'good employment record' (Manning et al. 2000: 37) was the major point of reference of biographical planning. What Leisering/Leibfried (1999) write concerning the impact of social policies on life courses in the German Democratic Republic is valid for socialist regimes in general:

'State policies aimed to ensure that all groups in the population would be integrated into a life course focused on work as soon as they reached working age. And as the right to social services was linked to the workplace, the occupational orientation was underpinned by the social security system' (Leisering/Leibfried 1999: 203).

The collapse of the communist systems also brought an end to the institutionalised school-to-work transition with its built-in, taken-for-granted promises, restrictions and moments of arbitrariness. Even if some authors argue that massive institutional reorganisation did not change school-to-work outcomes too much (Gerber 2003), the drastic increase in youth unemployment should suffice as an indicator for a dramatically new situation.

I assume that the collapse of the authoritarian socialist model, mass unemployment, and the loss of the employment guarantee as a major life-structuring element led to a radical change in the expectations concerning individual life courses and biographies. The gain of new opportunities was accompanied by new 'life course contingencies' (Diewald et al. 2006:

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>61</sup> It remains to be seen whether teachers fulfilled their official responsibilities and roles in this respect (for an exemplary list see Lenhardt/Stock 1997: 193-195), whether the student's scepticism was a form of rebellion against the authority of the teacher, or whether there was indeed a common understanding of the socialist reality and its (in)capacity to provide equality as, for instance, young people's letters to editors in the former USSR indicate (Eggeling 1999: 129-140). For a sensitive note on the 'double orientation of acceptance and refusal, of identification and distanciation' expressed in common work-related jokes see Wagner (1994: 139 Fn53).

296): a sharp increase in general insecurity and in uncertainties with regard to biographical expectations, orientations and planning. Another major source of uncertainty is the process of social transformation in itself. Apart from 'uncertainty' being a necessary consequence of a transition to democracy (O'Donnell/Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1986), severe uncertainties result from the early effects of economic reforms, poverty being amongst the most urgent (e.g. Cornia/Paniccià 1995). Young people in transformation countries are very perceptive of change (Macek et al. 1998), and social deprivation has a considerable impact on the development of children and young people (Elder 1974). Societies and individuals react sensitively to changes, and in the case of post-communist transformations, change was also dramatic for young people (UNICEF 2000, 2001, 2004).

Societal transformations and their consequences for individuals could provide an almost perfect example of the potential of the vocabulary developed by scholars like Beck (especially 1986: part II) and Giddens (especially 1990, 1991) in order to analyse processes of this kind. The Western origin of this analytical terminology, however, would need to be overlooked.<sup>62</sup> I will not apply this terminology and related concepts, but instead refer to a notion of biographical uncertainty (see below) that is general enough and can, as I think, be fruitfully used as a 'sensitising concept' for the present study without running danger of abusing it as an 'intellectual toy' (Leisering/Leibfried 1999: 36).<sup>63</sup> The concept refers to the above outlined notions of institutionalisation and focuses on the consequences of processes of de-standardisation for 'biographisation' (Brose/Hildenbrand 1988) and identity formation. Furthermore, it is sufficiently broad and open to invite alternative interpretations that might result from the findings of the present study.

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<sup>62</sup> It is not clear whether the proponents of a 'reflexive' version of modernisation would share this possible restriction in scope, as their common theoretical enterprise is introduced by Beck (1994) by making reference precisely to the historical weight of the changes associated with the year 1989: 'The year 1989 will go down in history, it seems fair to predict, as the symbolic date of the end of an epoch. As we are very aware today, 1989 was the year in which the communist world, quite unexpectedly, fell apart. (...) The key question we are now confronting is whether the historical symbiosis between capitalism and democracy that characterized the West can be generalized on a global scale without exhausting its physical, cultural and social foundations. (...) 'Reflexive modernization' means the possibility of a creative (self-) destruction for an entire epoch: that of industrial society. The 'subject' of this creative destruction is not the revolution, not the crisis, but the victory of Western modernization' (Beck 1994: 1-2).

<sup>63</sup> Leisering/Leibfried (1999: 36) articulate this 'danger' in the context of their study on poverty including East Germany. From my point of view, they refer to a fundamental ethical problem of research: 'In view of the social situation in Germany and Europe, of mass unemployment and the abrupt transposition of new structures on the peoples of the East European countries, the question arises whether concepts such as individualisation and biographisation are not just intellectual toys of the 1980s whose use seems cynical at times of overwhelming social upheaval.'

### **3 Conceptual frame of reference of the exploration**

The preceding chapter outlined two possible perspectives on the transition of young people in a post-Soviet context. Each, generally speaking, represents one level of analysis and incorporates one main assumption. The *'employment re-evaluation hypothesis'* related to the normative level, suggests that the range of meanings of work and unemployment might be 'located' between two extremes. On the one hand, the status of employment as a 'life course necessity' and citizenship requirement may be recognised. On the other hand, formal employment may be seen as one possible activity among others for making a living. Second, according to the *'uncertainty hypothesis'* related to the biographical level, I expect to find indicators for the impact of the loss of life course guarantees provided by the former socialist regime in individual biographical perspectives and self-conceptualisations (i.e. indicators of insecurity/uncertainty such as confused orientations, unclear social positions, contingency, loss of predictability).

This chapter takes the analytical perspective one step further and introduces two sensitising concepts, one for each of these levels of analysis. It concludes with a brief discussion of the concept of transition, which serves as a conceptual link between the normative and the biographical level. The transitional status represents both a 'moment of danger' in conceptual terms, and the 'moment of observation' in methodological terms.

Before outlining these, I provide a methodological prologue on the status of sensitising concepts and, consequently, of 'hypotheses' within the qualitative research process.

#### ***3.1 Methodological prologue – 'sensitising concepts' and the status of prior knowledge and hypotheses in the research process***

One of the fundamental problems of methodology in the social sciences is the status of prior knowledge, its influence on perception, and its 'treatment' during the research process. This section reflects on the status of the concepts introduced below as sensitising concepts for the conceptual framing of the study.

In a classical understanding, quantitative methodology requires the realisation and control of available knowledge as well as, in an ideal situation, its cumulative completion. It operates on an *a priori* elaboration of a theoretical frame that pre-structures, limits and restricts the usually linear research process. Qualitative methodology, which is predominantly relevant to the present study, is instead in principle characterised by openness, although the importance of theory for perception and interest is not denied. Concepts, which must at least

fulfil the criterion of appropriateness, can help in developing a certain focus within a field of research, but are not supposed to dominate interpretations or relevant indications emerging from the research process itself (Meinefeld 2000). Though contested within the camp of qualitative researchers, from my point of view, hypotheses - not in the strict sense of being at the end of clear-cut operationalisations but in the sense of a loose set of targeted and interrelated questions and research expectations - can be considered an epistemological precondition for the progress of any kind of research.<sup>64</sup>

One way of facilitating the reflection of empirical findings in theoretical categories and the systematic development of categories from empirical material is the establishment of a certain 'theoretical sensitivity'. First used by Glaser/Strauss (1967), this term signifies a non-exclusive commitment to conceptual and theoretical elements in the sense of a flexible curiosity to 'see around' certain concepts (ibid. 46). Strauss/Corbin (1990: 41-47) elaborate on this and define theoretical sensitivity with reference to the interpretive context as an 'awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data' (ibid. 41). Sensitivity depends on previous reading and experience and can be extended and refined during the process of research.

Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't' (ibid. 42).

Accordingly, the authors suggest a research process that provides space for the creative and sceptical use of knowledge while at the same time remaining committed to the 'reality of a phenomenon' and to controlled research procedures.

The precise status of theory and concepts in such an approach can be clarified by taking a small step back in the history of (qualitative) social science methodology and, in particular, to Herbert Blumer and his earlier methodological writings (especially Blumer 1931, 1940, 1954). Concerned with the problem of the general vagueness of social scientific concepts and their relation to the empirical world, Blumer expressed the need for a 'working relation between concepts and the facts of experience wherein the former can be checked by the latter, and the latter ordered anew by the former' (Blumer 1940: 709). What was addressed was not a one-way relationship, but one characterised by a potential equality of concepts and evidence. There must be a chance for a revision of the former. Generally doubting that concepts in social science can ever be 'definitive', he stressed their instrumental character as 'sensitising concepts'.

'A sensitising concept... gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitising concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. The hundreds of our concepts - like culture, institutions, social

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<sup>64</sup> Meinefeld (1997) concedes that prior knowledge and ex ante hypotheses share 'suppressed commonalities'.

structure, mores, and personality – are not definitive concepts but are sensitising in nature. They lack precise reference and have no benchmarks, which allow a clean-cut identification of a specific instance and of its content. Instead, they rest on a general sense of what is relevant' (Blumer 1954, 7).<sup>65</sup>

What is crucial in this passage is the fact that whether the sensitising quality of a concept as is recognised or not depends essentially on how it is *used*, not so much on its contents. However, its contents obviously retain certain relevance. Understood as a means for establishing a 'self-correcting relation with its empirical world' general ambiguity can be seen as an advantage. By avoiding precise definition, sensitising concepts can stimulate a dialogue between theoretical elements and empirical realities within the research process, at the end of which a concrete, historically and locally specific, 'form' of the concept may be identified.<sup>66</sup>

What applies to the distinct concepts introduced below, such as biographical uncertainty and recognition, is in principle valid for the whole conceptual framework. It must prove itself with regard to the empirical world of meanings and experiences. Consequently, the status of the hypotheses introduced previously and in the following is that of a heuristic tool for specifying questions related to areas of interest indicated by the conceptual framework. These hypotheses represent a 'tentative and imprecise conjecture about possible relationships between two domains of interest' (Kelle 1997: 3.6). Thus, exploration and interpretation has priority over ambitions like explanation or verification/falsification.

In order to do justice to the explorative nature of the study the two concepts introduced below are first of all important for narrowing the otherwise extensive interest in post-communist emergence of capitalist unemployment regimes down to two specific research perspectives. The utilisation of these concepts in the sense of sensitising concepts should guarantee that they do not dominate throughout the whole research process (Chapter 4). Figure 4.2 tries to illustrate exactly the scope of the overall influence of these concepts; they should only be indirectly represented in the single chapters, where priority is given to issues emerging from the data. A conceptual integration and revision is not intended here but is, however, possible. Chapter 10 tries to suggest a possibility how this could be done with regard to the concept of biographical uncertainty.

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<sup>65</sup> As early as the beginning of the 1930s, Blumer spoke of the need to see the quality of concepts primarily as an instrument to sensitise perception. By making reference to epistemological processes in the natural sciences (e.g. Pasteur, Darwin), he distinguished three functions of the concept and sharply criticised mere theorising as failing to realise 'the function of the concept (...) to bridge perplexed perception and to release and guide behaviour inside of this perceptual field' (Blumer 1931: 531.)

<sup>66</sup> The importance of sensitising concepts in qualitative research has long been recognised. Nevertheless, its origin tends to be neglected and its crucial methodological status underestimated or simplified (e.g. Ragin 1994: 87-88).

### 3.2 *The sensitising concept of recognition*<sup>67</sup>

The concept of recognition, which has become a core category in a recent outline of normative social theory (Honneth 1992), provides an alternative view on the contemporary problems associated with a hegemonic notion of employment. By tying together both normative and 'ontological' arguments, the concept (in Honneth's version) opens a potential channel for an anticipated critical exchange of findings on the two levels. Furthermore, its being associated with the Durkheimian question of the 'social bond' (Lash/Featherstone 2002: 12-15) seems to underline the significance of the concept for the present study. What is mass unemployment in (welfare) capitalism if not a potential threat to social cohesion (Levitas 1996)? Thus, how could the notion of recognition be used as a building block of the conceptual frame of reference of this study, and how could it be useful as a link between the two levels of analysis?

Recent contributions to social policy reform discussions (e.g. Lister 2002b) plead for an extended welfare reform formula that considers issues of recognition, in particular work-related asymmetries in recognition with regard to gender, disability and poverty. According to Nancy Fraser's (1995, 1998, 2000, 2002) distinction between recognition and redistribution, welfare that is based solely on socio-economic (distributive) justice ignores human needs for dignity, equality of status and respect (cultural and symbolic justice). Both dimensions of recognition, she maintains, must be equally considered in an extended notion of justice, without having to resort to a language of ethics suggesting the existence of some pre-defined notion of 'good life'. It is this idea of a 'good life' that is one of the starting points for Axel Honneth's (1992, 2002) philosophical enterprise to elaborate a conception of the moral order of society evolving around the notion of recognition. He is, amongst others, concerned with the negative impact of different kinds of 'mis- or nonrecognition' on self-development. This allows the conceptualisation of the experience of unemployment vis-à-vis 'institutionalised definitions and measures of social esteem that govern which activities and abilities may achieve symbolic or material recognition' (Honneth 2002: 54-55). This last point needs further explanation. It is fundamental for the analysis of accounts of perspectives on unemployment, because it formulates a distinct alternative assessment of the hegemonic norm of contribution through employment.

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<sup>67</sup> An earlier and more extended version of this chapter was presented as a paper entitled 'The concept of recognition as a tool for researching changing meanings of work in post-socialist youth transitions to working life' at the workshop: 'Recognition: theoretical perspectives and empirical research', European University Institute, Florence, May 27-28, 2005. I want to thank the participants for comments and feedback.



Honneth (1992, 2002) bases his contemporary conception of a moral order of society on the notion of recognition contained in the early writings of G.F.W. Hegel, and on G.H. Mead's translation of Hegel's idea into a theory of recognition-based identity formation. Like Hegel and Mead, Honneth accepts the hypothesis of a 'struggle for recognition' as the core point of reference for his theoretical efforts, which results, among other things, in the distinction of three patterns of recognition.

The first, *love*, refers to forms of emotional attention in primary relationships (e.g. family, friendship), which shape the development of trust in oneself. Forms of nonrecognition or misrecognition associated with this pattern deny physical and emotional integrity (e.g. physical humiliations like torture or rape). The *legal order*, the second pattern, provides the opportunity for actors (i.e. legal persons as individuals as well as the community or the state) to recognise each other as free, equal and autonomous subjects.<sup>68</sup> This enables interactions based on mutual respect and promotes the establishment of a relationship with oneself of self-respect. Related forms of misrecognition question the social integrity of a person and correspond to the denial of rights as well as social exclusion.

The third pattern, *solidarity*, which is the main point of reference for the present study, characterises the internal relationships of communities and their definitions of achieving social esteem. Whether individual abilities are accepted and respected is decisive for the formation and maintenance of self-esteem, the identification of oneself with specific attributes and achievements. On this level Honneth seems to refer to the idea of (self-) acceptance of individuals and what they become due to their own life histories:

'Within such a relationship, individuals would be able to find acceptance and mutual encouragement of their individuality, as individuals formed by their very life-experience' (Honneth 2002, 50).

In the context of this third pattern of recognition Honneth refers to symbolic struggles (including those of an economic character) between societal groups for definitions and measures of social esteem, according to which individual abilities and achievements are assessed as expressions of self-realisation. The 'social standing' of individuals depends on what they accomplish, what they contribute to social reproduction as a result of their particular features and capacities.<sup>69</sup> Misrecognition on this level corresponds to the 'depreciation of the social value of forms of self-realisation'.

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<sup>68</sup> Under this heading Honneth also discusses T.H. Marshall's evolutionary account of citizenship as full societal membership (see Honneth 1992: 173-195).

<sup>69</sup> Honneth associates this struggle with 'means of symbolic power' and points to Bourdieu's conception of society (Honneth 1992: 205-207).

### 3.2.1 Unemployment and misrecognition

In an updated version of his concept of recognition Honneth (2003) reformulates the idea of social solidarity as *accomplishment (Leistung)* by shifting emphasis towards the assessable 'output' of an individual - an 'input' in the form of a 'contribution'- and away from the ethical and universal claim for the impartial appreciation of a person's particular 'abilities and traits'. In so doing the third pattern of recognition acquires a 'more Durkheimian twist', as Honneth puts it (Petersen/Willig 2002: 275), as it moves closer to the (still) powerful Durkheimian argument of the 'division of labour' as the main pillar of social solidarity in modern society. Each member of society has, in his or her role as a 'worker-citizen' (*Arbeitsbürger*), the chance to enjoy esteem on the basis of accomplishment (ibid. 166).<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, the emphasis on the accountability of the individual increases the connectability of the concept to redistribution, which seems to require a 'material' starting point. One core issue of the dispute over redistribution is the struggle over what kind of (work-)activities lie within or outside the boundaries of the currently narrow definition of recognised forms of contributing (i.e. employment).

Without necessarily having to associate the experience of unemployment with self-realisation, many societal stereotypes regarding unemployment, which are themselves ideological positions, can be seen as belonging to the form of disrespect related to this third pattern of recognition. By referring to the discourse on socially necessary labour (Marx), Honneth explicitly addresses the link between unemployment and nonrecognition, where unemployment is an example of the struggle for recognition:

In short, it is a struggle over the cultural definition of what it is that renders an activity socially necessary and valuable. Once we are aware of this meaning of the struggle for recognition, then a pressing challenge to developed Western democracies becomes immediately apparent. Because of unemployment, which is no longer merely linked to economic cycles but is now also structural, a growing number of people do not have the opportunity to gain the kind of recognition for their acquired abilities that I refer to as social esteem. Because of this, they can hardly consider themselves as contributing members of a democratic polity, since that presupposes the experience of cooperation, that is, the socially recognised contribution to social reproduction' (Honneth 2002: 54).

In line with the conclusions related to the concept of the institutionalised life course, unemployment is seen as a threat to social integration. Here it is conceptualised as a form of 'non-activity' that lies outside institutionalised definitions of social esteem and of activities that merit symbolic or material recognition. Equally, participation in employment is recognised as a normative precondition for social recognition.

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<sup>70</sup> In my opinion, this point needs to be differentiated, because it is very close to the idea of the 'worker-citizen' mentioned above with regard to the status of the citizen under socialism (Offe 1996: 235). Or, the 'duty to work' has finally become an equally strong principle in Western capitalism, without involving the same commitments on the part of the state.

Despite disputes, the idea of recognition can substantially enrich socio-political debates. It allows us to re-theorise distributional matters against the background of complex issues of morality, responsibility and solidarity. First attempts at re-conceptualising questions of sociology of work in terms of recognition theory (not exclusively according to Honneth's version) and at negotiating new interpretations of well-known phenomena have already appeared (e.g. Holtgrewe et al. 2000; Voswinkel 2002; Petersen/Willig 2004; Heidegren 2004; also Pixley 1997; Wagner 2004).

For the purpose of the present project Honneth's concept of recognition helps to conceptually link the two levels of analysis. Moreover, the concept is instructive for understanding the potential meaning of unemployment in a country in transformation. By keeping Mead's idea of intersubjectivity present, Honneth's concept of recognition is open to issues of socialisation and self-development. A few aspects can be directly translated into tentative research questions for a study of youth transitions to working life.

A very general research interest in the context of the concept of recognition is related to the above-described change in the meaning of unemployment from a societal taboo to a mass phenomenon. The change from associating unemployment with social outcasts to associating it with potentially everybody (i.e. attributing reasons for unemployment externally) alone should have consequences for all levels of recognition, as well as for all the research questions discussed in the following.

#### *Dominant ideas of achievement and recognition crises*

If one accepts Honneth's position as a further attempt to interpret the 'bourgeois-capitalist form of society as an institutionalised order of recognition' (Honneth 2003: 162), one can try to search for indicators of an emerging dominant idea of 'individual achievement', established during the process of transition to capitalism. In a situation of mass unemployment and wide-spread informal labour, a form of work that is by definition not formally recognised, one might indeed expect a gap between the adapted norms of achievement and the actual socially available options for the same, which might go hand in hand with a neglect of normatively prescribed definitions. Krömmelbein (2000), referring to the former GDR, considers this dissociation of available expectations and realisable options as part of the 'recognition crisis' characterising the post-socialist situation. This crisis has three potential sources: First, the workers' self-respect can be undermined as their capacity for work under new circumstances is questioned. Second, the reasons for unemployment are not associated with external factors, such as the general lack of jobs, but individualised and

attributed to oneself. The freedom to choose a job cannot be transformed and activated within an alternative perspective of action. Finally, social interaction and relations between people change. For instance, values and moral patterns of behaviour like decency, consideration and solidarity prove to be obstructive and do not imply an entitlement to an appropriate job. More generally, recognition crises address forms of the devaluation (or revaluation) of knowledge and the re-definition of the 'semantic inventory' of a society (Srubar 1994: 208; also 1998), which is associated with changes of scope, with the problem of 'synchronising' claims and the capacities of individuals to cope with changing realities. Ultimately, the transition to a capitalist system and the related recognition crisis is brought to an end only when those forms of (mis-)recognition, which support the hegemonic normative definitions of achievement, are socially (and empirically) established. This process of redefining of meanings is a central feature of the transformation processes understood in terms of catch up modernisation.<sup>71</sup>

### *Successful biographies?*

A more concrete research interest is related to the importance of institutionalised definitions of success and achievement negotiated in struggles about the demarcation of what can be called a 'good' or 'successful' life (Honneth 2002: 51). Recognised activities and forms of achievement correspond on a higher level to what Wohlrab-Sahr (1995) terms the ideal of a 'successful biography'.<sup>72</sup> Within the general validity of the norm of an institutionalised life course a successful biography ideally evolves throughout a continuous career of upward mobility. Attached to this is a certain notion of failure. In situations of social change the criteria for success and failure are subject to re-definition, and ways of dealing with discontinuity and uncertainty can suddenly become criteria for success. The mere maintenance of any form of biographical *continuity* (itself subject to certain definitions) can then be an indicator for achievement. Assuming a change in the criteria for a successful biography (or for the successful management of biographical discontinuities) due to societal transformation, the status of employment within this ideal can be investigated.

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<sup>71</sup> An alternative version of this argument could underline the colonisation dimension inherent in forms of 'modernisation' that introduce new work-based modes of achievement and failure. However, the history of the post-communist world, with its previously established emphasis on work, allows for a more optimistic vision of the consequences of the introduction of a work society on western standards as compared to more remote contexts of colonisation such as the African continent (Gronemeyer 1990).

<sup>72</sup> See also Neckel/Dröge (2002).

### 3.3 *The sensitising concept of biographical uncertainty*

With her concept of 'biographical uncertainty'<sup>73</sup> Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (1992b, 1993) attempts to grasp the processes of de-standardisation and loss of certainty that are associated, albeit in a far less radical way and altogether more gradually than in the case of post-socialist countries, with the changing lives and identities of people in Western societies of modernity that Beck (1986) labels 'reflexive'. On the basis of a biographical study of the 'extreme group' of female temporary workers (*Zeitarbeiterinnen*), part of a wider study on temporary work (Brose et al. 1993), Wohlrab-Sahr analyses the establishment of identities under conditions where uncertainty is 'institutionalised' due to discontinuous and temporary employment relationships. With the notions of expectation and the temporal dimension at its core, biographical uncertainty is defined as the consequence of an erosion of traditional orders of time inherent in the life course as an institution (see Chapter 2). It is generally conceptualised in a sociological manner as a combination of three elements: (a) the 'internal' moment of personal feelings of uncertainty (i.e. certainty constructions become visible as fictions); (b) the 'external' moment of increased social complexity (i.e. it is objectively more difficult to orient one's own life according to standardised expectations in the sense of a normal biography); and (c) the 'reflexive' moment of increasing knowledge about this complexity (i.e. increasing awareness of the increasing contingency of life) (Wohlrab-Sahr 1993: 11-12).

Wohlrab-Sahr (1993: 17-27) distinguishes four anthropological and sociological traditions of theorising uncertainty, represented in the work of Gehlen, Simmel, Durkheim and Park, all of whom develop specific categories of uncertainty. Durkheim's concept of anomie (Durkheim 1983/1897), which has implicitly become an integral element of theories of modernisation, signifies the individual state of being confronted with a lack of social and moral order. Situations of social change imply a diffusion of certainty about values or goals: patterns of orientation become blurred as their validity is questionable. The result of this 'loss of order' is confusion with regard to expectations and claims. A second form of uncertainty is associated with Park's (1928) classical notion of the 'marginal man', a figure in between two cultures, traditions and groups of reference. His position is characterised by ambivalence and a loss of stability. A third dimension of marginality, emphasised in Simmel's (1908) notion of the 'stranger', which constitutes a separate category of uncertainty, is that of contingency. The fundamental ambiguity of this figure, resulting from a permanently unsolved confusion of the

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<sup>73</sup> Here and in the following I use the term 'uncertainty' (and not 'insecurity') for the German 'Unsicherheit', because it seems more appropriate for expressing difficulties in establishing biographical expectations in ambiguous situations.

A second question addresses resources and reasons for the adaptation of relevant biographical knowledge to the changing situation. This deals with the role of socialising agents as compared to the role of young people's own experiences in the process of socialisation. According to one aspect of the individualisation thesis, the share of autonomous elements of action for young people is increasing (Fuchs 1983, Buchmann 1989, Georg 1997, Furlong/Cartmel 1997). If one assumes that this is also true for young people in post-Soviet contexts and, furthermore, that socialising agents lost some of their competence through the abrupt breakdown of the system and the de-valuation of knowledge, then one might expect processes of 'self-socialisation' (Hoerning 1989; Hoerning/Alheit 1995; Heinz 2000b, 2002) to be very important and explicit among young Lithuanians. Yet, the opposite might also be the case: young people in Lithuania may also have to exploit all the support available in order to establish coherent orientations out of the situation of uncertainty. In this context evidence for a revaluation of the post-socialist family could be found (Becker/Nietfeld 1999). The individual accounts should allow the reconstruction of the social context and the formation of certain perspectives expressed at the end of a chain of experiences.

### ***3.4 The 'moment' of observation – the character of transitions***

The idea of 'transition' is conceptually crucial because it lies at the intersection of the normative and the biographical level. While it can, in the first context, be understood as a 'status passage', it is, in the second context, an example of what Giddens (1991: especially chapter 4) calls 'fateful moments'. As a general metaphor in youth research, the notion of transition, together with its associated status passages, refers to individualised but organised processes of growing up, as well as to the embeddedness of the individual in an institutionalised framework. At the same time, the concept of transition reflects a socialisation approach to youth, and implicitly or explicitly suggests criteria for success or failure in youth development. Within specific contexts the notion of transition usually defines those who are 'at risk' of not fitting into a potentially individualised process with certain 'pathways' and outcomes for 'mainstream' young people. (Wyn/White 1997: chapters 3 and 5).

The term 'status passage' originates from the anthropological work of Arnold van Gennep (1981/1909), who mainly studied passages between age-linked statuses such as birth and childhood, adolescence and adulthood etc. He finds that various 'rites of passage' accompanied by different initiation ceremonies help to structure stressful transitions. For the purpose of studying life course (youth) transitions, Heinz (e.g. 1996) suggests conceptualising

this as the outcome of interplays between individual decisions and opportunity structures, which he defines in the following way:

'Status passages link institutions and actors by defining time tables and entry as well as exit markers for transitions between social status configurations. On the micro level status passages are constructed by biographical actors (...). On the macro level status passages refer to institutional resources and guidelines for life course transitions' (Heinz 1996: 58-59).<sup>77</sup>

In this notion status passages are, analytically speaking, at the intersection of agency/structure and micro/macro processes and represent the biographical actor and his or her biography as well as the life course and institutions in general. Individuals are conceptualised as 'biographical actors' that integrate their life history as well as life perspectives, options and circumstances. Options are interpreted with regard to social norms and individual legacies; while decisions, or better the observable outcomes of biographical actions<sup>78</sup> allow the individuals to be involved in constructing their own life courses and, in so doing, negotiating their identities. Status transitions are bound together by life course trajectories, sub-units of the life course, that unfold as a result of the interplay between opportunity structure, individual dispositions and action. In the context of an institutionalised life course the most important entry and exit points of status passages are associated with education, employment, family, welfare, and retirement passages.

'Fateful moments', defined by Giddens (1991: 243) as 'moments at which consequential decisions have to be taken or courses of action initiated', are situations that are both 'highly consequential and problematic'. An individual stands 'at the crossroads in his existence' (ibid. 113) and every step taken from this position can have far reaching consequences. Transition points in life, with death and birth being the existentially most important, can be understood as fateful moments.<sup>79</sup> One of the most important transitions in 'earthly' life is the transition to employment, as it is both a fateful moment and a 'status passage'. Steps taken towards employment are (still) potentially decisive for a lifelong career and in the case of young people they are, in a normative context, steps taken in the status passage to adulthood. Trends towards the de-institutionalisation of the life course as a reference category for biographical orientation as well as youth transitions as status passages as such (Fuchs 1983; Buchmann 1989, chapter 3; Walther et al. 2002) can be a potential source for biographical uncertainty.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> A 'formal', yet descriptive theory of status passage was developed by Glaser/Strauss (1971). For a concept of (female) status biography see Levy (1977).

<sup>78</sup> I avoid using the term 'decision' because of its conceptual complexity with regard to biographical action (Burkhart 1995).

<sup>79</sup> Thomson et al. (2002) study such phenomena for young people under the heading of 'critical moments'.

<sup>80</sup> To what extent transitions are becoming more and more destandardised, or whether the notions of 'transition' and 'status passages' are still appropriate at all, are important youth research questions that require *empirical* answers. I cannot address these here. The main reasons for which I chose these concepts is their persistent

The movement from education to work marks a crucial status change in the lives of young people. The status passage can either be a gradual move or an abrupt change. The status position changes from pupil to young adult to citizen; the amount of time spent within private social contexts like the family and, to some extent, schools is reduced in favour of the establishment of a 'public' personality; daily activities gradually stop following an explicit logic of learning and become embedded within contexts of productivity; one's own life course starts to come into focus and must be actively shaped by biographical actions, decision-making and the fulfilment of possibilities; social norms of success and failure and integration and exclusion need to be negotiated, as well as self-concepts.

Unemployment and a decreasing standardisation of transitions are recognised as primary sources of uncertainty; they are interlinked with the general vulnerability of (young) people in status passages *qua* 'dangerous transitions', as Pat Allatt (1997: 98) refers to them, following the anthropological work of Mary Douglas (1996). Following van Gennep, Douglas points to the significance of 'danger-beliefs' for the maintenance of the 'ideal order of society' in religious systems. She identifies passages through transitional states and marginal periods as dangerous and as potentially contagious or dangerous for others:

'He (i.e. van Gennep; H.R.) saw society as a house with rooms and corridors in which passage from one to another is dangerous. Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others' (ibid. 97).

The general vulnerability of young people in transition makes youth as such a potentially dangerous social category in the above sense, i.e. dangerous for society.<sup>81</sup> In fact, unemployment in post-communism has become one potentially problematic outcome of the transitional moment that is both an integral element and a threat to the new arrangement of society. It triggers the establishment of (external) moral claims as part of 'men's attempts to force one another into good citizenship', to quote Mary Douglas (ibid. 3) once more. On the other hand, the precarious character of post-communist youth transitions and the danger of

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*conceptual* and *heuristic* value as well as the fact that it connects my research to an established research discourse. The fact that the loss of a central planning system and with it the certainty of employment happened so quickly, seems to be reason enough to talk about destandardisation in this respect (see Chapters 5 and 6).

<sup>81</sup> This is reflected in more critical contributions to youth research such as MacDonald (1997ab), Kelly (1998, 2000, 2005, 2006). The notion of the 'dangerous transitions' of young people has, for example, been used by Giovacchini (2001) to discuss the experiences of traumatised adolescents, without, however, referring to its ambivalent character. Contributions using the term 'risk' in the title are too numerous to be listed here and often have a different orientation.



uncertainty within is generally recognised (e.g. Roberts et al. 2000; Chuprov/Zubok 2000; Williams et al. 2003).<sup>82</sup>

The following part introduces the way in which the questions outlined above were integrated into the overall research agenda.

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<sup>82</sup> The use of the concept of danger here does not go much beyond the indicated metaphorical notion in an anthropological sense. For its possible status within sociological individualisation theories, and without direct reference to this anthropological connotation, see Schroer (2001). For a defense of the anthropological notion of danger vis-à-vis the term 'risk' see Douglas (1992). For a brief comparison of the concept of risk in Beck and Douglas in the context of risk perception research see Wilkinson (2001).



## **Part II      Research design, method, process**

This part explains how the explorative research perspective outlined in the previous part was put into practice. Following the main research interest in the meanings of work and unemployment a qualitative-interpretive approach was adopted. According to the anticipated interest in issues related to the above-described sensitising concepts of recognition and biographical uncertainty, the technique of the 'problem-centred interview' was used. This combines narrative elements with an interview guide guaranteeing the coverage of certain key topics in all interviews. Altogether 30 interviews with young men and women in linear and non-linear transitions to working life were conducted by trained native speaking interviewers. The data analysis began with an extensive reconstruction of 'anchor cases' that were selected on the basis of a numerical classification. This reconstruction led to a list of codes that was then applied to all interviews. A subsequent cross-sectional categorial analysis of key issues resulted in the empirically grounded elaboration of related types and typologies. The single case analysis is presented in Chapter 7, while three different classifications form the core of the other empirical Chapters 8, 9 and 10.



## 4 Research design and practice

### 4.1 *The research interest and approach*

The task and questions formulated in the research outline indicate my interest in meanings formed during an interpretive process, at the provisional end of which any expressed meaning is indicative of a complex genealogy. Sociological research aiming to reconstruct such processes cannot take the form of 'variable analysis', treating meanings as the outcomes of certain combinations of contextual elements that can be isolated (Blumer 1956). It tries instead to capture the processual character of the formation of interpretations and to contextualise meanings, both historically and locally ('here and now'), paying the price, however, of abandoning many of the advantages of 'variable analysis'.<sup>83</sup>

This type of scientific interest calls for a research programme usually referred to as 'qualitative' (e.g. Flick 2002). However, I wish to emphasise that the way I apply this qualitative perspective is undogmatic: I do not subscribe to the idea of apparently implacable differences between idiographic and nomothetic approaches. I rather consider methodological orthodoxy to be outdated and gradually losing its importance (Kelle/Erzberger 1999; Teddlie/Tashakkori 2003; Reiter 2001). Through the application of a numerical sorting of the cases, elements of quantitative research and analysis are integrated into the qualitative approach of this study. In its overall design, the study pursues an actor-oriented and meaning-focused approach (Heitmeyer/Hurrelmann 1992).

The outline of the study follows the twofold research interest (i.e. normative and biographical) in the meaning of unemployment as developed in the previous conceptual part. The first interest refers to concrete evaluations and interpretations of the societal status of work and un/employment, to so-called 'interpretive schemes' (*Deutungsschemata*) (Schutz 1967) or 'interpretive patterns' (*Deutungsmuster*) (Lüders/Meuser 1997) in the tradition of a sociology of constructivist knowledge (Berger/Luckmann 1967).<sup>84</sup> The second interest addresses the status of unemployment and related topics (especially in connection with uncertainty and misrecognition) within individual stories and biographical accounts. Here, the crucial question is if and how unemployment becomes relevant to and a part of the biographical orientation within individual accounts.

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<sup>83</sup> Blumer (1956, 689) undoubtedly recognises the valuable features of 'variable analysis' – 'the qualitative constancy of the variables, their clean-cut simplicity, their ease of manipulation as a sort of free counter, their ability to be brought into decisive relation'.

<sup>84</sup> I use the terms more generally than suggested in the context of the recent debate within German sociology about a dominant paradigm of 'interpretive patterns' (Oevermann 2001 ab; Plaß/Schetsche 2001).

#### *4.2 Research tool – the problem-centred interview*

For the study of the establishment of meanings in crisis situations from the perspective of those affected, the integration of biographical elements and work with narratives seems appropriate (Fischer-Rosenthal 1991, Fuchs-Heinritz 2000).<sup>85</sup> In the context of the analysis of transitional experiences, the biographical approach is particularly suited to bridging the gap between micro and macro perspectives, since it captures the process of negotiation between the individual and the social structure. The focus of the analysis is then not the reconstruction of intention alone but the 'embeddedness of the biographical account in societal macro-structures' (Apitzsch/Inowlocki 2000: 61). In this way information about experiences within specific 'life-worlds' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973) reaches beyond its immediate context. A further advantage of the openness of such an approach is the unfolding of the structures of relevance of the main actors within their primary context. With regard to the interest in the role of socialising agents and the transmission of knowledge, this allows me to assess the relevance of peers, family members, friends etc. without necessarily having to assume any prominent role in advance. The relevance and appropriateness of integrating elements of narrative and biographical methods for studying social changes, like the post-socialist transformations, is emphasised and documented in many recent studies.<sup>86</sup> Talking about the past is a common activity and an indicator for the search for new identities based on the re-evaluation of experiences (Andrews 2000). Of the common topics of biographical research in the East (e.g. Jaworski/Petersen 2002), the present project's main interest is in interpretive patterns among young people.

The research interest in interpretations concerning concrete issues also begs the incorporation of guidance within the data collection procedure. The core method and main generator of original data for the study was a form of in-depth interview, more precisely an adapted version of the technique of the 'problem-centred interview' (Witzel 1982, 1989, 2000). This technique is one of the few qualitative methods, which, in their methodological foundations, explicitly allow the integration of conceptual aspects. The problem-centred interview can be characterised as a compromise between guided and narrative interview techniques (Hopf 1991: 178). On the one hand, problem-centred interviewing tries to stimulate detailed and extensive biographical narratives, as is also intended in narrative

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<sup>85</sup> For specific approaches and fields of research see especially Chamberlayne et al. (2000), Jüttemann/Thomae (1999), Krüger/Marotzki (1999).

<sup>86</sup> E.g.: Humphrey et al. (2003), Struck (2000, 2003), Kusá (2003), Sutiniene (1996), Segert/Zierke (2000), Wingens (1999), Alheit (1995), Kreher (1995), Kirchhöfer (1995). For the biographical analysis of change in general see Thompson (1981).

interviews (Schütze 1983) used for biographical research. On the other hand, it makes use of additional semi-structured dialogues that can be structured by guidelines and targeted to specific dimensions of the research interest. This has an additional effect of increasing communicative validity as well as the comparability of the interviews with regard to particularly important categories. Because inductive and deductive elements are combined, the problem-centred interview has the potential to contribute to the modification and revision of theoretical concepts. Altogether this method overcomes some of the unfavourable features of the narrative interview without, however, losing all of its advantages; which is why Mey (2000: 147) calls it a 'dialogic variant of the narrative interview'.<sup>87</sup> In an earlier study on unemployed young people (Reiter 1997, 2003) the technique of the problem-centred interview proved to be suitable because its approach corresponded very well with the communicative capacities of the young respondents and the poor levels of articulation of some of these.

### 4.3 Data – interviews with 30 young people

In order to grasp the meanings of changing notions of work and unemployment among young Lithuanians, the interviewees, the units of analysis, are young people experiencing the transition to working life. A first round of interviews included only young people in 'incomplete, *non-linear transitions*', who had left education and employment (in a narrow sense). After discussions with the interviewers and a first examination of the material I decided to extend the sampling and include also youths in '*linear transitions*' that were interviewed in a second round. This group comprised of young people (still) 'on track' and involved in forms of (further) education. In this way, the pool of experiences, perspectives and meanings represented in the sample was considerably extended and enriched the possibilities for case comparison and analytic 'retrieval strategies' through the the material.

Apart from the criterion referring to their transition experience, gender and place of residence were the other two criteria organising the search for respondents *a priori*. As far as gender is concerned, the female perspective on employment is considered to be very different from that of young men. With regard to post-communist Russia, Ashwin (2002) for example, notes the persistence of the 'Soviet gender order' and the reproduction of the Soviet-style family: both partners used to work, but the man was considered to be the *main* breadwinner and the woman the 'worker-mother'. This division of labour was supported by the Soviet structures. In the Lithuanian case pre-Soviet gender patterns may also still be relevant. Changes in the labour market, however, make it much more difficult for both parties to follow

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<sup>87</sup> For a recent critical appraisal of the problem-centred interview see Scheibelhofer (2007).

their traditional 'role-models'. All this 'decreased the certainty of being able to both have a family life and keep a job', as Rudd (2000: 335) concludes. Tensions, especially concerning female life plans, are unavoidable, which, as Ashwin (2002: 130) notes, 'raises the question of the durability of the prevailing gender ideology'.<sup>88</sup>

As far as men are concerned, one may ask - outside the context of the present study and more as a general curiosity, as it would be another topic altogether - whether the particularly high suicide rate among young men is related to some deeply-rooted transformation of male self-understanding associated with the substantial loss of masculinity indicated in this tension.<sup>89</sup>

Place of residence was an additional category for the *a priori* internal differentiation of the sample. About 50% of all young people live in the five largest cities of the country, and their levels of education as well as income are higher (Veckiene 2001). In rural areas, where the impact of economic decline on living standards has been particularly dramatic (Juska et al. 2005; Povilunas 2003), the poverty level is much higher (28%) than in the five largest cities (7%). It is particularly high among farmers (41%) and all forms of households with children (above 30%) (Zalimiene 2000). According to Labour Force Survey data, regional youth unemployment levels varied from 13% to 41% in the year 2000. Variation in female youth unemployment levels was higher, between 12% and 44%; furthermore there were regions where overall youth unemployment levels among men (31%) and women (26%) were reversed, for instance in the district of Utena (men: 26% - women: 40%) (Veckiene 2001).<sup>90</sup> Bearing in mind this information alongside the gender dimension, one can expect differences in perceptions of unemployment.

On the basis of these selection criteria 30 interviews were conducted. The realised sample is represented in Table 4.1.<sup>91</sup> In terms of age the original intention was to limit the sample to young people immediately out of education but without work experience, i.e. at the age of about 16 to 18 years, in order to arrive at certain homogeneity of experiences. Not only did this limitation prove very difficult during the fieldwork, it also became clear that

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<sup>88</sup> Binder (2003), who analysed party programmes in several post-socialist countries, finds little evidence of gender equality as a policy priority. For the conservative trend with regard to the status of women in the new democracies see also Ferge (1997). LaFont (2001) goes one step further and argues that the democratic turn has even widened the gender gap through women's decreasing political participation.

<sup>89</sup> In 1999 suicide was the cause of death for 61,7 young men and for 8,6 young women per 100.000 average population (Statistikos Departamentas 2000a: 54). The suicide rates of young men and women are among the highest in all transition countries (UNICEF 2000).

<sup>90</sup> Paradoxically, the OECD report on labour markets and social policy in the Baltic countries (OECD 2003: 148) finds lower unemployment risks in rural areas than in small towns.

<sup>91</sup> For an overview of the 30 cases see Appendix 2.



extending the age boundaries would actually allow the coverage of a broader range of experiences and ultimately enrich the exploration. Furthermore, the heterogeneity among people with supposedly similar experiences due to age underlines that ‘standardising’ by age may not have the desired effect.

**Table 4.1 – The qualitative sample (n=30)**

		n
Transition	- non-linear (1st round)	19
	- linear (2nd round)	11
Gender	- male	15
	- female	15
Place of residence (grouped)	- Vilnius (capital)	15
	- other	15
	- town	4
	- regional centre	4
	- village	7
Age (grouped)	- 15-18	17
	- 19+	13
Ethnicity (grouped)	- Lithuanian	23
	- other	7

Finally, ethnicity was not included as an *a priori* sampling category. Yet the first interview round of young people in non-linear transitions in particular resulted in the collection of quite a few accounts of young people with Russian, Polish or mixed ethnic backgrounds.

#### **4.4 The research process**

The interviews were conducted between February and November 2004 by two Lithuanian native speakers, both M.A. students of sociology at Vilnius University. Native speakers were chosen in order to be sure that the interviewers would be able to follow the accounts without problems, and because they are closer to the cultural and linguistic environment of the young people. In this way, the already limited willingness of the young Lithuanians to participate in the interviews and to openly recount their lives was not further undermined by cultural differences or the burden of potential misunderstandings. Furthermore, single interviews, or parts of interviews with respondents belonging to the Russian minority were carried out in Russian but translated into Lithuanian by the interviewers. After transcription, the interviews were translated into English by Lithuanian translators; these were teachers or students of English and/or Lithuanian at the Department of Baltic Studies and at the Department of English Philology at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. The translators were instructed to translate as closely as possible to the original (i.e. transcribed) language. As insiders of the language culture they could also include notes on peculiarities like slang or borrowings from Russian or Polish. My own skills in Lithuanian allowed me to compare the original transcripts with translations, and I had language support

throughout the whole research process. However, the loss of the authentic quality of the material through the different levels of filtering by transcription and translation has to be considered and resulted in ruling out certain forms of in-depth analysis. The essential 'foreignisation' of the originally spoken language, as well as the related potentially 'biased' representation of the speaker needs to be considered (Temple 1997, 2005; Temple/Young 2004).

### *Interview workshop*

The interviewers were familiar with qualitative interviewing techniques and experienced from their own work. They were trained during an interview workshop in Vilnius at the beginning of February 2004. A first meeting, where the study was introduced and an agreement about cooperation made took place some six weeks before. Prior to the workshop the interviewers were informed about the project and the method; in particular they were provided with relevant parts of the extended project outline (i.e. EUI June Paper; Reiter 2003b), an article about a previous study with a similar methodological approach (Reiter 2003), and an article about the method of the problem-centred interview (Witzel 2000).

The aim of the workshop was to train them as fully competent interviewers able to take independent decisions by familiarising them with the research perspective and interests. The preparatory interview workshop consisted of four main parts. The first part was an introduction to the study, its detailed research questions, and its conceptual background. The second part covered technical and communicative aspects of this particular method of interviewing, the use of the interview guide and issues related to the carrying out of the interview as such.<sup>92</sup> In the third part practical issues were discussed, such as the access to the institutions that had been contacted in advance, the use of tape-recorders, and transcription conventions.<sup>93</sup> Finally, all stages of the interview and the complete interview guide were studied. The discussion of the interview guide and sample questions resulted in modifications and the revision of questions and their wording. A further moment of 'appropriation' of the task and its content by the interviewers was their spontaneous involvement in the revision of a first translation of the item battery included in the interview (see below). An additional,

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<sup>92</sup> Apart from the already mentioned references with regard to the problem-centred interview, particularly useful for the preparation of this part of the workshop were: Flick (2002, chapter 8), Fontana/Frey (2003), Fuchs-Heinritz (2000), Glinka (1998), Kvale (1996), Legard et al. (2003), Mason (2002), McCracken (1988), Miller (2000), Rosenthal (1993), Ullrich (1999).

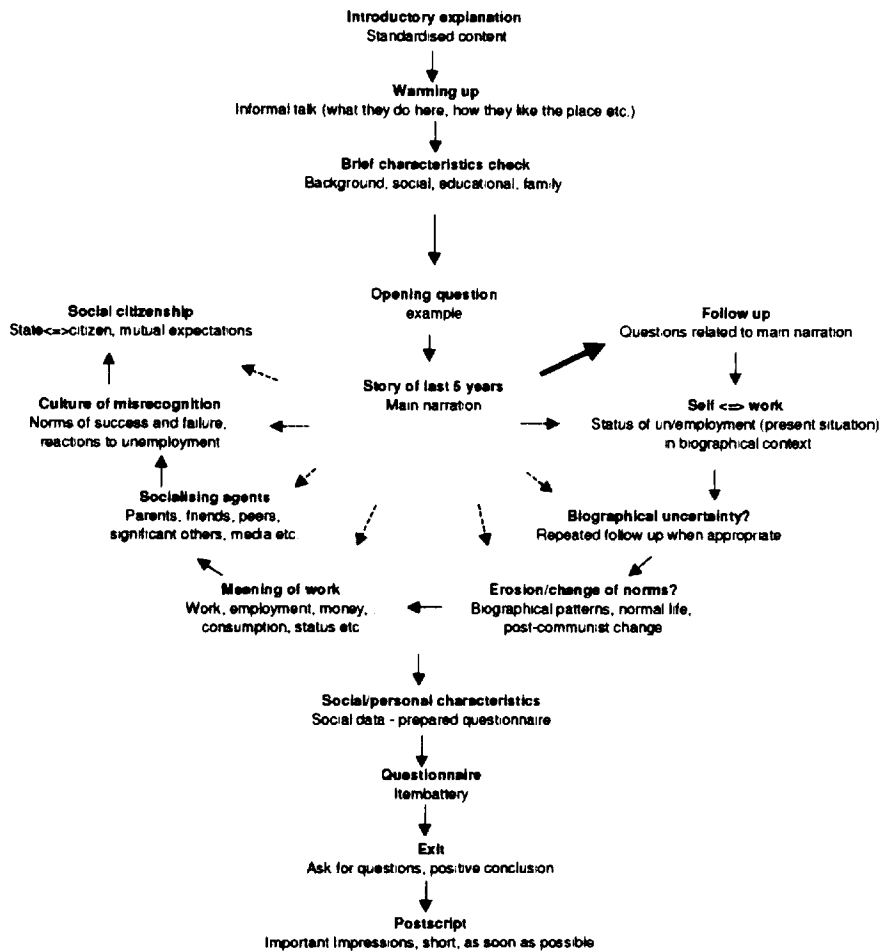
<sup>93</sup> In view of the necessary translation the transcription conventions were rather pragmatic and not very detailed; they followed suggestions made by Miller (2000: 108).

informal working meeting was held where software for transcription and for recording tapes into digital format was introduced.

*The interview*

The interview consisted of three main parts – the introduction and warm-up, the actual interview and the postscript; altogether ten interview phases can be distinguished (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 – Interview flowchart**



The first part introduced the study and informed the respondent about the confidentiality and anonymous character of the interview. Practically, respondents were asked to choose a pseudonym for themselves; their real names were not recorded. This part also emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and the necessity of agreeing to the tape-recording and later use of the transcribed material. The possibility to ask questions was explicitly given. Sample texts were prepared for this part. The next two steps, the warm-up and the brief check of the young person’s characteristics, were not necessarily separated; here, the respondents were involved in an informal chat. Sometimes this happened on the way to the interview location

and even before the above-described phase of formal introduction and assurance of confidentiality. This phase should break the ice, allow the young people to speak, and give them an opportunity to hear themselves (i.e. to literally give them a voice). It should also allow the interviewer to assess the young person's capacity and readiness to talk, as this guides the communicative strategy throughout the interview. Topics were, for example, the surrounding institution, the neighbourhood where they grew up, family background, school experiences or simply 'the weather'.

The second part, the actual interview, started with an opening question inviting the young person to talk about the story of the last five years. The following narrative (not always it followed!) is methodologically crucial: it provides the material for hooking in and following up. The idea is that, especially in (very personal) interviews with uncertain (young) people, every question needs a reason in order to not be irritating. The initial narrative therefore provides not only the most valuable information but is also a recognisably incomplete source of information, whose complementing through follow up questions appears legitimate. The completion exercise based on the curiosity triggered by the first account is usually acceptable. In addition, this initial narrative allows the interviewer to assess the respondent's capacity to deal with an open time frame (Reiter 2003), and leaves him/her an open field to be structured according to his or her own priorities.

After the main narrative, and with reference to it, follow up questions were formulated. The follow up questions were related to relevant points in the main narrative or to the thematic fields of the study – the relationship between the individual and work, biographical uncertainty, the change of norms, the meaning of work, socialising agents, the culture of misrecognition and social citizenship etc. These points were not equally covered in all interviews, as this would have made the interviews unreasonably long and would have stretched the patience of the young people. The strategy was rather to deepen and intensify the investigation of more promising topics and only touch on the others. The follow up questions were different for different fields and, for example, most challenging for the topic of biographical uncertainty because it was difficult to ask related questions without leading the subject. A sample of possible concrete questions was prepared for each of these topics.

This part of the interview was concluded with concrete questions concerning the socio-economic features of the young person and an item-battery with statements related to the meaning of work,<sup>94</sup> which were used to numerically classify the cases according to their

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 1.

attitude profiles.<sup>95</sup> The last phase of the face-to-face interaction with the respondent was reserved for the conclusion of the interview. The asymmetry of the communication was replaced by an informal chat about the whole interview experience. The respondent was asked to assess his/her feelings and invited to ask questions. Although space was also reserved for questions at the beginning of the interview, this was the moment when the young people involved themselves more actively in finding out what the exercise was actually about. Together with the introductory phase this exit phase had the function of bracketing and framing a very unusual, at times emotionally quite intensive, kind of social interaction and at the same time concluding it.

Immediately after the interview the interviewers prepared a so-called 'postscript'. This is a kind of interview protocol where they note their own impressions of the interview, the location, the respondent, and important non-verbal aspects as well as (positive and negative) emotions towards the respondent. The postscript also includes the interviewer's first interpretations and a brief overall assessment of the interview together with remarks concerning dominant and neglected topics. The postscript has the advantage of giving me some written first-hand background information about the interview process and the relationship established between the interviewers and the respondents, since I was not present during the interview. On the other hand, indicative remarks about atmosphere, location and emotions can help interviewers to recall details that would otherwise easily vanish from memory. In fact, these early notes proved to be most important during the completion workshop (see below), when each single case was discussed with the respective interviewer.

The interviewers were asked to tape-record as much as possible, i.e. from the moment consent was given until shortly before leaving the place. Transcriptions were made only for the actual interview and for passages before and afterwards judged to be relevant by the interviewers. The final interview was passed on to me both as a digital sound-file and an original tape.

#### *Access, supervision, impressions from the field, completion workshop*

The first interviews were conducted in the days immediately after the preparatory workshop. After each of these first interviews we met to discuss experiences, potential problems and possible improvements. The postscript to the interview and conversations about interviewing experiences – at first face to face as long as I stayed in Vilnius, and then through long conversations via internet voice communication – particularly facilitated the

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<sup>95</sup> See below Chapter 4.5. and Appendix 3.

improvement of technique and, last but not least, the motivation and commitment of the interviewers. During this initial period I also established contacts with relevant institutions and key-people, introduced the project and the interviewing team, and negotiated access. During my stay in Lithuania I also had the opportunity to personally introduce the project to some of the potential participants; after my departure this was done by the interviewers themselves.

Carrying out the interviews and making the respondents stick to their commitments was anything but easy for the interviewers. Some young people simply did not show up, especially those in the first group of young people in non-linear transitions.<sup>96</sup> For instance, they did not keep agreed appointments or did not come for interviews even if they were called the day before and promised to do so. Interviewers complained about some of the locations where the interviews were conducted. For the first group of young people in non-linear transitions, social work and training institutions proved to be more convenient than, for instance, the labour exchange. Young people interviewed in social work institutions were used to the atmosphere, the people around them and, with their personalities, were part of a communicative setting. Furthermore, an already existing relationship with an adult person in a position of trust (e.g. social worker) could be temporarily utilised and helped to establish the short-term relationship for the interview.

The young people from the second group (i.e. in linear transitions), on the other hand, were interviewed mostly in private settings, at their own or the interviewers' homes. They were generally more expressive and articulate, and, as one of the two interviewers notes in one of her postscripts, they were better organised and *'very busy'*:

'You told me to write the difference I felt between this guy and KIDS1, so one thing is that he is very busy. When you arrange the meeting you won't have this answer: 'Anytime'. He has to go to music school, rugby and to do his homework. So when you call him, HE says the time, but not you suggest when it is good for you. One more thing is that if the person can't come, it is because he is really busy, but not because he forgot or went with friends. If he can't come, or can come earlier, he will message you (i.e. send an SMS; H.R.) and so on. So, as you named it, they are more reliable than KIDS1.'

Some of the interviews of the first round with young people in non-linear transitions did not work. The reasons for this are diverse and include bad moods, inappropriate settings, a lack of communicative capacity or simply shyness or physical exhaustion. Also the classical 'problem with the tape-recorder' that was not switched on, needs to be included in the list. Probably the most remarkable incident, however, was related to a young man, DIMITRIJUS

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<sup>96</sup> As part of the 'project-language' between me and the interviewers the term 'KIDS1' was used for respondents from the first round, all in non-linear transitions. Respondents from the second round in linear transitions were referred to as 'KIDS2'.

as he had called himself: he fell asleep during the interview after some 20 minutes. He was ready to participate in the interview and interrupted his work outside a supermarket in Vilnius in the cold month of February 2004 to follow the interviewer to a room in a nearby social work institution. Obviously, he was overwhelmed by the warmth of the room, the soft sofa and his physical inactivity. The interviewer, on the other hand, was desperate and made some unsuccessful attempts to get him back. It was her first interview and although she had been prepared for quite a few exceptional experiences she did not expect this to happen.

The interviewer's postscript and the notes concerning DIMITRIJUS's social background (see below) provide a vivid picture of the situation. Despite the fact that this interview could not be considered in the final interpretation since it was incomplete, it should not be entirely lost for this exploration. Coming back to these notes after the study is like reading a summary of much that I discovered. Many details are striking, for instance: the young man's appearance, his poor education, his age when he started working, his parents' unemployment, his striving for independence, his plan to go abroad, the 'helplessness' of the public labour exchange, his ethnicity, the fact that this respondent is male, even the interviewer's reaction:

**Respondent: DIMITRIJUS**

Age: 20

Date of interview: 2004 02

Time of interview: 40 min.

**Place of interview: XXX.** It was a room in the basement. There were soft furnishings in the room. It was a very quiet room.

**The first impression:** The first impression was very bad. First of all, we had to go and pick him up from the supermarket not far away. He was working there (cleaning windows). Secondly, he had a lot of wounds on his face, hands; probably a day or two days ago he had a fight or something like this. It really didn't look nice. Thirdly, I understood that he is Russian and got scared (for reasons of language; H.R.). So I started the interview not in a very good mood.

**The appearance of the respondent:** Well, the respondent looked really poorly. His clothes were really very dirty (and he wasn't wearing a uniform during his work, it was his regular clothes - jeans and sweater). He looked just the same as you can see sometimes people living in the streets. I should say he looked like a very unpleasant young man.

**Behaviour of the respondent:** Well, considering the fact that it was my first interview so his behaviour for me was more than shocking. He was gaping all the time and finally fell asleep. When I woke him up he told me that he worked all night and all day, so he was exhausted. And it was warm and nice in the room so it was a perfect place for him to sleep (it was cold and rainy outside).

**The flow of the interview:** He started to talk about work because he was informed (by the social workers; H.R.) that the interview will be about work. And he was looking for concrete questions; he was too tired to think. I tried to involve him somehow; I started to skip from one topic to another but finally I had to give up. To see him with closed eyes and gaping all the time was too much for me for the first time.

**Education:** Compulsory education completed with certificate. He studied for a cook for some time.

**Activities with regard to employment and work:** The respondent worked in a building lot; he washed cars in the streets, sold newspapers. He is working from 9 years, because he didn't want to ask for money from his parents, he wanted to earn it by himself. He is searching for a job with the help of acquaintances. He was registered at the Labour exchange for half a year but as he said, 'there was no help'.

**Ethnicity:** Byelorussian

**Citizenship:** Lithuanian

**Family:** The respondent's parents are married. They are both unemployed.

**Housing:** The respondent lives with his parents.

**Preferred choice of career:** Future plans – to go to work abroad. He has a dream – to go to the army and to stay there. Mostly he likes to work with cars, repairing cars.

After the 30 interviews had been transcribed and most of them translated, the cases were discussed during a completion workshop in March 2005. Single cases were discussed with the respective interviewer. In a session with both interviewers the interviewing process and the interviewers' impressions of the research were noted. Furthermore, tentative interpretations of differences and commonalities between cases were negotiated and possible groupings of cases explored.<sup>97</sup>

#### ***4.5 From data to representation – cases, categories and concepts***

##### **4.5.1 Data analysis**

The analysis of the interview material followed the two levels of the study. The first strand of analysis cuts across cases and intends to provide – through a cross-sectional analysis of categories and topics – a differentiated picture of the normative validity and meaning of work and unemployment in the accounts of the young people. This mode of analysis follows the strategy of an 'empirically grounded construction of types and typologies' by systematically contrasting and comparing cases and categories as suggested by Kelle/Kluge (1999; also Kluge 1999, 2000 and Witzel 1996; for an example Witzel/Kühn 1999, 2000). The second strand of analysis concentrates on individual cases and intends to capture – by considering and reconstructing single cases in their entirety – the biographical contextuality of work- and unemployment-related accounts in individual transition experiences, as well as in relation to past and future perspectives. However, primarily for reasons of language (i.e. transcription, translation) certain forms of narrative analysis involving extensive text scrutiny cannot be applied (Fuchs-Heinritz 2000: 301).

The process of data analysis was organised in order to accommodate these two main approaches of analysing, organising, and representing the data at different stages (Figure 4.2). Details of the study are provided in the following, in order to invite an assessment of its 'procedural reliability' (Flick 2002: 220). Issues of validity – the question of transparency and the quality of the grounding of the research findings in the respondents' constructions (Flick 2002: 222) – as well as issues of writing and representation are also addressed. Ultimately,

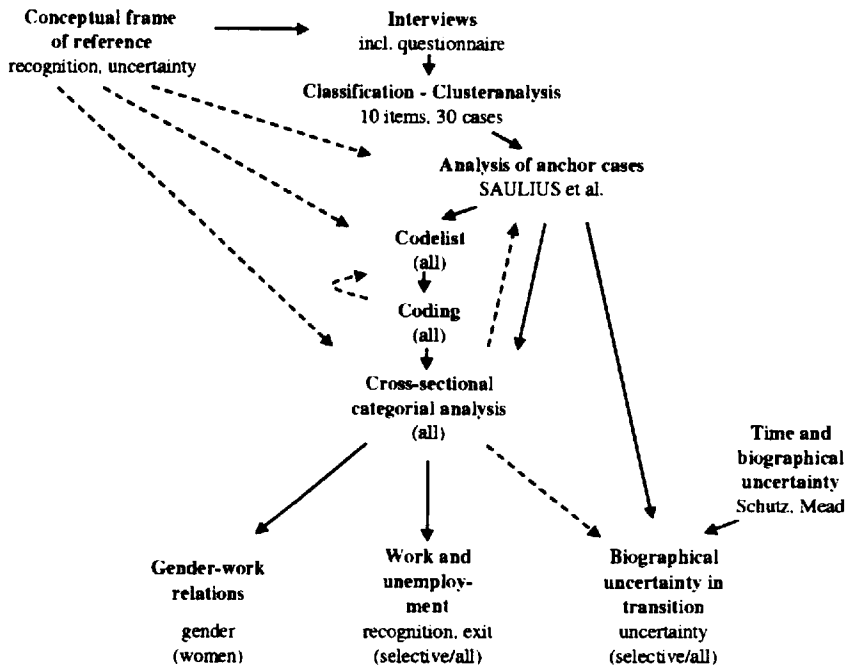
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<sup>97</sup> See Appendix 2 for an overview of the cases.



this entire chapter explaining the research design and process should provide the reader with the chance to assess 'whether the finally emerging findings are *good*', as Miles/Huberman (1994: 277; original emphasis) put it.

**Figure 4.2 – Data analysis flowchart**



The process of data analysis started with a discursive, and then a numerical classification of cases (cluster analysis) on the basis of the work- and unemployment-related items included in the brief questionnaire at the end of the interview. Eight so-called 'anchor cases' were identified and subjected to an in-depth analysis based on gender, age, residential background, and transition experience.<sup>98</sup> The pragmatic reasons behind this reduction of material were the necessity to get the analysis started,<sup>99</sup> and to keep the time needed within a feasible limit.<sup>100</sup> In addition, an extensive analysis of smaller parts of the data at the beginning of a study, and its later confrontation with the remaining data corpus is advisable in the frame of what Silverman (2000: 179) calls a 'constant comparative method', part of a strategy for increasing validity. The numerical classification should guarantee the consideration of the possible breadth of the data and reduce the arbitrariness of case selection.

<sup>98</sup> See Appendix 3 for the classification of cases in order to identify anchor cases.

<sup>99</sup> For an insider account of some of the practical problems of selecting cases in an initial analysis see Lüders (1991: 388-390).

<sup>100</sup> The analysis of one single case took one to two weeks, depending on its complexity and the amount of language revision that needed to be done. Practically, my Lithuanian skills allowed me to compare the original text and the translation for key words, structure and completeness.

This step prepared the further analysis in two directions as indicated above: First, the comparison of whole cases revealed biographical patterns for individual transitions as a background of work- and unemployment-related accounts. The intensive work with very few cases on certain thematic issues also determined how to arrange the findings from the analysis into a readable form (see below). The conceptual frame of reference and its sensitising concepts influenced this and other stages of the process of analysis and interpretation; in this way a certain deductive dimension was maintained. However, in order to allow the categories to emerge from the data collected, this influence was far less explicit than in the preparation and conducting of the interviews. Second, this in-depth analysis of cases generated a set of common topics resulting in a list of general and specific codes, which were afterwards organised into thematic code families. These general and specific codes were then applied to all cases (including those used to produce the codes); the list was complemented by a few extra codes as the analysis moved on.<sup>101</sup> The inclusion of *all* interview material at this stage as well as in later steps of the analysis should meet the 'totality demand' expressed by Silverman (2000: 180) when calling for an inspection and analysis of 'all parts' of the data 'at some point'. The application of the same coding system to all interviews should ensure comparability.

This two-fold use of the analysis of the anchor cases, as well as their importance at later stages should help to overcome, in this specific study, a common problem of text analysis as legitimately raised by Hitzler/Honer (1997: 22-25): forms of 'conventional content analysis' destroy much of the hermeneutic potential of texts by decontextualising parts of it through coding as a form of quasi arbitrary labelling of text passages. Furthermore, the origin and generation of meaning in socialisation – its 'how' and 'what' – is lost. I share this concern, but do not see an alternative to a certain degree of decontextualisation for the sake of responding to particular epistemological interests, such as the elaboration of static/non-dynamic types and patterns without time dimensions. Also, original context is less important when the sequential specificity of data is not emphasised as a requirement, as, for instance, is the case for narratives.

The coding was done using Atlas/Ti. As I was the only person coding the interviews the issue of 'coding reliability' was resolved in various ways. First, the lowest level of coding was usually the unit constituted by the sequence of the interviewer's question and the respondent's

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<sup>101</sup> Altogether more than 200 thematically organised general and specific codes were applied to all interviews. Appendix 6 includes an overview of these codes organised into code families, as well as information about the number of quotations linked to code families.

full answer. Keeping the level of interpretation general and transparent helped to avoid misinterpretation or over-interpretation.<sup>102</sup> In many cases codes were applied to longer sequences embracing thematically homogeneous dialogues. Such passages could be particularly long when the respondents' answers were very short and the interviewer had to make an effort to keep the conversation going. On the other hand, long monologues covering several issues were divided thematically. As many codes as indicated were used for single units. Only a marginal share of the transcribed material was irrelevant to any of the codes; on the other hand, one thesis will not be enough to fully exploit all the material. Second, *general* codes were available for thematically important topics represented by various specific codes. In case of doubt these general codes were used. Third, while general and *specific* single codes were used during the coding procedure, the retrieval of text for analysis was carried out on the basis of superordinate *code families* only; these families were introduced at a later stage and consisted of thematically related general and specific codes. This should at least help to 'heal' some coding mistakes, potentially missing out text passages labelled with the inappropriate code within a certain family. Fourth, as soon as the results emerged and the final structure of the four chapters presenting the findings of the study were fixed – first drafts were the product of the analysis of single or few cases – much of the material needed to be re-sorted. This resulted in extensive re-reading of whole interviews or long passages, and earlier coding was checked and, if necessary, corrected or complemented.

This last point leads to the next step in the process of analysis and interpretation, the cross-sectional categorial analysis of all coded interviews. As this part prepared the representation of the findings, issues of writing and reproducing original material and its structure needed to be addressed.<sup>103</sup> In practice, once a thematic text corpus had been retrieved for interpretation on the basis of (usually a combination of) code families, single quotations were re-read and paraphrased according to their specific interpretive value. Subsequently they were sorted into clusters of specifying, supporting, and contradictory evidence with regard to specific thematic interests.<sup>104</sup> At this point some feedback to the interpretation of anchor cases was necessary.

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<sup>102</sup> Like the ruling out of certain forms of in-depth textual analysis, this was another way of responding to the issue of translation and language.

<sup>103</sup> A rare emphasis on the importance of anticipating the features of the publication when deciding the mode of analysis and interpretation can be found in Fuchs-Heinritz (2000: 285-286) with regard to biographical research.

<sup>104</sup> This step was achieved using Excel, which is more convenient than AtlasTi for the purpose of sorting.

#### 4.5.2 Representation and choice of topics

Instead of systematically but mechanically summarising and discussing the findings, I decided to allow for some variation and experimentation in the way the findings are presented in the four empirical chapters. This idea draws on Faraday/Plummer (1979: 786-788) who suggest that researchers, of life histories in their example, 'publicly acknowledge how far they are 'contaminating' the data'.<sup>105</sup> The question is to what extent sociological interpretations, 'constructs of the second degree' in the sense of Alfred Schütz, are considered superior to the subjective interpretations of the respondents. Faraday/Plummer (1979: 787) introduce a 'continuum of contamination' in order to 'locate the extent to which the sociologist imposes his or her own analytic devices upon the subject, of the extent to which the subject's own world is allowed to stand uncontaminated'. Five 'ideal types' ranging from 'pure accounts' of subjects to those of sociologists are distinguished: (1) 'pure accounts' of subjects include the publication of people's own reports, autobiographies for instance, without any interpretation. (2) Contamination starts with the presentation of an 'edited personal document' where the researcher's intervention is limited. (3) The authors' favourite method at the centre of the continuum is the 'systematic thematic analysis' embracing inductive and deductive features: the researcher 'slowly accumulates a series of themes – partly derived from the subject's account, but partly derived from sociological theory' (ibid.). (4) 'Verification by anecdote' or 'examplifying' stands for the second most contaminating form of analysis. Here a bias is introduced because 'the sociologist's own story is given spurious support by careful, judicious selection of examples'. (5) Finally, 'armchair theory' represents the highest degree of contamination, the 'pure account of the sociologist'; it appears the most independent of the subject.

I try to take the 'systematic and thematic' middle way, combining induction and deduction in the process of analysis (Witzel 1996). Thus the findings are to a considerable extent contaminated by second order constructs and interpretation in the above sense. Yet at the end of a qualitative research process such second order constructs cannot stand alone, and their status vis-à-vis subjective interpretations needs to be re-defined in the course of presenting the findings. I decided to respond to this problem by providing various degrees of contamination in the four empirical chapters of Part IV covering the three issues indicated at the bottom of Figure 4.2. The rationale of the selection of these three issues instead of others is discussed below.

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<sup>105</sup> I owe the discovery of this reference to Fuchs-Heinritz (2000: 285).

In the two interrelated Chapters 7 and 8 looking at meanings of work and unemployment, the predominant form of interpretation oscillates between the two types of knowledge, the subjective and the sociological. Thus, the representation of the different levels of contamination is somewhat experimental here. The two chapters repeat some of the steps of the production of results by reflecting the important dialogue between cases, categories, and concepts. In these two chapters, I explicitly try to preserve the move from (I) single case analysis (i.e. SAULIUS) and (II) specific conclusions *qua* general hypothesis to (III) cross-case analysis and (IV) general conclusions. Steps I and II are presented in Chapter 7, which discusses the establishment of knowledge about the new figure of the unemployed between the two frames of reference of 'the West' and 'the Past' on the basis of one case. Steps III and IV are presented in Chapter 8, which synthesises the results of the cross-case analysis based on the categories and dimensions identified in the single-case analysis, into an 'empirically grounded', heuristic typology. Each of these four steps has a different status with regard to the explorative purpose of the study and makes its own contribution to the illumination of the overall puzzle. Further research could, in principle, be linked to any of these levels. The consideration of the case in its entirety (I) presents one concrete example of biographical socialisation and knowledge transmission under conditions of rapid societal change. The case is historical; thus, the main value of the specific conclusions (II) consists in their biographical rootedness and contextuality. Applied as hypotheses to the cross-case analysis ('hypotheses-testing *en miniature*') (III) these conclusions indicate ways to transcend the otherwise ahistorical but empirically more diverse conclusions based on the whole sample (IV). It should be obvious from these remarks, however, that the single case and its related conclusions do not automatically transfer to the whole population; there can be no direct step from features of the case and specific conclusions to generalisation.<sup>106</sup>

Chapter 9 presents gender-work relations from the perspective of young women in the form of a classification. It takes a similar approach as Chapter 8 but is conceptually less contaminated. After a brief review of the Lithuanian gender order and regime, the classification organises seven empirically available patterns, each illustrated with a

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<sup>106</sup> Far-reaching generalisations on the basis of a single case or 'text' can be possible under certain circumstances. The methodological programme of objective hermeneutics (Oevermann et al. 1979 and 2005; Reichertz 1997), (still) of rather limited relevance outside Germany suggests ways of revealing the 'structure' of the case together with comprehensive generalisations on the basis of even small bits of information. I absolutely share the fascination for this type of analysis, and, having participated in 'events' of its application, I am inclined to accept the general validity of such conclusions. However, the procedure is extraordinarily time-consuming and it seems difficult to imagine an academic reality outside rather privileged circles to be stylised enough to comply with the requirements of what is usually referred to as art (*Kunstlehre*) rather than method.

constitutive example, into an imagined progression from female independence to female dependence.

Chapter 10, finally, combines conceptual notions of biographical uncertainty with extensive discussions of three single cases representing three patterns of post-communist youth transitions to working life. Practically, the discussion integrates conceptual perspectives into the presentation of these three general patterns, and is thus a highly contaminated account of time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in youth transitions.

The organisation of the findings into just three thematic fields, addressed in Part IV, is made for various reasons. First, the chapters need to appropriately present the findings from the research without disregarding the established research interest represented in the two levels of the frame of reference (Figure 1.1) in a way that avoids thematic overlaps. Chapters 7 and 8 primarily respond to issues related to the normative level, while Chapter 10 primarily refers to the biographical level. Chapter 9, on gender-work relations, reflects the fact that the analysis of the interviews suggested a more systematic consideration of gender with regard to issues related to both levels. The chapter therefore incorporates both normative and biographical aspects. The male perspective is not considered in order to avoid overload and due to the less systematic representation of this issue in the male accounts. Besides, the study was not designed for an analysis of gender-work relations; yet the urgency of the issue of combining employment with family, especially in the interviews with female respondents, justifies its separate treatment. Furthermore, the establishment of an exclusively female perspective will allow follow up based on the assessment of male perceptions against female benchmark categories, rather than the other way round. In this way, the problem of defining the female status in relation to the male status together with associated baseline categories like the 'male breadwinner' is avoided. Finally, the fact that the interviewers were female and only slightly or a few years older than most of the male respondents would need very careful analysis with regard to the interactive and sequential constitution of the male perspective.

Second, other categories, whose relevance was either anticipated in the sampling of cases, like place of residence, or emerged during the course of analysis, like ethnic origin, were integrated into the construction of the classifications. For reasons of space and in order to avoid redundancies they are not discussed in separate chapters. Furthermore, as ethnicity was not systematically considered in the sampling additional empirical research is necessary in order to address this topic. For instance, ethnic origin turned out to be an important feature in the assessment of work and unemployment as well as the quality of the transition

experience. Interview sequences could be used to illustrate what appear to be expressions of discrimination. While further research into disadvantages associated with ethnic background is certainly indicated, the evidence as it stands would be overstretched to produce general conclusions.

Third, the richness of the data, as illustrated for instance in Chapter 7, which is based on a *single* case, cannot be fully exploited here. Chapter 8 responds to this by synthesising findings from *all* cases into a heuristic typology of issues general enough to be relevant to most cases. Some of the specific conclusions made on the basis of one case in Chapter 7 remain unexplored, as they would involve extensive additional conceptual work, which needs to be postponed. For instance, the family constellation, which is crucial for this one case and which allows, in its stylised quality, the formulation of general hypotheses, underlines the significance of family biographies in time and space for the intergenerational transfer of work-related knowledge. The conclusions strongly emphasise this finding; yet the exploration stops at this point in favour of other topics with broader representation in the data.

Fourth, there are many issues attached to the topic of growing into the world of work which are neglected in order to keep the scope of the project within feasible limits. To name but two: findings related to the status of work in the life concepts of young people in post-communism would have provided an important complementary perspective; the work of Baethge (1990; Baethge et al. 1988) for Germany could have been a starting point here. Issues of socialisation (e.g. Heinz 1995, 1999) also deserve a much more explicit and systematic consideration in a study of post-communist transitions to working life. The interview material as it is could certainly provide tentative answers to related questions. Yet both perspectives would have required the study to be a different one.

Finally, all these reasons for establishing a focus that blurs issues at its margins and beyond are accompanied by the necessity to manage available resources including those institutionally established with regard to the format and volume of a PhD thesis. Thus, the final product is necessarily the result of limitation and choice from an altogether more comprehensive menu.

#### ***4.6 Limits of the study - an interpretive, explorative project***

In its overall design the study could be classified as a retrospective, explorative study with comparative elements (Flick 2000). The *retrospective*-biographical dimension refers to the fact that certain events, processes and their meanings are analysed within the context of individual biographies. More concretely, the individual past history, however fragmented in

its reconstruction, is related to the present situation (of being in transition) precisely because it is reconstructed from a specific situation in the present (Reiter 2003). In this way, present status becomes visible from the perspective of the own individual biographical situation. The ideal data for this kind of analysis are narratives and biographical accounts. Where direct interpretations of the phenomenon of unemployment are not spontaneously included in the narratives, they can be 'stimulated' during the interview session.

The study's *comparative* dimension (apart from the logic of case-comparison as an element of data analysis) is not explicit. A direct comparison with the 'old West' of Europe (understood here as the EU 15), or with single countries representing it, was originally intended. But comparability is questionable; and so is the expected gain in insight from such a comparison. Too many societal and cultural features are different; growing up in either sphere is still too different, and it seems difficult to identify criteria that could be pinned down for the sake of a 'controlled' assessment of differences and commonalities. Nevertheless, a 'perspective of comparison' is applied in order to 'embed' and facilitate the research; it consists in looking west as well as into the past of the current post-Soviet system. This makes the obvious interest in the apparently different world visible, and allows findings to be related back to the general question of 'growing into employment'. Finally, the whole conceptual apparatus and the majority of the literature used, as well as my own perspective have their roots in the 'Western' academia and life-world.

The *explorative* dimension of the research has nothing to do with the common practice of qualitative research as a preparatory step preceding standardised approaches and techniques. This is not the purpose of this project. I use the term to indicate that it is research in a rapidly changing context that is, according to my knowledge, so far un- or under-researched. Its conclusions, including those produced by suggested follow-up research, are necessarily provisional. In my point of view this is altogether a more appropriate conception of social science. Besides, the *explorative* potential of quantitative and numerical techniques is certainly underestimated, at least in the official methods-discourse.<sup>107</sup>

The scope of this kind of qualitative exploration and analytic description is limited. The aim cannot be the systematic explanation of variation within variables in different contexts by identifying causal relationships. The complexity of the puzzle investigated in the present study is, in my opinion, far too high. Given the three possible aims of qualitative research

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<sup>107</sup> The recognition of the importance of what quantitative researchers like to call 'fishing for results', the process of exploring the data for fruitful hypothesis-formulation according to anticipated results, might be a first step in this direction, especially as this process is not applied in secondary analyses only.



mentioned in Flick (2000: 258) - namely, description, hypothesis testing and theory development - the aim of this study is descriptive and explorative also with regard to theoretical issues. The two main dimensions are normative meanings related to work and unemployment and their constitution, and the meaning of work/unemployment in the biographical context. As such the ambition is to contribute to the reconstruction of what Srubar (1994: 208) calls the 'semantic inventory' of the transformation process - 'the meaning level underlying the prevailing action orientations and expectations in which social mechanisms of everyday organization and the long-term acceptance of government, political or everyday social action are embedded'. The scope of the empirical material is above all microsociological (Figure 1.1). However, like the conceptual framing of the research question, the contextualisation of the results of the data analysis is also related to 'superordinate' societal developments, as it is ultimately their 'relevance' for people that is under discussion. Furthermore, as indicated in Part IV, 'the state' is of utmost importance as an 'actor' at various levels of analysis.

Due to the limited number of cases, a form of 'numerical generalisation' on the basis of the analysis is not possible: the generalisation has a 'theoretical' nature instead (Flick 2000: 260). One way to facilitate such a 'theoretical' generalisation, and to increase the validity of the findings, is to 'look at the same object from different perspectives', also referred to as 'triangulation' (Denzin 1978). In the present study a form of theory-triangulation is achieved by formulating two different conceptual perspectives on the same phenomenon. 'Triangulation of perspectives', a term suggested by Flick (2002: 49), is probably most appropriate here. A form of data-triangulation in the sense of the complementary use of qualitative and quantitative data on the same phenomenon, as suggested by Erzberger/Kelle (2003) turned out to be unfeasible. In the original design, I intended to link the analysis to a Lithuanian survey of unemployed young people;<sup>108</sup> but as the data had not been collected for the purpose of the study the link seemed insufficiently clear. Furthermore, as the research moved on, the sample was extended to include young people in linear transitions, not unemployed; this group would not have been represented in the survey. Instead, multiple perspectives on the same data were introduced in the process of analysis and interpretation. Perhaps this procedure could be classified as a kind of 'interpretive triangulation'.

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<sup>108</sup>The exploration of the data is documented in Reiter (2004); the manuscript is available upon request.



### **Part III Context matters: youth transitions from the planned to the market economy**

Before discussing the findings from the analysis of the accounts of young people, this part offers an account of the reorganisation of the underlying institutional programme from the logic of planning to the logic of market matching. This serves as an excursus into the institutional background of youth transitions before and after the collapse of the Soviet regime. Chapter 5 reconstructs the previous Soviet transition arrangements and discusses some ideological and institutional aspects. Chapter 6 outlines the developments in post-Soviet Lithuania, focusing on educational reform and the transition into the labour market. Both chapters complement the information about the local context of Lithuania provided in Chapter 2 (changes in the post-communist world of work and employment) and Chapter 9 (changes with regard to the gender regime and order).

It is difficult to say which remnants of the old and which aspects of the new system will finally be relevant to the young people's expectations, planning and evaluations in the context of their cognitive, biographical, and institutional transition to working life. However, the purpose of the reconstruction of the Soviet and the post-Soviet transition arrangements is threefold. First, it provides a space of institutional reference points for this study into changing meanings. Second, it indicates how the general process of the transition from a communist to a post-communist world of work (see Chapter 2) is reflected in the specific process of the reorientation of transition arrangements. Third, and beyond the context of the present study, the reconstruction of the Soviet context in particular should invite a more thorough consideration of the past of the current post-communist transition arrangements in their assessment.



## 5 USSR – transitions to labour<sup>109</sup>

The institutional establishment of predictable links between young people's education and labour market entry has never been complete - either in 'welfare capitalist countries', where the state generally controls education but employment is allocated according to market mechanisms, or in communist countries where central planning attempted to instate a 'close functional fit between labour demand and labour supply' (Wallace/Kovatcheva 1998: 85-86). Despite the fact that, unlike in market democracies, the relationship between ideology and the organisational features of matching mechanisms was *explicit* in socialist societies, the organisation of the transition to work was far from flawless. Youth transitions to labour in the Soviet Union were run by three key institutional programmes - the comprehensive system of labour planning, the education system, and the job placement programme. Nevertheless, as the following part suggests, the coordination of the three programmes was not 'perfect' and left considerable space for initiative. As was the case in East Germany (Wingens 1999; Windzio/Wingens 2000; Mayer 2006), institutional arrangements in the Soviet Union did not entirely determine individual action: instead, people found ways of circumventing the official allocation mechanisms. In general this question addresses the dualism of structure and agency that is at the core of sociological research. For instance, as Goffman (1990) states of the behaviour and knowledge of participants in 'total institutions': 'Whenever worlds are laid on, underlives develop' (ibid. 305). People find alternative ways to 'work the system' (ibid. 210) and make 'secondary adjustments' (ibid. 189). Without necessarily equating the socialist, or here the Soviet system with a total institution, it is obvious that the systemic inconsistency between ideological as well as organisational superstructures and the sphere of experiences and action needs to be taken into consideration - an omnipresent phenomenon that could be called duality of socialist reality. Along with Marody (1988), writing about late socialist Poland, one could say that 'the subjectively perceived maladjustment of the system to the needs' of the people leads to 'various ways of handling (...) social reality' and to 'individual algorithms of activity'. These are attitudes that 'seem to stand in perfect opposition to (...) system related attitudes' (ibid. 104) indicating 'a complete axiological separation of the functioning of individuals in their public and private roles' (ibid. 107). In the context of the present chapter, this capacity of people in socialist countries to develop strategies to circumvent 'the system' in order to fulfil their own needs is important for the assessment of

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<sup>109</sup> See Reiter (2006) for a more extensive version of this chapter and a stronger analytic perspective on the findings concerning the post-communist assessment of communist youth transitions.

the actual coerciveness of the transition system. In Chapter 8 I will come back to this phenomenon in assessing ways of cheating the state in post-socialism.

The following section discusses the early roots and the main institutions of Soviet labour planning as long-term consequences of the political commitment to full employment and its relevance for young people. In a second step, the Soviet version of education for labour is reviewed, including its institutional backbone, the three-track system of education, and its main destinations. In a third and final step I discuss the mechanisms and shortcomings of post-educational youth placement in the USSR. Before beginning, two qualifications need to be made. First, I depend on work by individual, mainly Western scholars. This is for reasons of language and in order to avoid official Soviet sources of dubious quality by relying on more competent filters. Second, arguments are sometimes generalised as variations in terms of space and time cannot be fully integrated here. Needless to say, I cannot, like Kornai (1992) in his phenomenology of the 'classical socialist system', provide a prototypical representation of an 'intertemporal average' (ibid. 21). Some of the points have general validity, most refer to the period between the 1970s and the mid 1980s. The educational reforms adopted in 1984 and 1988 were never fully implemented.

## ***5.1 Labour planning in the USSR***

### **5.1.1 Early roots and main institutions**

The unemployment that accompanied the 'New Economic Policy' was a massive social and political problem in Soviet Russia during the 1920s. Its eradication in the first year of the following decade, consequently exploited as an intended political success and future key feature of Soviet society, actually came as a 'surprise'; a side product of other measures introduced earlier to tighten labour discipline, particularly the abolition of unemployment benefits (Christian 1985). In the official discourse, however, it was during the autumn of the year 1930 that the final steps towards the 'complete elimination of unemployment' were taken by Soviet leaders. Key officials of the (supposedly unsuccessful) People's Commissariat of Labour were removed from their positions, and unemployed persons refusing to take up job offers were removed from the register. The terms 'labour exchange' and 'labour market' were declared inappropriate and the need to strengthen the element of planned control was emphasised (Davis 1986). As early as the end of 1930, the labour exchanges were turned into institutions for labour administration; the provision of 'systematic estimates and the planned distribution of available manpower' were their main tasks. Finally, in order to control the flow of rural labour into industrial urban areas, the decision to establish a labour-recruiting

organisation (*Orgnabor*) for rural areas was taken in 1931. From that time on the idea of controlled labour allocation was institutionalised, and planning labour became central to both the Soviet economy and the self-understanding of socialism as a superior form of economic organisation.

Issues of labour mobility were subject to a varied development in the history of the USSR. Without going into too much detail, some rough indication can be given. In the 1940s, the restrictions applied to labour mobility were at their worst. In view of the approaching war (in the USSR from 1941) labour legislation became more and more restrictive and quitting a job without the employer's permission was not only denied but, for the first time, criminalised. It was only in the mid-1950s (under Khrushchev) that labour relations were liberalised to the extent that (voluntary) mobility between jobs could be initiated by individuals, and transfers to another job required the worker's approval. An incentive-based but in the final instance unsuccessful labour policy was maintained from the mid-1960s (under Brezhnev) onwards. Only at the end of the 1970s was administrative control tightened and labour quotas reintroduced. In the 1980s attempts were made to raise the work ethic and labour mobility was again restricted: the complex and multi-dimensional problem of labour shortage remained subject to many different and even contradictory policies, depending on which kind of causal attribution for shortage was favoured (Oxenstierna 1990, Malle 1987).

Full employment and the efficient allocation of labour according to economic needs were the overall goals of Soviet employment policy. According to the ideal of the Soviet control of resources, the implementation of the guidelines of the union-wide centralised five-year plans was supervised by *Gosplan*, the State Committee for Planning.<sup>110</sup> Labour planning was part of the overall planning system (Yampolsky 1952). In practice, *Gosplan* reacted to requests by Ministries, industrial enterprises and other employers. The flow of workers between economic branches and different republics was co-ordinated according to 'labour balances', which estimated the relationship between labour supply, demand and sectoral distribution. In the Soviet Republics corresponding Republican State Committees on the Use of Labour Resources were established, with subordinate agencies of *Orgnabor* (Lane 1987: chapter 3).

The organisational units of the job placement system were subordinated to different departments and institutions. Organised recruitment, agricultural 'resettlement', youth

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<sup>110</sup> Two other important institutions involved were the State Committees for Statistics (*Goskomstat*) and for Labour and Social Questions (*Goskomtrud*).

employment and organised job placement services were subordinates of the State Committee for Labour and Social Problems (*Goskomtrud*). Job transfers as well as the distribution of graduates from the education system were under the authority of different ministries and agencies, assisted by the *Komsomol*. Social security institutions tried to find jobs for the disabled and 'internal affairs agencies' were responsible for the placement of former convicts (Kotliar 1984: 23-24).

In 1969 job placement bureaus (JPBs), Soviet employment agencies co-ordinated by state planning agencies were reopened in order to facilitate job matching and to assist retraining and labour transfers.<sup>111</sup> These agencies were supposed to supplement recruitment by enterprises and to bring parts of this 'grey area' of job allocation back under state control (Kotliar 1984: 30-32). At first JPBs only operated in the bigger cities of Soviet Russia, but were subsequently established in almost half of cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants, approaching 2.000 by the end of the 1980s. JPBs were especially important because of their monopoly on information and placement. In practice, they mostly assisted blue collar workers and offered jobs with high turnover rates in less popular regions and sectors.

These institutions, relevant to the mass of Soviet workers, were complemented by a secondary system of executive job placement, which I shall mention only briefly here. The alternative system of executive job placement was controlled by the Party organisations and partly followed secret regulations. Access to certain high as well as comparatively low ranking positions on a special list (*'nomenklatura'*) - an estimated four million jobs including managers and school directors - was limited to people approved by the Communist Party. Party members, on the other hand, had to accept assignments to work and were exchanged according to Party rationale (Ioffe/Maggs 1983: 254-259).

### 5.1.2 Limited scope

Different (Western) authors agree that in the everyday practice of job changes and searches in the USSR the overall relevance of state-controlled labour allocation should not be overestimated. Malle (1987) reviews the available evidence on labour mobility in the Soviet Union and estimates the significance of the manifold institutions of job allocation in its later years. Focusing on industrial labour, she distinguishes mechanisms of organised and unplanned mobility into and out of jobs.

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<sup>111</sup> Services with similar tasks had been abolished together with unemployment in the 1930s.



The quantification of the relevance of placement mechanisms shows that the significance of organised forms was limited (Table 5.1). Malle (ibid.) estimates that in 1981 two thirds of all job placements were actually 'hirings at the gate' and therefore beyond direct state control, while organised allocation accounted for a remaining maximum of only one third in the same year. The quantitatively most important institutions, the JPBs, contributed most to the increasing importance of job placement from the late 1960s to the early 1980s; however, in 1981 they processed no more than 23% of all allocations. *Orgnabor*, finally, had little relevance; less than 6% of job placements were attributed to it in 1981.

**Table 5.1 – Relevance of job placement mechanisms**

**JOB PLACEMENT BY SOURCES (% OF THE TOTAL) IN THE USSR (1967-1981)**

Sources	1967	1971	1976	1981
Hiring at the gate	87.7	79.2	67.4	62.2
Placed by JPBs	-	8.7	17.2	22.5
Placed by <i>Orgnabor</i>	2.2	3.8	5.3	5.6
Transfer from other enterprises	3.9	3.2	3.1	3.3
Other channels of allocation	6.2	5.1	7.0	6.4
Total organized allocation including placement by JPBs	12.3	20.8	32.6	37.8
Total organized allocation excluding placement by JPBs	12.3	12.1	15.4	15.3

Adapted from Malle (1987: 358; original emphasis)

After discussing evidence of regional and sectoral differences in labour turnover, changes in policies, the impact of technological change, and the relative status of various segments of the labour force, Malle's (ibid.) final assessment of Soviet (industrial) labour turnover points to directional changes in the structure of labour flows initiated during the 1970s. Most importantly, unforeseen factors of labour planning remained important from the mid 1970s onwards and 'reveal the inability of central planning to control employment flows' (ibid. 381). At the same time, compulsory forms of labour planning, especially job placement bureaus, gained in importance from the late 1970s onwards, as did the first job assignments of graduates.

Young people were a particularly important target group right from the earliest days of labour planning. Institutionally mediated by the *Komsomol*, youth was a central resource in the context of the 'physical construction of communism' in the frame of the first five-year plan (Pilkington 1994: 56-60). In order to meet the labour demands of the economy in a short time frame, young people were channelled through brief training courses to become semi-skilled workers for jobs in the 'mass trades'. For instance, Barber (1986: 57; also Blumenthal/Benson 1978: 37-38) describes the mass mobilisation of young male teenagers for vocational training in the year 1940, and the associated development of a training infra-structure as a 'major innovation in recruitment policy'. Another form of using young people as an ad hoc labour force associated with *Komsomol* is reported by Lane (1987: 49): from the mid-1950s to the

mid-1960s in particular, the Communist Union of Youth was involved in organising young people's employment mainly in construction projects and in enterprises in the northern and eastern areas of the country. First, 18 to 25-year-old school or college graduates enrolled for some years following a recruitment device known as a 'social appeal'. Furthermore, a record of *Komsomol* work usually had a positive effect when seeking better jobs, and may well have resulted in entrance to the alternative route of job allocation towards, for instance, a party career.

Another important institution relevant to the transition experiences of young males was the Soviet Army with two years compulsory service beginning at age 18. Deferments were granted only on special grounds (family, hardship, health) but generally only to full-time students in higher education. For all other young men, military service implied the potential interruption of vocational training, and there were complaints that they did not return to the professions they had acquired before the military service, but changed to those acquired during service (Granick 1987: 218). Though severely sanctioned, draft evasion was possible and common: failing to register, bribery, preferring jail to the army or simply disappearing were among the most common ways of avoiding service.

The significance of informal aspects of job mobility is substantiated by a survey of (mostly Jewish) Soviet immigrants living in the United States about their unemployment experiences in the USSR – the 'Soviet Interview Project' conducted in 1983 (Gregory/Kohlhase 1988; Gregory/Collier 1988). It allows a comparative evaluation of the actual job seeking methods of young and old ('mature') workers in the Soviet Union.

The survey underlines the importance of 'non-institutional', informal ways of searching for jobs among both young and old workers. On the other hand, it emphasises the relatively higher significance of official placements for young workers. Obviously the two institutions of the army and the *Komsomol*, both targeted at young people, contribute significantly to this difference. Official placements are relevant to 26% of young workers as compared to only 7% of older workers. 11% of the young workers 'inquired at enterprise/institution', 10% replied to a public announcement or an advertisement at school, but a 52% majority of young workers were told about the vacancy by friends, relatives or teachers. Among older workers this share is 63%.

Even if this survey of former Soviet citizens may, for various reasons, suffer significant bias, the results seem plausible considering the findings presented above, and indicate that there was both considerable space and a need for labour mobility outside the institutional

frame of reference among young people. Additional forms of youth job placement that were more directly linked to the education system but partly overlapped with those already introduced are discussed in the following section.

## *5.2 Soviet education for labour*

'The institutionalisation of individual lives in the Soviet Union began with the educational structure', as Titma/Saar (1995: 38) maintain in their *ex-post* assessment of regional differences in Soviet secondary education. Despite its ideological claim to create equality and be indifferent to the social origins of students, the Soviet educational system only appeared uniform on the surface. Aside from several reforms, it has always been subject to power struggles between different ministries and the Communist Party. Besides, there were regional differences in emphasis in the implementation of the Soviet model of education especially with regard to the higher grades of secondary education (see Titma 1993; Titma/Saar 1995).

Yet the degree of systematisation and control of the Soviet education system was unequalled in the West. The link between education and work was more immediate, or, to put it differently, one of the main goals of education in a centrally planned economy was the availability of an educated 'general' labour force alongside a pool of highly trained specialists. But educational credits did not necessarily translate into certain transition patterns or chances. 'Educational policy has always been conceived in the light of social and political requirements, to which all other considerations must be subordinate', as Grant (1970: 23) writes on the 'secondary importance' of education and its purposes and effects within the Soviet ideology. Due to the ideology's obsession with control the education system was embedded in the more primary concern of labour force planning (Lauglo 1988; Kaser 1986; Sowitz 1991).

Work was guaranteed at the end of the transition, but not the kind of work, and organisational insufficiencies meant that suitable jobs were not always allocated. Therefore, besides their general and vocational education, students needed to be prepared for jobs they might not like. 'Vocational guidance' and other forms of labour socialisation were important, if not the only tools that Soviet authorities would publicly consider in order to counteract the persistent dissatisfaction of graduates with their job assignments. I begin the following brief review of Soviet education with this important aspect of 'education for labour', as Zajda (1979) terms it. In a second step I briefly introduce the structure of the Soviet education system; here, I restrict myself to the three main types of secondary education, i.e. general,

vocational, and specialised. Finally, the main destinations of students after compulsory and upper secondary education are discussed.

### 5.2.1 Education for labour – guidance, aspirations, and destinations

Some scope for creativity and individual freedom within the 'polytechnical vision' of education integrated into productive work was rooted in Marx's criticism of alienation and was central to early post-revolutionary educational philosophy. But the first steps towards the instrumentalisation of education for reasons of ideological indoctrination were made before 1920. Activities labelled '*socially useful labour*' were considered crucial to the socialisation of young communists, and vocational training was introduced to the curriculum. It was during the first five-year plan (from 1928) that education was more explicitly geared towards the production of technical specialists in order to meet the demands of the economy. Economic planning became 'the backbone of educational policy' (Blumenthal/Benson 1978: 17). The emancipatory dimension of learning to work was abandoned and elements of central control were strengthened, both at the level of state administration and within schools. In his review of early Soviet education policy Lauglo (1988) identifies a 'pattern of *austere utilitarianism* in education stressing social discipline and utility for the world of work' (ibid. 296; emphasis in the original); this trend would only be reversed in the USSR during the reforms of the 1980s.

The Soviet Union was one of the few countries in the world where education was geared to the needs of the state rather than to the wishes of the individual. The entire educational system could be envisaged as a vast network of manpower training and, more specifically, labour socialisation', as Zajda (1979: 288) writes of education for labour in the USSR. The gap between the human resource demands of the Soviet economy, '*socially available work*' and local needs, on the one hand, and the career aspirations of young people (facilitated by the 'democratisation' of general education) on the other, made it necessary to ensure that young people would not leave education without having been equipped with the 'correct' (i.e. communist) attitude to labour. Marxism-Leninism provided a useful philosophy for the re-evaluation of all sorts of work activities according to the slogan 'all jobs are equal'. This, it was hoped, would 'cool off' the previously raised ambitions of young people.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the compulsory polytechnical preparation of secondary school pupils through the integration of practical elements at all levels of schooling, which did meet with resistance

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<sup>112</sup> O'Dell/Lane (1976: 424) illustrate the custom of somewhat inflated praise for manual labour, quoting the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the *Komsomol*: 'School-children have at times a most confused impression of many jobs and have not understood the significance of such indispensable and important specialisms as those of the turner, the milling-machine operator, the metalworker, and the polisher etc.'

from school authorities, was designed to guarantee that early school leavers could be employed as workers (O'Dell/Lane 1976).

Character formation, rather than the development of skills, was the main pillar of the 'preparation of students for socially useful work', which, in official terms, used to be 'one of the most important goals of contemporary Soviet schools' (Panachin 1982: 451) as well as an integral element of political socialisation towards Soviet patriotism. The 'correct' attitude was to recognise work of any kind as a form of fulfilment and as expression of one's love for the country. Needless to say, not all Soviet citizens, or young people in particular, shared this enthusiasm and the gap between individual and societal interests was a persistent problem in youth job placement (see below). In order to bring children's interests closer to locally needed and available jobs, 'vocational guidance' was introduced in schools and institutionalised in the late 1960s (Matthews 1982: 60). In the sense of 'corrective education' it was designed to re-adjust ambitions and 'compensate for shortcomings of the family in terms of labour socialisation' (Zajda 1979: 290). Work training, which was also used to reform problematic pupils, was included at all levels of education, but took different forms in urban and rural areas.

The educational reform of the 1980s once again stressed vocational experience in general education, this time through vocational qualifications rather than orientation. For instance compulsory labour practice, mostly work for the community, took place during the summer holidays. In addition, many other forms of moral education and 'voluntary' work (as well as paid work in summer) were organised by the *Komsomol* throughout the year. Depending on the pupil's age, this lasted 10 to 20 days (of three to six hours). While the aim continued to be the development of the 'right' attitude to work, of a certain 'love of labour' (Tudge 1991: 131), the activity itself was of minor importance. Work with the label 'socially useful' could be very heterogeneous and was not necessarily 'productive' in any way. Depending on the age of the child it could, for instance, include simple activities like 'learning to dress and care for oneself and to do household chores and take care of school rooms as well as mastering the rudiments of manual labor with tools' (Szekely 1986: 339).

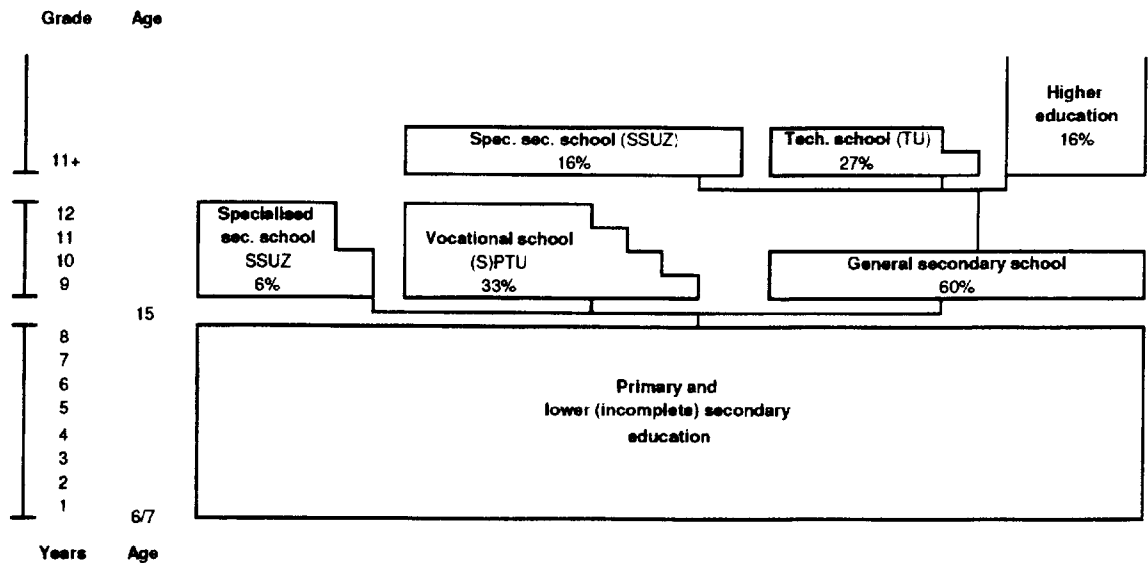
Despite all these attempts to manipulate young people's attitudes towards work, their aspirations and choices remained, as numerous studies show (e.g. Shlapentokh 1989: 71-79), relatively uninfluenced and continued to aspire to higher education. Their actual work experiences were a major contribution to youth dissatisfaction with Soviet society (Riordan 1986).

### 5.2.2 The three main tracks of Soviet upper secondary education

The structure of the Soviet educational system changed over the years according to the emphasis of different regimes; reforms were often accompanied by lively processes of interest negotiation involving various 'publics', such as the media, parents' groups or the silent resistance of factory managers (e.g. Schwartz/Keech 1968). One of the longer periods of stability, lasting for two decades, was from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. In my brief review of the three main tracks after lower secondary education I mainly refer to this period as it is best documented. Besides, the succeeding reforms of 1984 and 1988, which introduced an 11 year programme of compulsory education by adding one year at the start of compulsory education, maintained the crucial trifurcation at the age of about 15 years. However, they were never fully implemented.

Typically, after eight years of comprehensive primary and lower secondary education, young people entered one of three different tracks of upper secondary education – further general secondary education, vocational secondary education or specialised secondary education (see Figure 5.1). These tracks were associated with clearly defined future roles for their graduates, and decisions taken at this crucial selection point were largely irreversible. In fact, this difficult choice for students and parents was exacerbated by potential injustices due to arbitrariness in the placement of students. The option of beginning work immediately after eight years of education (the 'fourth track') had virtually disappeared, as further education was encouraged, and compulsory upper secondary education was introduced in the 1980s (Table 5.2 below).

**Figure 5.1 – Transitions in the Soviet educational system, 1980<sup>113</sup>**



Numbers for 1980 taken from Marnie (1986: 212); see below Tables 5.2 and 5.3

The majority of young people finished their secondary education in general secondary schools (full name: secondary general educational labour polytechnical schools). These were the main entrance points to academia and, in theory, prepared students mainly for higher education. The main (political) problem with this track was that many students dropped out of this popular form of education, or completed it but then went straight to work without having acquired any useful qualifications. Repeated attempts to incorporate elements of vocational training into the general curriculum contributed little to the mismatch between labour supplies and actual labour demand. According to the Soviet census of 1979 the share of persons in the work force with 'secondary (general or specialised) and higher education' increased from 17% in the year 1959 to 54% in 1979 (Chizhova 1984). Approximately one in six graduates from upper secondary education continued the academic track; 95% of the entrants to one of the institutions of higher education (commonly referred to as VUZ - *vysshiee uchebnoe zavedenie*) were general secondary education graduates. Higher education included, apart from universities, numerous institutions and colleges, all of which were involved in research and awarded diplomas (Matthews 1982: chapter 4; Grant 1970: chapter 5).

Vocational or technical schools recruited less gifted students and dropouts from other tracks, whose professional future was associated with manual work and farming. Continuing

<sup>113</sup> This is a simplified representation of the Soviet educational system for the purpose of illustrating the three main tracks. Special schools and institutions for adult or evening education are not included; part time schooling in prolonged courses was also possible. For a comparison of the educational structure at four different points in history as well as a discussion of the reforms after the Second World War see Jakir (2003).

to higher education was effectively impossible for these young people. In the beginning of the 1960s the former state labour reserve schools, which, after the war, recruited masses of students (mostly involuntarily) for ordinary training, were turned into vocational and technical schools (PTU - *professionalno-tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) (Matthews 1982: chapter 3). PTU education lasted for 1 to 3 years and provided training for workers in manual skills; upper secondary education had to be completed at evening schools. These schools had bad reputations and were considered 'schools for the 'failed'', as Marnie (1986: 211) notes. Alternatively, secondary vocational-technical schools (SPTU - *srednee professionalno-tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*), which were introduced at the end of the 1960s, lasted for 3 to 4 years and provided a combination of training in a production skill with a general education. Because they also offered general education, these schools transcended the dead-end character of regular vocational schools, and became increasingly popular in the 1970s. SPTUs prepared also for higher education, and had the status of an alternative to general upper secondary education. Nevertheless, most of the graduates from these schools immediately began work. A variation of the SPTU existed for graduates of upper secondary education that were not admitted to higher or secondary-specialised education. They could attend a technical school (TU - *tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) for 1 to 2 years before they began work.

Institutions of specialised secondary education, including technical schools (SSUZ - *srednee spetsialnoe uchebnoe zavedenie, or tekhnikum*),<sup>114</sup> trained semi-professionals for non-manual jobs like technicians, nurses, primary school teachers, librarians etc. for a period of 2 to 4 years. Early school-leavers were admitted to courses of up to 4 years; shorter courses of 2 years were designed for graduates from general upper secondary education who had not been admitted to higher education. This track was strictly committed to the production of skilled professionals; in principle, passage to higher education (usually after a few years of work) was possible but highly restricted. Like the low-grade vocational schools, specialised secondary schools also suffered a poor reputation, although some institutions were highly prestigious (Matthews 1982: chapter 3). Another feature they had in common with vocational schools was the insufficient preparation of students for the work they would then have to perform. Large parts of what would be called 'vocational training' outside school in a Western context, took the form of on-the-job training within enterprises (Matthews 1982: 178-182; Kahan 1960).

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<sup>114</sup> This acronym (SSUZ) is not found in Soviet sources but was introduced by Matthews (1982) in order to indicate Soviet secondary special educational institutions including technical schools (*tekhnikumy*).



### 5.2.3 The main destinations of graduates

In the 1980s about 4 million young people finished basic education and moved into one of the three main tracks of further education every year. About 2 million young people graduated from 10 or 11 years of secondary education. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show the transition patterns of school leavers at these two thresholds.<sup>115</sup>

**Table 5.2 - Destinations of school children after the 8th grade, 1965-1980 (%)**

	1965	1975	1980
9th grade	40,0	60,9	60,2
SPTU		10,2	19,3
PTU	12,3	21,4	13,8
SSUZ	5,2	5,2	6,2
Work	42,5	2,3	0,5
	100	100	100

**Table 5.3 - Destinations of school children after the 10th/11th grade, 1965-1980 (%)**

	1965	1975	1980
Work	16,2	55,3	41,2
TU		12,9	26,9
VUZ	41,4	15,8	16,3
SSUZ	42,4	16,0	15,6
	100	100	100

Both: adapted from Marnie (1986: 212, tables 12.1a and 12.1b)

At the first threshold after lower secondary education the emphasis shifted away from work and towards education and training. While more than 40% of young people started to work after basic education in the year 1965, this share was negligible by 1980. By this time, 60% of students continued in the first track of general upper secondary education, 33% entered the vocational track (PTU and SPTU), and some 6% began the specialised secondary track (SSUZ). Within the vocational track, the SPTUs providing additional general education overtook the PTUs in popularity, and became the second most important option for completing education. The share of graduates taking some form of specialised secondary education remained more or less stable.

The majority of young people leaving secondary education at the second threshold after 10 or 11 years (about 40%) began work without any additional vocational training. In 1975 this share reached 55%. This group also included graduates of general education that had failed to continue to higher education, and were therefore least interested in the mainly blue-collar job opportunities that awaited them. Of these, one in four continued with the vocational track (PU), and about one in six with either specialised secondary (SSUZ) or higher education

<sup>115</sup> Statistics about flows through the system have not been published and the available data have several shortcomings. Transfers between tracks cannot be estimated and drop out rates need to be painstakingly reconstructed; for the latter see Matthews (1982). Furthermore, as Dunstan (1987: 49) mentions, it remains unclear how many students left the upper secondary level because of having received their internal passport at 16, which allowed them to get a job.

(VUZ). The proportions had changed dramatically since the 1960s, when the specialised and higher educational tracks were still the two main routes for those who completed upper secondary education. The tertiary sector did not keep pace with the expansion of general education, and access to higher education became more and more competitive. Only a small proportion of young people in upper secondary education actually entered higher education. Considering an estimated dropout rate of one in seven in the late 1970s (Matthews 1982: 104; 167-168), only a few of those who entered the academic track after lower secondary education actually managed to complete it.

The age of entering the world of work increased as a result of the trend towards further or higher education and/or training and was, during the 1980s, 18 years or more. Correspondingly, the labour force participation of young people below the age of 20 years decreased over the decades from 40% in 1970 to 30% at the end of the 1980s (Table 5.4). The activity rate, about 40% in the year 1970, dropped to about 30% by the end of the 1980s.

**Table 5.4 – Activity rates of the youth population in the USSR, 1959 to 1989<sup>116</sup>**

age	1959	1970	1979	1989
15-19	73.0	39.6	36.2	29.0
20-24			85.7	78.9
25-29			95.4	92.2
20-29	83.0	88.0	90.3	86.1

Source: ILO (Internet, 07.02.05 and 07.04.2005), own calculations; Oxenstierna (1990: 202, table 7.7)

Soviet secondary education was regionally differentiated and so were transitions into one of the three tracks of upper secondary education. Titma/Saar (1995) trace young people's transitions to upper secondary education in the 1980s across different regions of the USSR and provide a differentiated picture of the Soviet educational system despite its universalistic claims. First of all, the structure of educational institutions followed the logic of what might be called national path-dependencies. Opportunities for young people were unequal across regions because of differences in emphasis and the actual availability of certain school types. The more expensive schools offering vocational training tended to be in industrial areas. In Lithuania, for instance, about half of the young people in upper secondary education attended general secondary schools, 20% technical schools and 30% vocational schools. The two other Baltic republics had higher proportions of students in general, and less in vocational education (ibid. 44, Figure 2). In those regions where resources did not allow the fulfilment of ideological directives concerning schooling these were followed only formally. It was common for certificates to be faked and numbers of graduates manipulated. While the

<sup>116</sup> The ILO 'activity rate' refers to the sum of employed and unemployed persons as a percentage of the total population.

selection process for vocational schools followed similar rules across the regions, the patterns of recruitment for the other two more advanced tracks were closely associated with regional social differences. The ideologically idealised working class recruited its members through a process of negative selection inherent in the educational system that was often executed by powerful individuals in key-positions (i.e. especially teachers) or by mediating institutions like the *Komsomol*.

Young people's aspirations and vocational choices have been popular topics of sociological studies in the Soviet Union, which tried to 'discover a correlation (if any) between the 'pyramid of desires' (student's vocational aspirations) and the 'pyramid of demand' (manpower needs)', as Zajda (1980: 6) puts it. Unsurprisingly, these studies confirmed the low prestige of manual work irrespective of (material) incentives or indoctrination to the contrary in the form of vocational guidance (e.g. Shlapentokh 1989: chapter 2). Despite the need for trained workers, young people continued to aim for higher education, pointing to the unresolved systemic problem of the unbalanced evolution of the three structural dimensions of career-choice attitudes, the educational system, and the system of production, not to mention their different responsiveness to administrative control (Shubkin 1985; Schubkin 1991). Politically uncomfortable research results like these were suppressed, as Solnick (1998: 150-152) reports from an interview with a leading sociologist. In order to avoid controversy, researchers usually contented themselves with suggestions for ever more sophisticated ways of manipulating student's preferences.

Evidence on the mismatch between aspirations and actual assignments is rare and surveys are often not representative. However, some estimation is possible and can illustrate the issue. Marnie (1986: 216-219), for instance, indicates that in the year 1975 46% of tenth-class leavers intended to continue with higher education but only 16% actually did so. The group of school-leavers going directly to work consisted mostly of those who had failed to pass the highly competitive entrance exams for higher education. Instead of continuing an intellectual career, they were expected to carry out mainly unskilled jobs in industry and agriculture. The relatively low level of barriers to upward social mobility in terms of young people's education as compared to their parents, which Peschar/Popping (1991) find for one city in the USSR, may well have only contributed to frustration about the low quality of available jobs. Another large group among early job entrants facing similar disappointments consisted of graduates from rural schools doing mainly agricultural labour. There are indications that being a young woman further aggravated disadvantages.

### ***5.3 Youth job placement - mechanisms and shortcomings***

From the early 1930s onwards it was legally possible for the Soviet authorities to place graduates for a certain time in their first job. The systematic recruitment of young people, mostly from rural areas, into labour, low-quality training, or their first job had become compulsory during the 1940s in the context of the introduction of the country-wide system of 'State Labour Reserves'. For some two decades 'many hundreds of thousands of trainees were conscripted against their will' into poor training and inefficient placement procedures, as Matthews (1982: 67-79) maintains. Yet, due to labour protection young people and minors in particular, were difficult to integrate into the labour force (together with women with young children, older workers, and the disabled). State intervention was common in order to fulfil the socialist promise of full employment and enterprises were required to reserve a certain quota for minors graduating from general secondary education. In the mid-1960s, the problem of matching became acute. Due to the graduation of post-war baby boomers and the shortening of education by one year, two large cohorts of school leavers had to be placed at once. Despite the political commitment to an economic reform granting some autonomy in the management of enterprises' labour forces, the maximum youth quota was doubled and school leavers were channelled into local enterprises under pressure to meet the established quota (Cook 1993: 54-58). The earlier established youth placement commissions were recreated at the national level and became attached to local soviets. In addition, the above-mentioned system of 'vocational guidance' was set up in order to steer the development of children's interests towards local needs and available jobs. All these institutions remained important as such but were subsidiary to the overall plan. The placement of graduates differed with educational level, but usually followed the same logic including the essential elements of planning, fulfilling targets and meeting certain obligations on both sides of the (prospective) labour contract. The most important institutions here were the Youth Placement Commissions attached to local soviets. They operated on the basis of annual plan assignments and included representatives from the local labour section, the schools, the Party, the *Komsomol*, the Trade Unions, local enterprises and local Soviet delegates. Based on their information about the jobs and graduates available, the local labour section, a local 'outlet' of the *Goskomtrud* system, prepared preliminary recommendations to the Commission. Enterprises were expected to reserve a certain proportion of jobs for school leavers (between 0,5% and 10% of their staff). The Commission then handed a document including a job guarantee to school leavers, who

could accept the assigned job. In fact, many found jobs without making use of the official placement procedure (Helgeson 1984: 58-59).

Neither the theory of controlled matching, nor its institutional framework, survived the test of practice. The job placement system met with resistance among both graduates and enterprises, and the ideal of assignments according to qualifications could not be realised. The apparently increasing number of graduates actually working in assigned workplaces in the beginning of the 1980s (Malle 1987: 359) cannot obscure the fact that matching between graduates and labour requirements was insufficient. Young people were reluctant to follow their assignments and inventive in circumventing them; many left their jobs prematurely. Enterprises, on the other hand, sometimes refused to take graduates; they failed to meet standards for providing living conditions, or simply changed their 'plans' and quotas in the meantime. Searching for work was common among graduates, and different (mostly Western) scholars calculated an average period of three to six months for initial job searches (referred to as 'unemployment') (Oxenstierna 1990: 226-227). Gregory/Collier (1988) even claim an estimated average unemployment rate of 3,5% among young Soviet people between 18 and 24 years. Adirim (1989: Table 1) calculates an estimated 830.000 young people in temporary unemployment for 1985. And Porket (1989: 106-110) emphasises regional differences in youth unemployment.

Altogether the placement of graduates in the USSR was quantitatively relevant; for instance, youth job placements and allocations from secondary and higher education (PTU, SSUZ, and VUZ) together accounted for 17% of all forms of workforce recruitment in the Russian Republic (RSFSR) in the year 1980 (Kotliar 1984: 25). Also with regard to forced local mobility, young people were the group most affected by migration programmes giving priority to eastern regions (Helgeson 1986). The link between educational institutions and enterprises varied according to levels of education. In the following I distinguish two levels of regular transition *qua* placement – i.e. the placement of graduates from vocational schools, and the placement of graduates from higher and specialised education.

### 5.3.1 The placement of graduates from vocational education

Compared to the assignment of young specialists discussed below, the placement of graduates from ordinary or secondary vocational-technical schools (PTUs, SPTUs) functioned smoothly. Yet this advantage came at the price of a considerable degree of coercion, a feature of recruitment into vocational training ever since the low-grade schools of the state labour reserve policy following the Second World War (Matthews 1982: chapter 3). Furthermore,

coercion contributed to the low popularity of these schools, which thus bore the additional burden of low levels of discipline (Matthews 1982: 88). Designed to provide the locally demanded labour force, graduates were mostly sent to specific workplaces, so-called 'base enterprises', which were usually directly associated with the schools and already involved in training.

The State Committee for Vocational Education was responsible for developing targets for the training and placement of graduates from vocational schools from 1980; and from 1982 newly established enterprises with more than 2.000 employees had to be associated with vocational schools (Helgeson 1984: 59-60). Many Soviet towns were 'company towns', i.e. dominated by single enterprises with few alternatives for vocational training. In terms of sectoral attachment the schools were clearly oriented towards agriculture and industry. For example, during the eleventh Five-Year Plan from 1981 to 1985 36% of graduates went into agriculture, 31% into industry, 14% into construction and 6% into transport/communication (Oxenstierna 1990: 222; Table 8.12).

The general problems of placement procedures described earlier also apply here. Enterprises are reported to have refused to accept PTU-graduates, claiming they would not remain in the job long enough. This concern seemed justified. Less than half of more than 2.000 respondents to a survey of PTU trainees in the year 1975 intended to continue working in their acquired trade. Most of the others wanted to change their specialisation, study, or were undecided (Matthews 1982: 88). This basic dissatisfaction with early career could be one 'explanation' for much of the intentional job mobility that occurred in Soviet society.

Furthermore, companies criticised PTU-training for neglecting practical training in favour of general education, which was of little use on the job (O'Dell 1983: 134). From the perspective of labour planning, however, training within the PTU system, and not on-the-job, was considered an advantage because existing associations with companies could have undermined control (Helgeson 1984: 60). Despite the fact that most of the professional skills could actually only be acquired in the workplace, and were not part of school training programmes, authorities kept arguing against on-the job training, essentially criticising their narrow focus and the lack of possibilities to exert influence (Matthews 1982: 178-182). Many of the shortcomings of the professional preparation of students were eventually recognised by the authorities, and vocational qualifications, rather than vocational orientation, were the focus of the penultimate educational reform adopted in 1984 (Szekely 1986).

### 5.3.2 The placement of graduates from secondary-specialised and higher education

Each year graduates from higher and specialised secondary education, so-called 'young specialists', were processed through the job allocation system for college graduates (*raspredelenie* – 'distribution'). On the basis of an assessment of the need for young specialists, *Gosplan*, the State Planning Committee, assigned quotas to each ministry supervising institutions of higher education. These ministries, in turn, elaborated assignment plans and passed them on to institutions of higher education. Commissions for Personal Distribution, which operated on the level of educational institutions and usually consisted of representatives from the institution itself, the *Komsomol*, and trade unions, then had to match graduates with the available posts. In theory, the commission guaranteed jobs corresponding to training and specialisation for all graduates. On the basis of its assessment of the academic progress of the prospective graduates, their social activities, family circumstances and health situation, the Commission established a list of assignments and invited the students for an interview. Graduates could express preferences or apply to be released from their placement for health or family reasons, but usually had to accept the assignments. After the legally granted one month of holiday, graduates had to work in these jobs for at least three years; they were often required to move to distant areas. The underlying philosophy was that, in this way, graduates would repay the state for their education (Matthews 1982: 169-170).

The placement of graduates from higher and specialised education also suffered from obvious difficulties. While it was easier to establish the demand for specialised labour in certain areas like education, health and administration, it was more difficult in others, such as production. Unpredictable economic developments, or simply changing political priorities, constituted one cluster of difficulties. Another consisted in the general expectation that employers would be affected by labour shortages, which often led managers to over-estimate their need for specialists. Being released from posting by the Commissions due to shortcomings in planning did happen but was a rare privilege, and the competition for 'more desirable jobs (...) tended to become the focus of all kinds of unofficial pressures,' as Matthews (1982: 171) states. The real dimension of the gap only became apparent in the actual process of placement, and the dissatisfaction of students was doubled by the professional obligations that they often had to accept on top of the potentially undesired topic they had to study. Many specialists with or without higher education ended up doing manual work; some had been wrongly requested by enterprises instead of graduates from vocational schools.

Evidence allowing an estimation of the scope of the problem is not easy. Oxenstierna (1990: 220-221), for instance, reports from a study conducted in 1985 that 84% of graduates from specialised secondary schools and 17% of graduates from higher education following compulsory assignments ended up working in blue-collar positions. Malle (1987: 378) notes that 'intellectual unemployment' was common among young specialists. Referring to a report from 1984 she notes that about 12% of blue collar jobs in engineering were held by university graduates; 70% of engineers did not work in their specialisation and 22% worked in jobs that did not require higher education. This lack of appropriate jobs is identified by Solnick (1998: chapter 5) as one of two major problems plaguing the system of mandatory placement for university graduates from the 1950s onwards. The other problem was the reluctance of graduates to take up their assigned jobs. Both issues were little documented and lay outside the reach of the authorities. Statistics available for the 1980s from *Goskomstat* and *Komsomol* (Table 5.5) suggest that some 10% of graduates from higher education did not follow their assignments; up to 20% of those who did left before the completion of the first year of their three-year assignment.

**Table 5.5 – Job assignment non-compliance ('no-shows') and attrition (%)**

	data source	1980	1982	1985	1987
<b>No-shows of VUZ graduates</b>					
	Goskomstat	8.9	-	9.4	8.0
	Komsomol	-	12	-	12
<b>Assignees no longer at job after nine months</b>					
	Goskomstat	5.1	-	5.4	5.2
	Komsomol	-	n.a.	-	20

Adapted from Solnick (1998: 148, table 5.3.)

These highly divergent official statistics underestimate the problem and indicate misinformation within the system. Enterprises that could have identified the scope of the problem had little interest in revealing their miscalculation of labour force needs, or in obliging assignees to stay, since their leaving saved the costs of unneeded labour. Likewise, those young specialists disappointed by their assignments preferred to disappear rather than file a complaint, for this could have worsened their situation. It was due to this 'tacit collusion between unenthusiastic employer and unwilling employee', as Solnick (*ibid.* 136) notes, that the extent of the problem remained undiscovered, that informal ways of searching for (alternative) jobs remained important, and that the system feature of overproducing specialists never ended.



#### *5.4 Concluding remarks*

A closer look at the institutional arrangements of the transition of young people from education to labour in the Soviet Union provides an ambivalent picture. Despite the relatively strong impact of planning in the area of transition to first jobs, the system failed to establish the close links between education and labour for which it was, and still seems to be, famous. The right to work and the job guarantee expressed in Article 40 of the Soviet Constitution of 1977 (see Chapter 2) was closely associated with the right to choose one's profession and type of work according to preferences and societal needs. A review of transition arrangements as compared to actual transitions allows a more honest picture of this constitutional promise and the interaction of its ingredients. All the emphasis placed on 'vocational orientation' and work, both ideologically and in terms of life organisation, young people's transition to labour, and, finally, Soviet society in general, remained characterised by the basic contradiction between what its citizens had learned and what they did. Beginning work, millions of (young) people experienced the immediate devaluation of years of study, as well as disregard for their career aspirations. The freedom to make work-related choices, and especially to choose one's first job, was strongly restricted. Where many arrived at the end of their school-to-work transitions was very far away from where they wanted (and perhaps had even planned) to get. The one outcome that could be predicted was that they would have work and that they would be integrated into the labour system. But the ideologically praised world of manual work was the reality for the majority of Soviet citizens. The particular form of uncertainty incorporated into the transitions of Soviet young people to work finally meant that the guaranteed job waiting at the end of education was usually unsatisfactory and unrelated to the person's qualifications and aspirations.

The primacy of administrative order and its bureaucratic rituals, as well as the altogether unsuccessful attempt to appropriate and regulate the matching procedure, thwarted both individual wishes and potential market matching. Job wishes developed throughout an extensive period of education were cut off at an early age. It would seem, then, that the notorious underutilisation of labour in the USSR was foremost an underutilisation of (young) people's desire to do certain jobs and their striving for professionalism. The non-utilisation of specialist capacities and the low productivity of Soviet labour may have been secondary effects of these unfulfilled desires on a biographical level. The universal orientation towards education, easy access, its importance for upward social mobility, and the monetary as well as non-monetary benefits connected to the jobs for the well-educated indicate a 'more direct



relation between education and prestige in the USSR' (Katz 1999: 429). It seems that the status outcome was more important than the qualification outcome. The quality of a job, on the other hand, was not assessed only by 'goodness of fit' with regard to qualifications or interests, but also according to the opportunities it offered for making money on the side (Porket 1989: chapter 8).

## **6 Lithuania – transitions to the labour market**

Youth transitions to the world of work dramatically changed after the collapse of the Soviet regime, and it is impossible to pack an all-embracing account of this change from the institutional level down to the individual into one single chapter. In the following I start with a brief review of the Lithuanian education system as the institutional starting point of young people who then enter the labour market (Allmendinger 1989). Apart from a review and tentative assessment of its main features, the description focuses on the re-orientation of education in general and vocational education in particular, towards 'Western' standards and requirements, as well as on the changing and re-directed 'flow' of students through the educational system. The second part of the chapter first takes a look at indicators about the position of young people in transition to the world of work. The argument in this part mainly follows statistical evidence from national and international sources. Whenever possible numbers from recent years and differentiated by gender and residential background are provided. Finally, I take a brief look at some main features of the Lithuanian labour market, as the part of the most likely destination for most young people on the other side of their transitions.

### ***6.1 Education for the market***

#### **6.1.1 Reorienting education – a general picture**

The reform of the education system and its transformation into a new structure were among the major challenges of post-socialist societies at the beginning of the 1990s. Despite their common legacy of formerly centralised and ideologically oriented education systems, the countries in transformation found different solutions to the problem of 'realigning education systems with market economies and open societies' in consideration of the new rules of the game' (Berryman 2000). The type of reform necessary to meet the challenge was essentially different from ongoing educational reforms in Western-European countries with regard to both scope and time-frame. While educational reforms in Western European countries start with consolidated educational systems and have the option of continuously replying and adjusting to the changing environment, reform in post-socialist countries required a more radical re-orientation on the basis of the available infra structure. It also had to be achieved in conditions of necessity and under a certain time pressure (Rado 2001).

The reform of Lithuanian education finds its roots some years before independence in the late 1980s, when a first initiative to place a stronger emphasis on national language and

culture suggested an independent curriculum and some elements of decentralisation in the 'Concept of the National School'.<sup>117</sup> For 50 years the Lithuanian education system had been integrated into the Soviet system, which granted only restricted autonomy, mainly for language teaching. But, as Zelvys (2004: 561) notes in pointing to some distinct features of the Lithuanian educational 'culture', there was no space for independent policy making: 'even curricula of national language had to be approved in Moscow'. The breakdown of the USSR opened new perspectives and the initial emphasis on national language and culture as the former core-elements of educational resistance to Russian imperialism, could (and had to) be extended.<sup>118</sup>

As in many other post-socialist countries, Lithuanian educational reform struggled with different options and directions, including those of the system before the Soviet occupation and/or certain Western European models. The 'nostalgic attachment' of politicians to the past was a popular element of education policy during the first half of the 1990s, which finally managed to become more and more 'independent both from historical sentiments and contemporary foreign influence' (Zelvys 2004: 563). Strong elements of de-ideologisation, liberalisation and decentralisation were also among the early aims of reform. It partly had to be revised at a later stage, from 1998 onwards, when (economic) pragmatism started to replace the 'highly inspirational visions' (ibid. 566) of the earlier reform guidelines.<sup>119</sup> Needless to say, the reform that followed affected all levels and areas of education. To mention but a few, it covered the revision of the curricula of all schools and the introduction of a new 'vision of the ideal citizen of the future society'<sup>120</sup> as well as human resource policies for teaching staff, new criteria for student assessment and the negotiation of the role of private educational institutions (see Zelvys 2004, OECD 2002).

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<sup>117</sup> 'Tautine mokykla', English: 'National school', was the title of the collection of articles published at the end of the 1980s suggesting the partial decentralisation and reform of the Lithuanian education system. The reform was rejected by Soviet authorities. But after the collapse of the Soviet regime, this document, by then outdated because assuming different starting conditions, became a reference document for educational reform. See also Godon et al. (2004).

<sup>118</sup> For a discussion of the 'complex nature of language loyalties' during and after the Soviet occupation in Lithuania including a brief 'characterisation' of the Russian and Polish minorities in contemporary Lithuania see Hogan-Brun/Ramoniene (2003). For a comparative discussion of the Baltic countries Ozolins (1999).

<sup>119</sup> Among the important initiating factors for steering educational reform towards economic pragmatism were, according to Zelvys (2004: 566): the Russian economic crisis of 1998, which had an impact on economically associated Lithuania; recommendations from international organisations (especially the OECD and the World Bank); participation in international educational programmes requiring 'accurate budgeting'; the growing 'economic awareness of national policy makers'.

<sup>120</sup> Although disguised as a positive vision, the description of the 'new' qualities of future citizens of Lithuania provide pretty profound insights into a certain Western understanding of the shortcomings of the citizens of the former USSR: 'Lithuania's changing society requires from its citizens new skills and a re-definition of the concept of what constitutes 'an educated citizen': a self-motivated person with the ability to think, solve problems and use higher-order intellectual skills to process information and make informed decisions' (OECD 2002: 71).

The early educational reform had, besides many positive consequences, undesirable side-effects (as well as some spontaneous and probably temporary systemic answers to them) which are important with regard to the assessment of potential problems for young people in transition to working life. Zelvys (2004: 565-566) lists some of them:

- The number of *dropouts* increased abruptly, and there were few opportunities to continue with 'interrupted' education. As a reaction, 'youth schools' were established (see below).
- The new levels of freedom as well as resources of social mobility, led to a *segregation of schools* according to their prestige. General and vocational schools lost (further) in status as they had to compete with private, fee-paying schools as well as new types of prestigious upper secondary schools (i.e. academic gymnasias) (see below).
- The quality of education as well as the overall infrastructure of schooling suffered from a general *shortage of resources*. Furthermore, due to generally low pay it was difficult to recruit a new generation of teaching staff.<sup>121</sup>
- Due to the declining birth rate, and the therefore constantly declining number of students, it was necessary to *close down schools in rural areas*. This triggered other problems like transporting children to other schools, unemployment and a general devaluation of rural areas.<sup>122</sup>
- Finally, Russian language schools became less and less popular even among the Russian speaking population, which left politicians with the sensitive issue of *closing down the schools of the national minority*.<sup>123</sup>

I restrict myself below to a brief discussion of the reform in the field of vocational education and training (VET) because it was, also in the understanding of the Lithuanian reformers, the one area of education that needed to be most sensitive to economic changes. Furthermore, it was the part of the education system most immediately relevant to youth transitions to the world of work. Following this, I move on to an overview of the current Lithuanian education system.

#### 6.1.2 From 'social usefulness' to the 'needs of the market' – the example of the reform of initial vocational education and training

The highly inefficient, centralised, and in many ways 'misleading' vocational preparation of young people during the Soviet period was part of the ballast that needed to be thrown overboard in transforming the Lithuanian education system. What replaced the

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<sup>121</sup> According to the Ministry of Education and Science (2003: 41) the average gross monthly salary in the education sector at the end of 2001 was 1176.7 Litas (i.e. ca. 341 Euro). It was about 60% of the average monthly salary in public administration, 2,2 times lower than the average remuneration of employees in the best paid sector (financial intermediary) and 1,6 times higher than in agriculture.

<sup>122</sup> Restricted mobility could also be an explanatory factor for increasing dropout rates. However, no systematic evidence pointed to this.

<sup>123</sup> Young people, on the other hand, (including a few of the respondents of the study) were confronted with the problem of having to change from a Russian to a Lithuanian school before, eventually, dropping out.

unresolved, perpetual tension of Soviet vocational education between its ideological orientation towards 'socially useful' labour and the realities of 'socially available' labour, was the tension between the re-orientation of education towards the 'needs of the labour market', the societal capacity for reform and the general commitment to the idea of building an 'inclusive society' under new conditions.<sup>124</sup> Although only translation problems prevented the adoption of the EU's language policy – there is no appropriate direct translation of the English term 'social inclusion' in Lithuanian, thus the term has been 'under-used in official documents and political discourse' (Gudynas 2003: 63) – there can be no doubt of the goodwill of the reformers to consider this element within the process of re-arranging the pillars of society. Pranas Gudynas, the director of the Lithuanian Education Development Centre,<sup>125</sup> founded in 2001 by the Ministry of Education and Science, maintains:

'Despite this absence of a specific Lithuanian term to refer to what in English is called *social inclusion*, the goal of creating an open, just and undivided society has been systematically pursued; a society in which everyone would be able to enjoy equal rights, freedoms and social services, such as education, health care, housing and employment. It may be argued that social inclusion and social cohesion are among the highest priorities of government policy. However, these goals are not easy to achieve in times of rapid social change, increasing material inequality, high unemployment and negative impact of the globalization process' (ibid: original emphasis).

The field of VET reform is at the heart of this tension between pragmatic orientation towards the labour market, available resources and social cohesion. And it is the one area of educational reform that immediately concerns the interface between education and the labour market.<sup>126</sup>

Dienys/Pusvaskis (1998)<sup>127</sup> provide a lively description of the first stage of VET reform, its sudden necessity, the related concerns as well as the perceived options for development.

'The process of destruction of the Soviet Union was more rapid than anyone could have expected. On 11 March 1990 the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania made a political decision to claim Lithuania an independent country. At the time this decision was made, (the) vocational training system was not prepared for a reform. There was not enough time to improve theoretical models publicized in 'Tautine mokykla'.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, there was not enough time to prepare 'human resources' necessary for reform either. Those who were responsible for reform co-ordination could rely only on their common sense and intuition.

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<sup>124</sup> It seems more difficult to discern what is 'ideological' and 'real' in the latter case.

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.pedagogika.lt/> (20.04.2005).

<sup>126</sup> As an indicator supporting this point I consider the fact that the preparation of the following key reports concerning VET reform was granted by the European Training Foundation involving (partly the same) leading Lithuanian experts in the field: Employment and labour market in Lithuania (Gruzevskis/Beleckiene 1999); Vocational education and training against social exclusion, Lithuania (National Observatory Lithuania 2000); Human resources in the context of regional development. Company skills survey in selected industries in Lithuania (National Observatory Lithuania 2001); Vocational education and training and employment services in Lithuania (Beleckiene et al. 2002).

<sup>127</sup> I consider this article especially 'authoritative' with regard to Lithuanian VET-reform in terms of both substance and reflection of the situation as the two authors held positions as practitioners of VET reform as well as political responsibilities. Both were vice-ministers for education, Vincentas Dienys from 1990 to 1994; Romualdas Pusvaskis from 1994 to 1998. I had the pleasure of an enlightening and very open conversation with Vincentas Dienys about the Lithuanian situation at the very beginning of my research.

<sup>128</sup> i.e. the Concept of the National School mentioned above.

Lithuania had a rather developed system of vocational training and technical schools which could match the needs of the population quite successfully. However, the prestige of vocational training was low. Moreover, it could have been expected that after (the) economic breakdown a considerable part of youth would not be willing to get a profession at all. It was feared that vocational training schools would become deserted if planned sending to them declined. Thus, the existence of vocational training schools would become threatened. Therefore, the main purposes of the first stage of the reform were:

to reform (the) vocational training system in order to match peculiarities of working in free market conditions;

to improve the content of education to correspond to economic needs and assure a higher quality of vocational training' (ibid. 120).

Lithuania had inherited a system of vocational education that, as indicated in the discussion of the Soviet system, had a bad reputation both because of its poor quality and its compulsory character. The concerns expressed in the above statement with regard to a possible collapse of the whole system due to a lack of students willing to attend were justified.<sup>129</sup> Besides, especially at the very beginning of independence, when the direction of societal development was still unclear and, earning money, to put it very generally, was a matter of survival, vocational training was not the most reasonable choice for young people. Gruzevskis/Beleckiene (1999) in their review of the employment and labour market situation in Lithuania for the European Commission identify this direct link between societal change and educational choices: 'Due to disturbances in the economy, many young people have not enrolled in any sort of training, and today they make up a large group (some 100 000) within the non-qualified labour force in society (current, 1998)' (ibid. 42).

Development towards a market economy required a 'radical reform' of VET. First steps, such as the introduction of a four stage (core) school-based system of initial vocational training were taken immediately. From 1992 onwards, with the introduction of the general concept of education in Lithuania that saw a programmatic shift from the centralised control of the educational *process* to the *result* of education (Budiene 2002: 47), the VET system was officially adapted to the labour market. However, any reform efforts were difficult and 'continually thwarted by severe lack of financial resources', OECD (2002: 137).<sup>130</sup> For instance, no planning system existed, and there was no way of assessing the 'needs of the (local) labour market'; a problem that remains unsolved, as a recent review of VET development in (former) acceding countries maintains: 'In general, labour market intelligence is poor. This is due to the speed of change within the economy' (Masson 2003: 141). Furthermore, the fact that curriculum development was, as a part of decentralisation policy, delegated to vocational schools, some of which continued to deliver their old curricula (they

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<sup>129</sup> In fact, a recent comparative review of VET reform in the European Union (Leney 2004: chapter 3) finds that in Lithuania the initial levels of participation in VETs are particularly low.

<sup>130</sup> See also Beleckiene et al. (2002: 30) on the reluctance of the Lithuanian government to approve educational development plans not only as concepts but as programmes, as the latter would entail financial commitments.

had no other option due to the lack of supporting structures at the centralised level), led to a serious mismatch between supply and demand for vocational graduates. Beleckiene et al. (2002: 48-57), who discuss the 'responsiveness' of VET to the needs of the labour market and the individual, concede that the situation started to improve towards the end of the 1990s; however, the necessity of a comprehensive and accurate analysis of skills needs is still not a sufficiently recognised element of policy making. In rural areas especially the structural change of the labour market makes prognoses difficult and job creation policies are lacking. Eventually, an alternative approach to solving the problem of the mismatch between labour market needs and individual profiles permeated Lithuanian VET development through international cooperation. This is an approach that promotes the reorientation of education of young people towards flexibility, mobility and adaptability.

From the mid-1990s onwards international institutions like the EU, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank stepped in and accompanied the VET reform process with expertise and knowledge transfer as well as financial support.<sup>131</sup> The scope of this knowledge transfer is considered to be important: Gruzevskis/Beleckiene (1999: 41) conclude that, for instance, the PHARE-programme of the European Union 'had a direct impact on less than 20% of all VET institutions, but its indirect impact has affected the entire system'. In Lithuania the PHARE-programme first involved the reform of initial VET from 1994; it was managed mostly by the European Training Foundation (itself founded for VET development in CEE). On becoming an 'associate country' of the European Union in 1995, Lithuania committed itself to EU legislation, and, in particular, to the 'Copenhagen criteria' for accession from 1993. The priority of human resource development in the agenda of VET development was deduced from the second set of Copenhagen criteria, which included the requirement of 'the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union' (Masson 2003: 35).<sup>132</sup>

A second period of EU-supported VET reform in the accession started in 1998 when the first enlargement negotiations commenced (with Lithuania in the spring of 2000). The EU policy priorities behind this period of reform were the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy launched in 1997: entrepreneurship, employability, adaptability and equal opportunities. This second period brought about a shift in educational reform from a

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<sup>131</sup> In the following I refer mainly to the review of European policy on enlargement concerning VET by Masson (2003: chapter 3), who discusses (and evaluates) the gradual orientation of VET towards market requirements in the frame of EU accession policies.

<sup>132</sup> From 1996 onwards additional reform activities were funded in Lithuania in the frame of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.



narrow focus on VET to broader human resource development issues, alongside a new emphasis on issues traditionally linked to employment policies. Employment policy reviews were launched in the accession countries. In particular, labour market structures, labour market and employment policy institutions, compatibility with EU criteria and national priorities for human resource development were analysed. The specific areas of importance that were identified for the VET system included, amongst others, 'reforming vocational education and training systems to promote employability and adaptability of the workforce' (Masson 2003: 45). Together with the European Commission, the Lithuanian government approved the Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities (JAP) at the beginning of 2002 and committed itself to the priorities of the European Employment Policy with its National Development Plan and follow up programmes (Beleckiene et al 2002: chapter 1).

With the third period of VET reform towards a 'European area of knowledge' from 2002, Lithuania became fully involved in the VET-reform machinery of the European Union (Masson 2003). Lithuanian national priorities for VET policies are, as in most new member countries, coherent with EU priorities for education and training (Leney 2004: chapter 2). The common frame of reference is the EU's Lisbon strategy, towards a 'more dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in Europe that will deliver sustainable growth, generate more and better jobs and create greater social cohesion' (ibid. 8).<sup>133</sup>

For young people between education and work, such a large and sudden leap from a 'planned' to a 'learning' economy entailed a fundamental shift in the perspective on their transition. For instance, the notion of 'employability', a crucial concept for the definition of the status of young people in European labour markets (Reiter/Craig 2005), has also become one of the new key-terms for the preparation of young people in a rapidly changing and more unpredictable labour market in Lithuania.<sup>134</sup> The ambivalence of this concept and its connotations for an 'individualisation of responsibility' is acknowledged in official documents. For instance, Leney (2004) writes in his report to the European Commission about the possible contribution of VET to the achievement of the 'Lisbon goal':

The focus on 'employability' and 'lifelong learning' put the individual rather than the system in the centre of action. It thereby provides a framework for a learning pathway suited to the individual. The flipside is, however, that it becomes the responsibility of individuals to ensure that they have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and motivation to do the job in question - regardless of personal life circumstances, the form of employment contract they may have, the type of work organisation practices that may be in place

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<sup>133</sup> For an overview of the policy implications of the Lisbon strategy see Rodrigues (2003).

<sup>134</sup> For a discussion of the 'paradigmatic shift' towards an emphasis of the 'employment value of education' and the adaptation of employability as a major educational concern since the mid-1970s within the OECD context see Teichler (1999).

which favour or impede lifelong learning, or the type of skills the individual possesses' (Leney 2004: 167).

In Lithuania the issue of 'employability' has already become indicative of one of the major problems of youth integration into the labour market, as a study into employer's and young people's perspectives demonstrates (Gruzevskis/Okuneviciute-Neveauskiene 2003). The survey of employers reveals complaints about the lack of work experience and very general skills (e.g. communication skills, discipline, independence) of VET graduates, and about their unsuitability for the reality of work. What seems commonplace in VET research appears to be, for the time being, a Gordian Knot in a country like Lithuania: VET is school-based and there is no work-based route to vocational qualifications in the sense of an apprenticeship system. The Soviet institution of 'base enterprises' attached to vocational schools could not be preserved due to economic restructuring, and the state budget does not allow the introduction of alternative forms of training beyond the level of pilot projects. In the language of comparative education research, the lack of joint responsibility for vocational training and the resulting suspicion of employers towards the quality of young people's qualifications indicates very weak 'linkages' between graduate and employer, or, more generally, between education and the labour market (Shavit/Mueller 2000: 444).

Altogether, it seems that companies' societal responsibilities for human resource development disappeared with the socialist system. Only employers' compulsory unemployment insurance contributions, which feed into the Employment Fund, are partly used for labour market training for unemployed people. Apart from this, employers 'are not obliged to contribute to the upgrading of their own staff nor are there any tax incentives to do so', as Beleckiene et al. (2002: 37) point out. Somewhat counterintuitively, the policy of (economic) liberalisation has resulted, at least in the field of initial VET, in a monopolisation of state responsibilities. The formerly state *controlled* transition regime is now entirely *run* by the state,<sup>135</sup> although coercion no longer applies.<sup>136</sup> The apparent insolubility of both the *organisation problem* of VET practice and the *information problem* of assessing the 'needs of the labour market' seem to result in the transfer of an attempted solution of the *legitimation problem* (i.e. the policy priority and promise to include and integrate young people into the labour market) to the level of the individual.

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<sup>135</sup> To be precise, in the academic year 2002-2003 one out of 82 vocational schools was non-public (Statistikos Departamentas 2003b: 70).

<sup>136</sup> This is an important shift even if it may be argued that the formerly state-controlled companies were in any case state-owned. What changed significantly was the means to approximate a matching of skills supplies and demand.

### 6.1.3 The Lithuanian education system

What are the main features of the current Lithuanian education system, what are the main tracks towards the world of work and what are the main (institutional) points of reference for moving through the system? In the following part I attempt to synthesise what has been written in more detail elsewhere about the Lithuanian education system in transformation.<sup>137</sup> I also add and reorganise arguments. The vanishing point behind the organisation of the argument lies in the field of comparative research into institutions of transitions of young people from school to work. This research area is very lively and consolidated only to the extent that it provides rough guidelines for the assessment of the institutional arrangements of national transition regimes (see e.g. Kerckhoff 2000, Shavit/Müller 2000, Müller/Gangl 2003).<sup>138</sup> Key concepts include educational stratification and standardisation as well as the idea of linkages between education and employment. I cannot fully argue the Lithuanian case because comparative information is missing for the time being. However, in order to render some link between the present discussion and previous research, even where I am obliged to remain on the level of an outline, I try to organise both argument and information in a way that will allow similarities with the available discourse. The main contribution of the present study to this discussion is an insider perspective on changing transitions due to the availability of unemployment as an outcome.

The reorganisation of the basic features of the education system was completed by the year 2000. The structure of general education inherited from the Soviet Union had consisted, since 1986, of twelve years of compulsory education (4+5+3) - i.e. four years primary, five years lower secondary and three years upper secondary education. In the year 2000 the transfer to the new system of general education (4+(4+2)+2) of ten years compulsory education was completed (Figure 6.1). The new structure consists of four years of primary education (*Pradine mokykla*) and six years in a basic, lower secondary school (*Pagrindine mokykla*). Upper secondary education lasts another two years. The last two years of lower secondary education and the two years of upper secondary education may be completed in a gymnasium (*Gimnazija*), a type of school that had existed before the Soviet occupation and was re-introduced (Mitter 1999). Gymnasias are designed to provide advanced education and

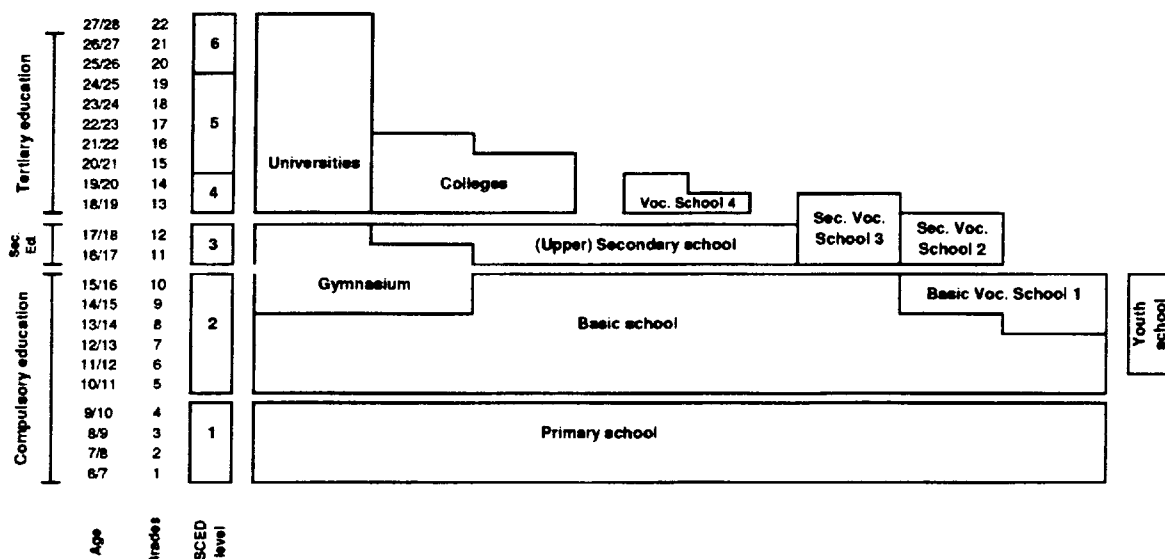
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<sup>137</sup> See especially Mitter (1999), Dienys et al. (2003), Beleckiene et al. (2002), National Observatory Lithuania (2000), OECD (2002), Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (2003). For a comparative assessment of the Lithuanian education system see especially European Commission (2002b); unfortunately the data used are mostly from the years 1999/2000 and the Lithuanian situation has since changed considerably.

<sup>138</sup> These references are indicative and refer to a long list of preceding contributions. However, this is not the place for a review.

to prepare students for university; they are the most prestigious types of upper secondary schools (*Vidurines mokyklos*).<sup>139</sup> Vocational schools (*Profesines mokyklos*) are generally attended after compulsory education; however, a basic form of vocational education is accessible from the age of 14, where the last two to three years of compulsory education can be completed. In addition, besides the continuous track of special education (*Specialusis ugdyimas*), 'youth schools' (*Jaunimo mokyklos*) were established to accommodate 'difficult' students; they do not award vocational certificates, and provide only basic practical skills training.<sup>140</sup> Quantitatively, youth schools are not very important; in the academic year 2003/2004 the 24 youth schools throughout Lithuania had about 2.400 students.<sup>141</sup>

**Figure 6.1 - The education system of Lithuania**



Source: adapted from Badescu/Kennedy (2002: 19)

<sup>139</sup> Gymnasia, and 'gymnasium classes' within secondary schools, are turning into an important new asset of social distinction within Lithuanian society. They are concentrated in big towns and apply selective recruitment criteria. The OECD review of Lithuanian education writes: "To attract the best teachers to work in gymnasia, the MoES (Ministry of Education and Science; HR) provides a 20% weighting to teacher salaries. Gymnasia are usually also better equipped than other secondary schools and they tend to benefit from more generous parents' support. Vaguely defined criteria for selection and admission of students allow gymnasia to accept students from better-off families" (OECD 2002: 67).

<sup>140</sup> Youth schools are designed to provide a minimum of education and vocational work skills to 'problem-groups' among young people. Needless to say, participation is highly stigmatised. The official description of youth schools is as follows: "The youth school is intended for those who do not feel comfortable in general education schools or lack motivation to study there or those whose decision to attend the youth school is determined by social conditions" (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 2003: 7-8). See also OECD (2002: 185-186), Targamadze (1999).

<sup>141</sup> To complete the picture: at the beginning of the academic year 2003/2004 the 448 primary schools had 33.400 students; the 644 basic schools had 119.900 students; the 476 secondary schools had 315.800 students; 91 gymnasia had 74.700 students; the 67 special schools had 6.700 students (Statistikos Departamentas 2004a: 36-37).

Level 1 *vocational education* is designed for dropouts from compulsory education (from the age of 14 years). It lasts for two to three years and those students who manage to complete it with a basic school certificate have the option to progress to either general or vocational upper secondary education. Levels 2 and 3 are designed to recruit graduates with ten years of basic education into programmes of three to four years, leading to vocational training diplomas. Transfers between schools of the second and third level are possible. Graduates from level 3 schools also complete upper secondary 'maturity' and may continue to higher education; furthermore, they can transfer to upper secondary general education, although the reverse is not possible. Level 2 vocational schools are disappearing, which means that there will be a gap in the ladder of educational levels. Level 4 advanced vocational schools are designed for graduates from upper secondary education who want to obtain an additional vocational qualification within one or two years. They can then continue to higher education.

The old Soviet technical schools (*tekhnikumy*, SSUZs) were transformed into 'professional colleges of non-higher education' (*Aukstesnioji mokyklos*), where the qualification of 'associated specialist' can be acquired in a minimum of three years. The transfer of these educational credits to higher education is not possible, whether to universities or non-university colleges. This type of education is being abolished and its respective institutions are currently being transformed into either non-university colleges of tertiary education or into vocational schools.

*Tertiary education* consists of universities (*Universitetai*) as well as colleges of higher education (*Kolegijos*), which started to operate in the year 2000. Universities offer bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees. Colleges offer non-university higher education to graduates from upper secondary education lasting three to four years. These credits are also non-transferable. Access to tertiary education depends either on the capacity to pay fees, or on the availability of state-subsidised places, which are negotiated between the Ministry of Education and Science and the institution concerned. Access is usually granted on the basis of results from upper secondary examinations. Practically speaking, a moment of placement and competition was thus introduced. Upon graduation from secondary education students can articulate priorities for higher education, and are then 'assigned' to institutions. In this way students are placed on the basis of their achievements as well as according to their residential background. Within institutions of higher education a 'principle of rotation' is common, 'whereby state- and self-financed students may be redistributed, on a competitive selection

basis, every year' (EURYDICE 2003: 34).<sup>142</sup> The placement procedure takes into consideration the availability of places in student dormitories. To some extent this policy also applies to vocational schools, which have student dormitories and take students with state-grants.<sup>143</sup>

Continuing vocational training is possible in (advanced) vocational schools as well as higher educational institutions. Unemployed people above 18 years can attend *labour market vocational training* up to a maximum of 10 months. They receive vocational training in public and private educational institutions that can lead to a qualification but not to a vocational certificate, the qualification is not transferable for vocational education.

A look at the whole population and the distribution of educational attainment indicates a low proportion for vocational education (Table 6.1). The share of the population that completed the vocational track – including vocational education on the lower upper and post-secondary level as well as technical schools (technicums) and professional colleges<sup>144</sup> – amounts to only 35% (30% for the rural population). Women are under-represented in the vocational track.

**Table 6.1 – Population (15 years and above) by educational attainment (%)**<sup>145</sup>

	total	male	female	urban	rural
Higher education	13,5	12,3	14,4	17,1	5,9
Prof. colleges	4,3	3,6	4,9	5,0	2,9
Technicum	15,9	13,8	17,6	17,3	12,8
Vocational post-secondary	5,0	5,3	4,8	5,3	4,4
Upper secondary vocational	6,8	10,1	4,0	7,1	6,1
Upper secondary	20,6	20,0	21,2	21,4	19,1
Lower secondary vocational	2,8	4,6	1,3	2,5	3,4
Lower secondary	15,1	16,9	13,7	13,2	19,2
Lower secondary not completed	16,0	13,4	18,1	11,1	26,1
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004c: 18-19); Labour force survey data; own calculations

The level of education is much lower in rural areas than urban ones. In rural areas one person in four only completed primary education; nearly one person in two failed to study beyond the level of lower secondary education. In the urban population both shares are much lower; just 11% have only primary education and 27% did not continue with secondary

<sup>142</sup> The EURYDICE-report (2003: 34) mentions the 'tuition fee of a relatively small size (1000 LTL)', which needs to be paid by students without state support or those who, through the principle of rotation, lose this support to their fellow students. However, a fee of 1000 Lit is certainly not low as it is more than an average monthly net earning (in 2004). From conversations with students I learned that in practice transparency is not a main feature of the principle of rotation of state-support among students.

<sup>143</sup> At the beginning of the academic year 2002/2003 62% of students in masters programmes received state-grants, 53% of students in bachelor and professional programmes, 51% in colleges, 60% in professional colleges, and 61% in vocational schools (Statistikos Departamentas 2003b: 33 table 1.18).

<sup>144</sup> I do not include higher education because it is usually at the end of the general track.

<sup>145</sup> The Lithuanian educational statistics, like the system, do not yet fully meet the ISCED 1997 standards; I only include these where they are explicitly indicated in official publications.

education. It is an open question whether this is due to the migration of the higher educated and younger population towards urban areas or because of the poor education infrastructure in rural areas; it is most likely a combination of both. Female education is more polarised across the whole range from primary to higher education; the lowest as well as the highest education levels are higher for women.

Lithuanian is the dominant *language of instruction* (Table 6.2). Some 90% of students in general education are taught in Lithuanian, some 6% study in Russian and 4% in Polish. In the other types of schools Russian and Polish are marginal and have all but disappeared over the 15 years of independence.

**Table 6.2 – Shares of students by language of instruction (%)**

	1990-91	1995-96	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
<b>General schools (primary, lower and upper secondary)</b>						
Lithuanian	82,6	85,9	89,1	89,7	90,3	90,8
Russian	15,1	10,6	7,1	6,5	6,0	5,5
Polish	2,3	3,5	3,8	3,8	3,7	3,7
<b>Vocational schools</b>						
Lithuanian		89,8	93,9	95,2	96,6	97,8
Russian		9,6	5,1	3,9	2,6	1,8
Polish		0,6	1,0	0,9	0,8	0,4
<b>Professional colleges</b>						
Lithuanian	88,1	95,7	99,4	99,6	98,9	98,0
Russian	10,9	3,7	0,3	0,0		
Polish	1,0	0,6	0,3	0,4	1,1	2,0
<b>Universities</b>						
Lithuanian	90,1	96,9	99,4	99,1	99,1	98,9
Russian	9,5	1,8	0,8	0,6	0,6	0,6
Polish	0,4	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004b: 217-218)

Curriculum policy is, in general, characterised by a move away from narrow specialisation towards 'more general working skills applicable to a range of professions' (OECD 2002: 71), a development, which supports the idea of delivering VET at schools and not in enterprises. The Ministry of Education and Science is the central curriculum authority, and provides guidelines and standards for curriculum design. The practical delivery of teaching seems to lag behind and needs consolidation; or, at least this is the impression given by the OECD-review. Teaching methods, teaching staff and teaching material need to be 'updated'. The change from five to six years of lower secondary education appears to be another source of confusion, especially within the curricula of vocational schools on the upper secondary level that had to adapt to the new structure by shortening their programmes. The reform of final exams for upper secondary schools only began in 1999 with the support of the EU PHARE programme. The degree of *standardisation* of vocational training is not yet very high. Most of the curricula for vocational education are designed by the schools themselves;

the Ministry of Education and Science, which has sole responsibility for vocational schools, prescribes only core parts regulated in the Vocational Training Standards.

#### 6.1.4 Movement of students through the system

After finishing basic school, the majority of graduates continue with upper secondary education (Figure 6.2).<sup>146</sup> After the reform of the basic structure of the education system and the introduction of 10 years of compulsory education in the year 2000, about 80% of young people continued in the general educational track.<sup>147</sup> The second largest group (about 20% in 2001) moved into vocational education, a stream that had lost popularity over the last decade.<sup>148</sup> Most students attended vocational schools of the third type, which also led to a completion of upper secondary education and allowed passage to tertiary education.<sup>149</sup>

Within 10 years the choices and options of young people at the first threshold changed considerably; altogether they became less diverse and more young people continue in general or vocational education. In 1992 only a little more than half of graduates from basic schools continued in further general education: one third continued in vocational education and some 6% discontinued their education. Intake for vocational education is now below 20% and the group of young people discontinuing education (the majority probably being available in the labour market) has become marginal, although beginning work is possible from the age of 16.

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<sup>146</sup> The data used for the reconstruction of educational flows do not allow to follow one cohort through the system but indicate the movements of a certain population of graduates in a given year.

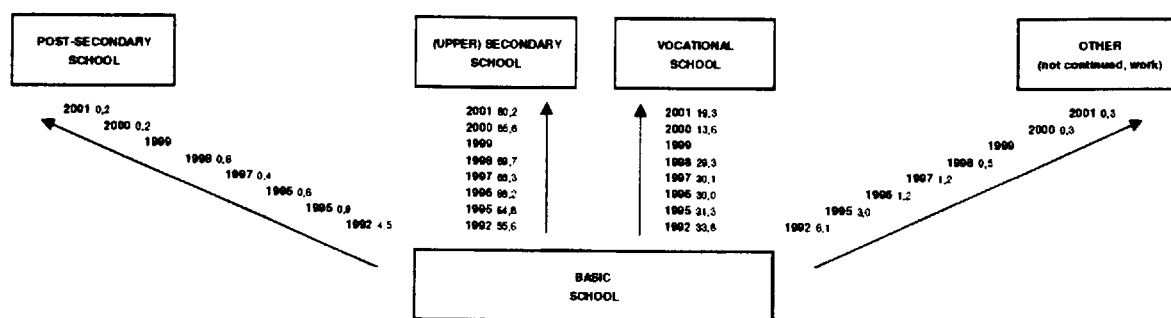
<sup>147</sup> The academic year 1999/2000 is omitted because in this year lower secondary education shifted from 9 to 10 years. No data are available.

<sup>148</sup> The above-discussed concern that the vocational track may disappear because of its low popularity is not verified.

<sup>149</sup> Type 2 and 3 vocational schools take graduates after the completion of 10 years compulsory education; at the beginning of the academic year 2001/2002 about 94% of all students in the two tracks studied in type 3, 6% in type 2.



**Figure 6.2 - Continuation of graduates from basic education in different tracks in the same year, 1995-2001 (%)**<sup>150</sup>



Source: for 1992: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (2003: 11); Statistikos Departamentas (2000a: 32 for 1995 to 1998; 2002b: 43 for 2000 to 2001); own calculations

At the second threshold it is fruitful to change perspective upside down and ask what are the main receiving institutions for graduates from upper secondary and vocational schools continuing in the same years, and how did the relation between continuing and discontinuing graduates change? In the year 2003 40% of graduates from vocational and secondary schools discontinued their education (Table 6.3). This share has decreased in recent years, after a peak in 1996, by about 8 percentage points. The general tendency in Western societies to a prolonged participation in education beyond the secondary level is therefore reflected in Lithuania.

**Table 6.3 – Continuation of graduates from secondary and vocational schools in the same year, 1995 to 2003 (%)**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Graduates...</b>									
...not continuing studies	44,9	48,1	45,5	44,3	43,4	41,6	40,1	37,3	40,0
...continuing studies	55,1	51,9	54,5	55,7	56,6	58,4	59,9	62,7	60,0
<b>Continuation in...</b>									
...vocational schools	12,0	9,9	10,4	10,6	10,8	13,1	12,6	11,7	14,8
...prof. colleges	35,3	37,6	37,6	36,7	35,1	25,0	16,0	6,7	0,6
...colleges	-	-	-	-	-	6,7	11,7	21,7	26,0
...universities	52,7	52,5	52,0	52,8	54,1	55,3	59,6	59,9	58,5

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004a: 26); own calculations

Universities remain the quantitatively most important institutions of further education: by 2003 the intake of VET and secondary school graduates continuing in the same year had reached nearly 60%. Education in professional colleges is to be abolished and their importance had become marginal by 2003. They are to be substituted by non-university colleges of higher education and by vocational schools. While the flow of VET and secondary school graduates to vocational schools increased quantitatively by more than 100% - from

<sup>150</sup> The absolute number of graduates from basic school was 44.484 in 2001.

about 2.100 in 1995 to about 4.500 in 2003<sup>151</sup> – it grew only slightly in terms of its share in the whole cohort of graduates – from 12% in 1995 to 15% in 2003.<sup>152</sup> Non-university colleges, on the other hand, have become a very popular form of education; within a few years they managed to attract one in four graduates continuing in the same year.

What is the educational profile of new entrants to different tracks, not just those continuing immediately after graduation, but in general? And how much diversity do these different tracks allow for? Universities recruit more than 80% of their students from upper secondary education; with the transformation of professional colleges, which also primarily recruited secondary school graduates, this share will probably increase further (Table 6.4). The share of new entrants to university from vocational education is as low as 3%. The newly opened tertiary colleges, on the other hand, recruit two thirds of their entrants from secondary education, 10% from vocational education and, again as an effect of abolishment, 25% from professional colleges.

**Table 6.4 - Educational profile of new entrants to different tracks (%)**

<i>education</i>	Voc. schools			Prof. colleges			Colleges			Universities		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
unfinished basic	29.1	21.6	20.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
finished basic	40.9	51.5	54.9	1.0	1.4	4.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
finished upper secondary	25.0	23.0	21.3	81.5	78.0	73.8	86.1	79.5	64.7	82.5	82.4	84.3
finished VET	4.5	3.4	3.0	14.0	17.7	18.0	7.7	9.8	9.4	4.0	2.3	2.9
finished prof. colleges	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.0	2.5	3.1	4.8	9.2	24.9	11.3	11.7	9.4
finished higher	-	-	-	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.4	1.5	1.1	2.2	3.6	3.4
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2003b: 70, 79, 87, 91); own calculations

New entrants to the four different types of vocational education have the broadest range of educational backgrounds. An increasing share – more than half – come directly from lower secondary education, 20% dropped out of basic education and another 20% have opted for vocational education after completing upper secondary education.

Level 2 vocational schools are disappearing; the number of new entrants decreased from about 22.300 in the year 1995 to 800 in the year 2003. On the other hand, the importance of level 3 vocational schools is increasing; the number of new entrants increased from about 17.200 in the year 1995 to 27.600 in the year 2003 (Statistikos Departamentas 2004b: 222). The disappearance of level 2 vocational schools (i.e. without completion of upper secondary education) and their substitution by level 3 vocational schools will have the positive effect of providing all VET students beyond basic level also with a secondary education that will allow

<sup>151</sup> In fact, the share of VET graduates continuing to another form of VET is very small, i.e. 360 out of 4.507 in the year 2003 (Statistikos Departamentas 2004a: 26).

<sup>152</sup> The reason for this apparently low increase is, of course, the generally rising number of graduates from VET and upper secondary schools, from 32.175 in 1995 to 50.564 in 2003 (Statistikos Departamentas 2004a: 26).

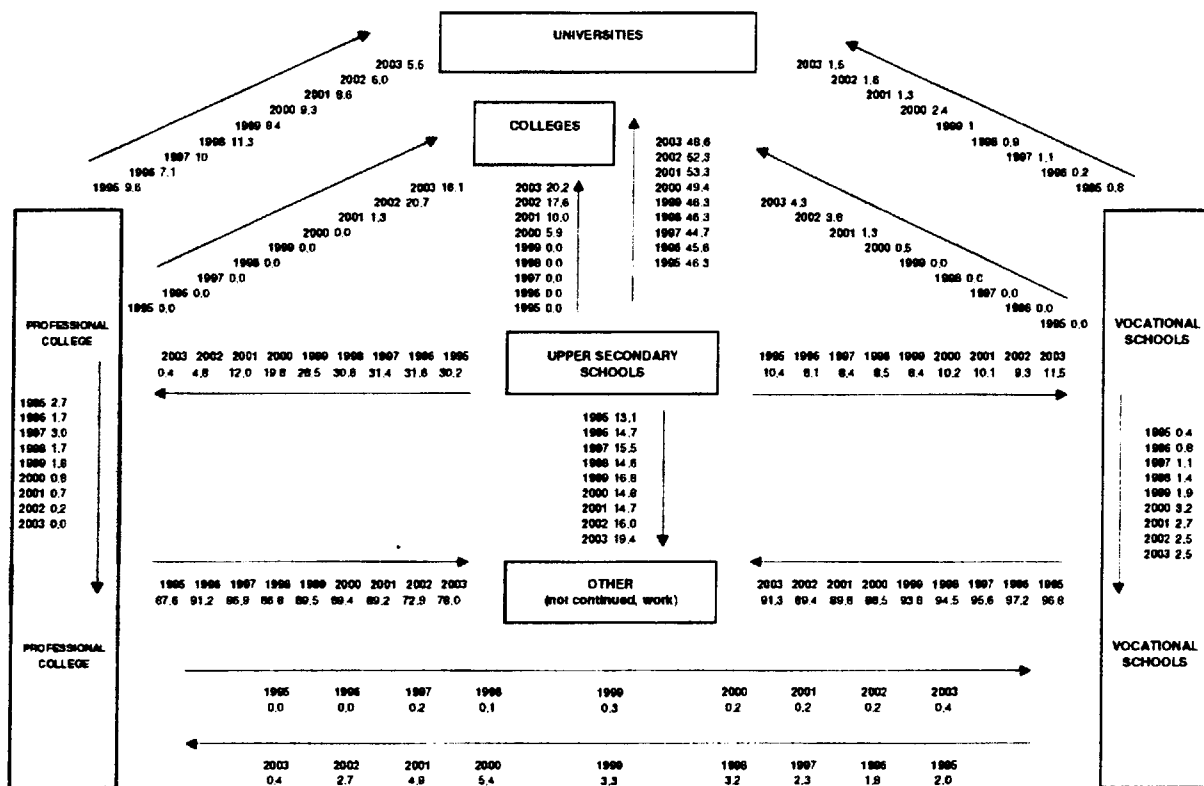
them to continue to tertiary education. This complies with the EU's 2010 Lisbon strategy benchmark to increase the share of 22-year-olds having completed upper secondary education to at least 85% (see Leney 2004: 20-21; European Commission 2005). However, for young people less oriented towards a more classical education but aware of the necessity to get professional training this means that they will either not receive more than a very basic form of level 1 VET (10 years), or, they will be obliged to spend at least 13 years in the system in order to receive professional training. In times of economic hardship the latter may not be an option.

Finally, what are the patterns of movement for graduates? What is the 'outflow' of the system and how did it change at the second threshold – i.e. after upper secondary or vocational education (Figure 6.3)?<sup>153</sup> The quantitatively most important point is upper secondary school; from here the main route leads about half of all graduates into universities. This share increased until 2001, and is now decreasing; most likely as a result of the introduction of colleges, which have become the second most important target institution for graduates of upper secondary education (20% in 2003). In the mid-1990s professional colleges were still the second most important institutions; about 10% of secondary school graduates continued to vocational education, a share that remained stable over the years. The share of secondary school graduates not continuing in the same year increased from 13% in 1995 to about 20% in 2003. The majority of graduates from vocational schools do not continue their education: this share has decreased slightly in recent years, but remained at a high level (90%) in 2003. Colleges have become the most relevant form of further education for this group – 4% in 2003. A few young people move on to other vocational schools, some continue to university.

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<sup>153</sup> For the full picture, graduates from professional schools are also included in this figure, although these are post-secondary institutions. Furthermore, certain patterns of exchange between and within professional colleges and vocational schools are indicated. The reference statistics also include information about the movement of graduates from universities into colleges and professional colleges but the numbers are negligible.

**Figure 6.3 - Proportion of graduates continuing with education at different levels in the same year, 1995-2003 (%)**<sup>154</sup>

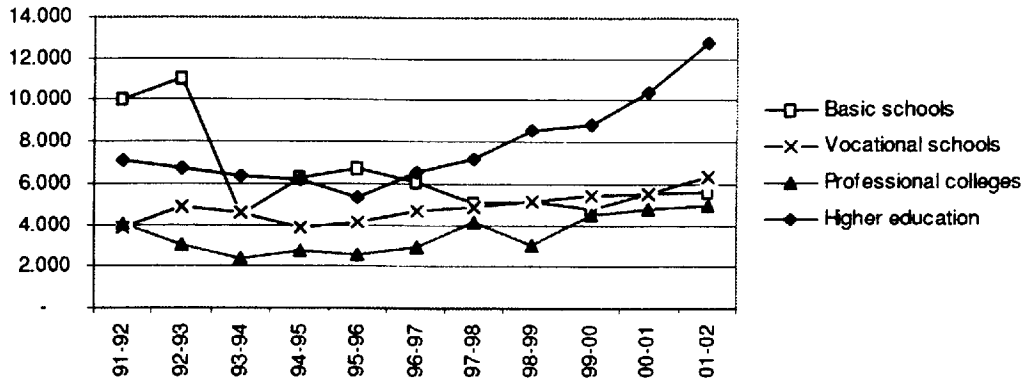


Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004a: 26); own calculations

There are no reliable statistics about dropouts and no information is available about how many may have continued their education at a later stage. However, estimations and figures available for the different levels of education generally show an increasing number of dropouts for the last few years (Figure 6.4). The introduction of youth schools (for the age group 12 to 16) as well as the possibility of entering vocational schools at the age of 14 helps to integrate some of the young people dropping out of education. The most problematic group, however, are young people between 16 and 18 years with no basic education; they are too old for basic vocational education and too young for adult education (Rimkeviciene 2001: 37-38).

<sup>154</sup> The absolute numbers of graduates in the years 1995 and 2003 were: vocational schools 12.260 and 14.465 (+18%); upper secondary schools 19.915 and 36.099 (+81%); professional colleges 6.756 and 6.893 (+0,2%); universities 12.366 and 22.959 (+86%).

**Figure 6.4 – Dropouts from education, 1991 to 2001 (absolute numbers)**



Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2003b: 34), Ministry of Education and Science (2003: 69).

In the early 1990s the number of dropouts was particularly high in general education, possibly indicating additional difficulties stemming from the reorganisation of the educational infrastructure. The number of pupils expelled from full-time education follows the same pattern – i.e. high numbers at the beginning of the 1990s, levelling off from the mid-1990s onwards. The number of expulsions, most in lower secondary education, amount to about 10% of the number of dropouts (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 2003: 68).

A first assessment with regard to the dimensions of stratification and standardisation as suggested by Allmendinger (1989) for a comparative perspective on education systems seems possible, yet it does not result in any clear classification of the Lithuanian case, because systematically collected and comparable evidence is not yet available. In sum, the former Soviet three-track system was transformed into a two-track system of vocational versus general education. Internal differentiation has increased as well as decreased. It has increased because the formal separation of lower and higher strata of education has become more pronounced. It has decreased because certain types of schools are disappearing, together with old tracks; others, like the prestigious and popular gymnasia were introduced.

The option of leaving education with a vocational qualification but without having completed upper secondary education no longer exists, except for disadvantaged students already attending vocational education at the basic level. However, due to this mainstreaming towards prolonged education the majority of students, including students from the vocational track, will formally qualify for access to higher education, which is then limited. Altogether, more and more students are pushed towards higher levels of education, which will supposedly facilitate their involvement in life-long-learning and keep them 'employable'. However, a

minority will not manage to progress beyond the lowest level of compulsory education. For them, 'occupational upgrading' will most probably entail sharply rising unemployment risks (Gangl 2002). Finally, an intermediate level is set to disappear.

Vocational education organised in public schools and not as an apprenticeship system does not stratify because everybody has the option to participate, as Allmendinger (1989: 238) maintains. However, access to all professions throughout the country is limited and low mobility from rural areas is still a problem. Furthermore, employers do not seem to be satisfied with the skills profiles of VET graduates, especially in terms of general skills. Thus, young people have to receive additional on-the-job training, or simply learn how to work; the provision of such vital opportunities seems to depend solely on employers' choices. For these reasons the Lithuanian system appears to have a relatively low to medium degree of stratification together with a high degree of internal polarisation, if this is not a contradiction in terms. The fact that educational reform was strongly guided by international expertise could make Lithuania a kind of 'guinea pig' for an education system compatible with the transforming labour markets of Europe.

With regard to the dimension of standardisation, it is early days and any assessment, however provisional, is difficult. Nevertheless, the degree of ambivalence is equally high. If standardisation were, for instance, associated with a centralised curriculum authority then the Lithuanian case would fulfil this criterion. The organisation of VET in public schools – also an indicator for weak linkages between education and employment – as well as the gradual monopolisation of Lithuanian as a teaching language, point to some development in this direction. Furthermore, educational possibilities are worse in rural areas, the standardisation of both curricula and profiles of professions, together with final exams, still needs to be completed, the re-training of teachers or the employment of younger teachers is difficult because of low resources and salaries in the educational sector; and, finally, employers' dissatisfaction with the outcomes of school-based vocational education remains an unsolved problem. Altogether, the Lithuanian education system is certainly moving towards standardisation, but still has a long way to go.<sup>155</sup>

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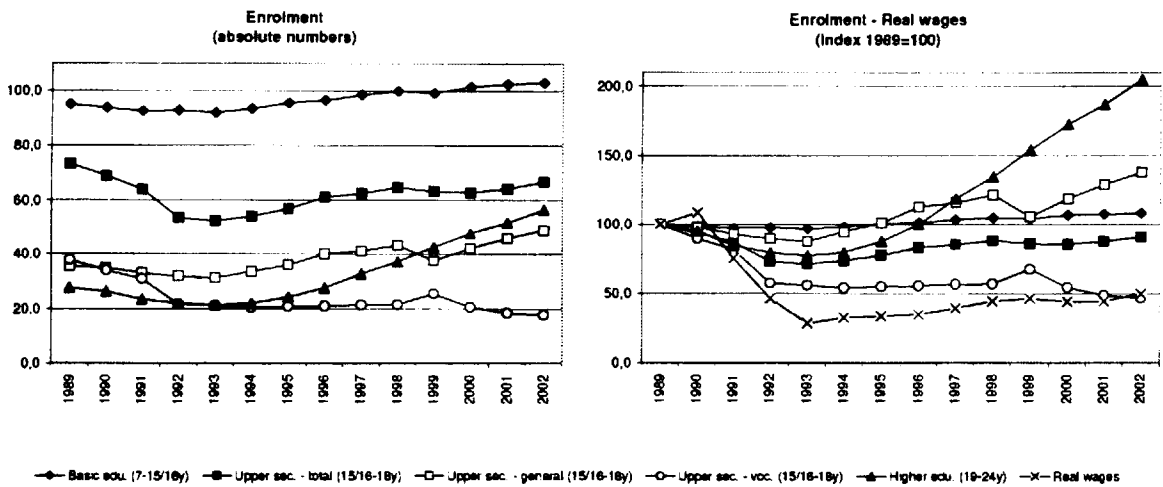
<sup>155</sup> For a more determined attempt to locate a similar case, Estonia, within available maps of country classifications see Saar (2005); also Toomse (2003). For an assessment of Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia see Kogan/Unt (2005).

## 6.2 Between education and the market – some figures

### 6.2.1 Enrolment trends and youth activity

If we accept the enrolment rates of young people in different levels of education as indicators for youth participation in education, as suggested in UNICEF (2000: 43), an idea of the impact of societal change on the educational behaviour of young people after the collapse of the Soviet regime may be formed. The Lithuanian case follows the general pattern of post-communist countries in Europe, with enrolment rates falling in the first half of the 1990s, but rising again during the second half (Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5 – Education enrolments (gross rates), 1989 to 2002<sup>156</sup>**



Source: UNICEF 2004; own calculations

While the gross enrolment rate<sup>157</sup> of children from the age of seven up to 15/16 years in basic education decreased only slightly up to 1993, participation in upper secondary education among youths of 15/16 to 18 years decreased significantly to nearly 50% in 1993. The enrolment rate subsequently recovered but would not reach the 1989 level again until 2002. The reason for this is the steadily declining participation of young people in upper secondary vocational education that could not be compensated by an increase in the general track.

In Lithuania the shares of young men enrolled in the vocational stream of upper secondary education declined from 41% in the year 1999 to 32% in the year 2003; female VET participation is generally lower but the decline was less strong, from 25% to 21%. VET participation in Lithuania is comparatively low; in Western European countries (EU 15)

<sup>156</sup> Due to the extension of lower secondary education to the age of 16 in 1999, the boundaries of the age-groups for the aggregate data changed for the years 1999 to 2002 (UNICEF 2004: 83-84, tables 7.2 to 7.4).

<sup>157</sup> The gross enrolment rate is defined as 'the number of children, irrespective of age, enrolled in a given level of education divided by the total number of children in the general population that corresponds to the age group specified for that level of education' (UNICEF 2004: 127).

comparable shares were 62% (men) and 56% (women) in the year 1999 and 57% (men) and 56% (women) in the year 2003 (no table) (Eurostat internet; 08.05.2005).<sup>158</sup>

The reorganisation of the education system, the sudden devaluation of educational credentials in times of social change as well as the difficult economic situation could be part of the explanation for this drop in participation in education among young people. One indicator for the latter could be the development of real wages, if one is ready to accept this as a rough indicator for the development of the amount of money available to a family or a household. As can be seen from the right side of Figure 8.5, which includes the development of real wages alongside enrolment in education (index, base year: 1989=100) there is a simultaneous decrease until the year 1993, which seems to have been an important turning point. In other words, it may well be that many families simply could not afford their children's further education, and needed their contributions to the family income.<sup>159</sup>

The impact of these difficult years before and around 1993 (see also the relatively high numbers of dropouts shown above, Figure 6.4) on the distribution of educational attainment is still visible (Table 6.5). For instance, in the year 2002 the share of those who did not complete any education beyond the lower secondary level peaked at 20% in the age group of 25 to 29 years: in the year 1991 the members of this age group were 14 to 18 years old.

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<sup>158</sup> See also European Commission (2002a). For the role of this indicator for the comparative assessment of national training systems see Van der Velden/Wolbers (2003: 198).

<sup>159</sup> Two other indicators support this thesis of a peak in socio-economic hardship in Lithuania around 1993; both are not directly material and refer to what people *do*, or better, do not do, rather than to what they *have*. First, there was a first sharp decline in the crude birth rate between 1992 (14,7 live births per thousand population) and 1993 (12,9); second, the crude marriage rate declined from 8,1 marriages per thousand population in 1992 to 6,4 in 1993 (UNICEF 2004: 60 table 2.2; 75 table 5.1). Price liberalisation and voucher privatisation started towards the end of the 1991, the annual inflation rate (i.e. annual average percent change in consumer prices) was about 1.000% in 1992 and still about 400% in 1993 (ibid. 93 table 10.6). For a discussion of the changing patterns of fertility in Central and Eastern Europe see, for instance, Philipov (2002), Philipov/Dorbritz (2003).



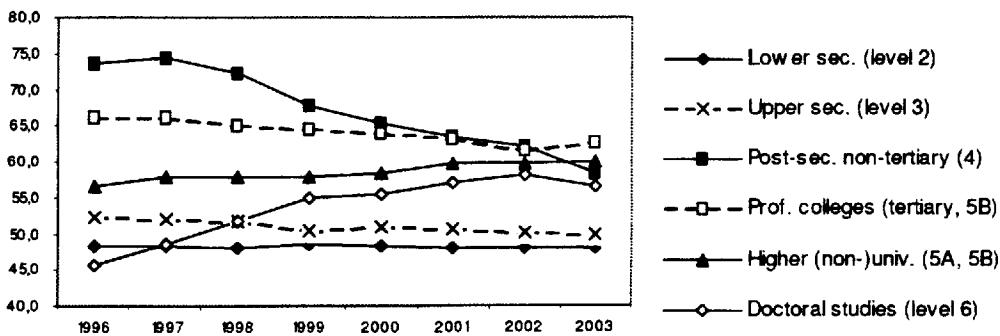
**Table 6.5 - Population by age group and highest level of education attained (ISCED 1997) (%)**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>20-24 years</b>							
Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2	16.6	18.8	22.2	19.0	20.9	17.9	13.9
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4	65.6	65.7	59.8	64.5	63.0	67.5	70.1
Tertiary education - levels 5-6	17.4	15.5	18.4	16.9	16.1	14.5	16.0
<b>25-29 years</b>							
Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2	7.7	8.4	12.0	14.7	20.0	19.2	16.0
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4	59.1	56.1	56.4	55.0	48.3	48.7	38.5
Tertiary education - levels 5-6	40.1	44.4	39.3	35.1	33.9	29.9	37.3
<b>30-34 years</b>							
Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2	4.5	4.2	6.0	6.1	5.2	9.4	7.0
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4	51.8	56.1	56.8	81.4	78.7	70.1	63.5
Tertiary education - levels 5-6	51.8	49.0	47.0	22.9	27.0	26.5	30.3

Source: EUROSTAT (internet. 06.05.2005): Labour force survey data, 2nd quarter of the year, education levels according to ISCED 1997

The shares of young women enrolled in education beyond the compulsory level are generally higher than those of young men (Figure 6.6). Female shares have been constantly high with a slightly decreasing tendency for professional colleges leading to specialised training (the former *tekhnikumy*). The increase was strongest in higher education (including the newly opened colleges). In level 4 post-secondary vocational schools female shares have strongly decreased, but women still remain the majority.

**Figure 6.6 – Shares of enrolled female students (%)**

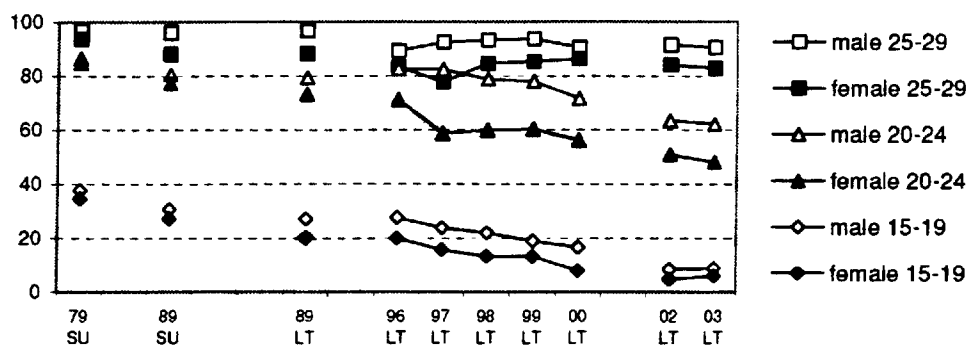


Source: Statistics Lithuania (Internet. 28.04.05); own calculations

Altogether this points to a generally low and, on the tertiary level, decreasing participation in education among young men, who generally tend to be more economically active (Figure 6.7). From 1997 onwards, especially in the age group of 20 to 24 years, the

activity rate (i.e. the share of the economically active population) of women remained between 15 and 20 percentage points below that of men. In Soviet Lithuania the transition to working life for both young men and women was completed at a lower age, and the differences between men and women were less distinct.

**Figure 6.7 – Activity rates of young people in the Soviet Union (SU) and Lithuania (LT) by gender and age groups, 1979-2003<sup>160</sup>**



Source: ILO (Internet, 07.04.2005); own calculations: LT 1997 to 1999: 14 to 19 years

The transition patterns of young Lithuanians aged between 20 and 24 years show strong gender differences, and both young men and women postpone economic activity to the second half of their 20s. Activity of the youngest group of Lithuanians is among the lowest in Europe. This is partly to do with the fact that vocational training is school-based, which keeps young people out of economic activity. In addition, youth labour force participation has declined sharply in recent years; the reasons for this are a hostile labour market (see below) and the increasing participation in education, which has become an option for more and more young people as their parents' income has grown, as Hazans (2004) argues in his analysis of the development of the workforce in the Baltic countries.

The gender-differences in the youth population reflect a generally different profile of men and women with regard to economic activity (Table 6.6). According to the 2001 census about 63% of the male population are part of the labour force compared to only 51% of women; in the age group of 15 to 24 years this applies to nearly 40% of men and only 30% of women.

<sup>160</sup> As mentioned earlier, at least the reliability of the Soviet statistics is questionable. However these are the only data available for an assessment of changes in the transition system.

**Table 6.6 - Population by economic activity, age and gender, 2001**

		labour force	employed	unemployed	inactive	not indicated	total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
total (15+)	men	62.7	49.3	13.4	35.8	1.5	100
	women	51.1	42.1	9.0	48.0	0.9	100
	total	56.4	45.4	11.0	42.4	1.2	100
15-24	men	39.2	27.9	11.3	58.1	2.6	100
	women	30.3	22.6	7.7	68.3	1.5	100
	total	34.8	25.3	9.6	63.1	2.1	100

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2003a: 24-25); population census data; own calculations

In recent years more and more young people remained outside the labour market. Labour force surveys record an increasing amount of inactive young people, from 63% in 2000 to 74% in 2004; the male shares increased from 58% to 67%, the female from 67% to 81%. During the same period the respective average shares of inactive young people in the EU 15 increased very little, remaining at about 50% for young men and 56% for young women (no table).<sup>161</sup>

The lower participation levels among women in the formal labour market and their tendency to be 'inactive' in the sense of labour statistics can only partly be explained by a 'traditionally' stronger tendency for women to be enrolled in further education, as Rimkeviciene (2001: 40) puts it. It is true that the amount of women in the 'inactive' population is higher than that of men – i.e. 61% of the inactive population are female (only 53% in the age group 15-24 years). But the data from the 2001 census also show that the share of men who declare themselves 'inactive' because they are studying is actually higher than for women, both in terms of the total population and among young people (Table 6.7).

**Table 6.7 - Inactive population by type of inactivity, age and gender, 2001**

		pupils, students	pensioners	homemakers	other	not indicated	total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
total (15+)	men	29.3	54.3	3.5	12.9	0.0	100.0
	women	20.5	64.2	11.2	4.0	0.0	100.0
	total	23.9	60.4	8.3	7.4	0.0	100.0
15-24	men	89.6	1.1	0.8	8.4	0.0	100.0
	women	87.1	0.6	8.0	4.3	0.0	100.0
	total	88.3	0.8	4.6	6.2	0.0	100.0

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2003a: 70-73); population census data; own calculations

Apart from gender-specific differences with regard to the category of 'other' statuses it is the category of 'homemaker' where numbers of women are considerably higher. While 8% of young women at the age of 15 to 24 years fall into this category, less than 1% of young men do; the latter rather fall within the residual category (i.e. 'other'). This not only indicates

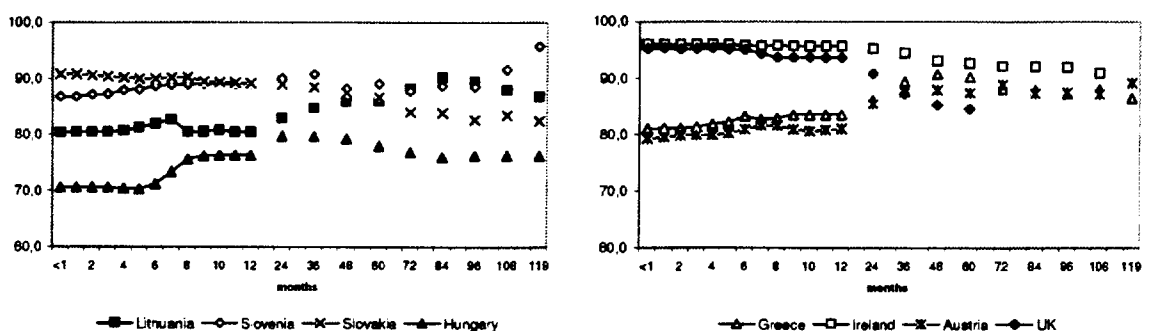
<sup>161</sup> Data from the second quarter of the year; source: EUROSTAT (internet, 03.05.2005).

the prevalence of a gendered division of labour; it may also mean that the phenomenon of the 'discouraged worker' – people withdrawing from job seeking on the formal labour market – is more widespread among young women than among (young) men (see also Rutkowski 2003, 2006; Vidovic 2002; Hazans 2004).

### 6.2.2 Outcomes of education

The participation rates featured above do not tell us anything about the dynamics of labour market integration among young people after leaving education. The 'European Union Labour Force Survey 2000 Ad Hoc Module' on transitions from school to work (see Kogan/Müller 2003) allows the calculation of indicators for the transitions of recent school leavers to working life, relating them to the time individuals have already spent in the labour market. The respondents were 15 to 35 years old and left continuous education for the first time 5 to 10 years ago. The average activity rate for 15 to 35 year old education leavers in the EU 14 countries is about 90%;<sup>162</sup> this average remains stable over 10 years irrespective of when the respondent left school (Kogan/Schubert 2003: 8-9). Figure 6.8 shows the activity rates for some transition countries that were included in the survey, including Lithuania (on the left), as well as for selected EU countries (on the right). The latter, included as an illustration rather than as a detailed comparison which would need more space, were selected as the four countries with the highest and lowest values. The first 12 months after leaving school are fully displayed, then one value for each following year up to 10 years.

**Figure 6.8 - Activity rates by time (months) since leaving continuous education for the first time; age: 15-35**



Source: EUROSTAT (internet, 03.05.2005); LFS 2000

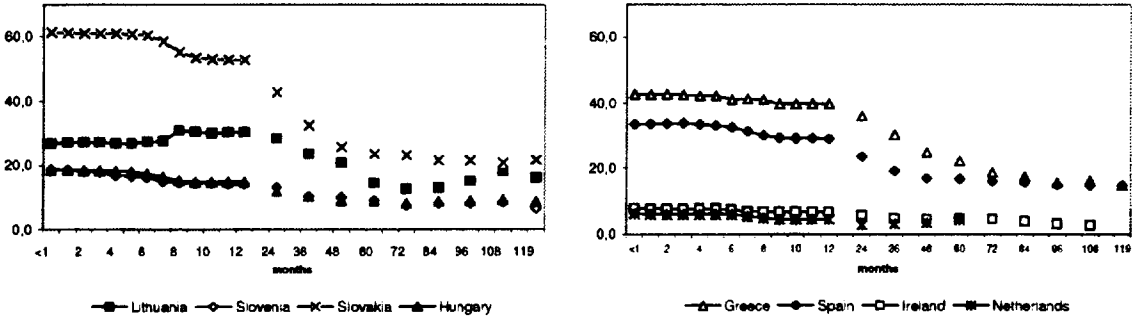
In Lithuania the activity rate remains at a constant level of 80% during the first year after leaving education; it then starts climbing and reaches the EU average of 90% for

<sup>162</sup> Germany did not participate in this module.

respondents that have been out of education for about seven years. Hungary comes closer to the 'prevailing pattern' within the EU of 'growing labour force participation shortly after leaving education and a subsequent stabilization' (ibid. 8); The participation rate increases substantially after 6 months, reaches a peak of about 80%, and continues to decrease slightly over time. In Slovenia as well as Slovakia most young people enter the labour market immediately after leaving education; while in Slovenia the activity rate remains at a high level and even surpasses the EU average, it continuously decreases to about 80% in Slovakia.

A period of 10 years is a long one for transition countries because of ongoing transformations affecting all areas of society. Claiming the existence of 'patterns' thus seems premature. However, a gradual withdrawal from the labour market, for instance because of household work, discouragement or informal labour, all of which are explanations for decreasing activity rates in the adult population, does not necessarily apply to young Lithuanians after they have left school. What is a problem, though, is the continuously high level of unemployment that accompanies transitions from education to work across a period of well beyond two to three years, as can be seen in Figure 6.9.

**Figure 6.9 - Unemployment rates by time (months) since leaving continuous education for the first time; age: 15-35**



Source: EUROSTAT (internet, 03.05.2005); LFS 2000

In Lithuania recent school leavers immediately face an unemployment rate of about 27%; this increases during the first year to over 30%, only beginning to decline the second year. One explanation for this is the loose link between education and employment discussed above. The situation appears to be much worse in Slovakia, with an initial youth unemployment rate of over 60%, as well as in some EU 15 countries like Greece and Spain, both with unemployment rates of over 30%. In Slovenia and Hungary, on the other hand, the youth unemployment rate is below the EU average, but shows the same pattern of high unemployment risks at the beginning of careers.

The Lithuanian youth unemployment rate was anything but stable in recent years; from 1999 to 2004 it fluctuated between 20% and 32%, reaching its peak in 2001 (Table 6.8). Furthermore, the usual pattern of higher female youth unemployment is not found in Lithuania; only in two of the five years was female youth unemployment higher than male unemployment. A 'pattern of irregularity' also seems to apply to unemployment with regard to education. In most of the years, but not all, youth unemployment was highest among the least educated; in the year 2001 the unemployment rate for this group was 43%, while it was 31% for young people with upper secondary and post-secondary education and 21% for young people with tertiary education.<sup>163</sup>

**Table 6.8 - Unemployment rates by gender, age and highest level of education attained (ISCED 1997) (%)**

		Lithuania						EU 15
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2004
<b>15-25</b>								
<b>Total</b>	total	25.5	28.6	31.6	20.4	26.9	21.2	16.1
	male	28.8	29.5	36.6	19.6	22.2	23.6	15.9
	female	21.0	27.3	24.6	21.6	32.8	17.1	16.3
<b>Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2</b>	total	32.0	37.3	42.7	26.7	36.0	19.7	21.5
	male	34.2	34.9	49.8	27.8	33.5	:	19.8
	female	27.9	42.0	:	:	:	:	24.3
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4</b>	total	23.0	26.2	30.5	18.3	26.8	23.0	14.7
	male	29.2	27.6	34.2	16.9	17.0	25.3	14.8
	female	15.5	24.4	25.0	20.6	37.9	19.0	14.5
<b>Tertiary education - levels 5-6</b>	total	19.9	21.4	21.3	18.4	:	18.3	11.9
	male	:	:	:	:	:	:	11.5
	female	:	:	:	:	:	:	12.1
<b>25+</b>								
<b>Total</b>	total	11.7	14.4	15.2	12.2	11.4	10.4	7.2
	male	12.4	16.6	17.3	12.5	11.4	9.6	6.5
	female	11.0	12.2	13.1	12.0	11.3	11.2	8.1
<b>Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2</b>	total	13.0	18.1	18.3	15.8	17.7	13.3	10.1
	male	15.0	22.6	20.4	18.0	17.7	14.5	8.8
	female	10.5	12.3	15.4	11.8	17.7	11.3	12.1
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4</b>	total	15.1	19.3	18.4	14.1	12.5	11.9	7.2
	male	15.8	20.4	19.4	13.5	11.8	10.2	6.6
	female	14.2	18.0	17.2	14.8	13.1	13.6	8.0
<b>Tertiary education - levels 5-6</b>	total	8.3	8.7	6.1	5.7	5.8	6.0	4.8
	male	7.6	10.1	8.9	5.1	6.2	5.2	4.3
	female	8.8	7.7	4.2	6.0	5.6	6.6	5.4

Source: EUROSTAT (internet. 06.05.2005): Labour force survey data, 2nd quarter of the year, education levels according to ISCED 1997

The education-unemployment nexus is more consolidated among the adult population (aged 25 years and more). In general it is true that higher levels of education are associated with lower unemployment. However, the difference between the other two groups is not big, which may be due to the fact that the share of employed people among the least qualified of the adult population - i.e. their employment rate - is the lowest of all educational groups (Table 6.9). In 2004 only 20% of the least educated adult population were employed; 33%

<sup>163</sup> For comparison, the average youth unemployment rate in the EU 15 in the second quarter of 2004 was 16%; 22% among the least educated, 14% for those with secondary education, and 12% for those with tertiary education.

among men and just 13% among women. The Lithuanian average for those over 25 years of age was close to 60%, close to 70% for those with upper or post-secondary education, and close to 80% for people with tertiary education. The EU 15 average among adult people of 25 years or more for the second quarter of 2004 was 54%, 37% among the least qualified, 66% among those with secondary education, and 76% among those with tertiary education.

**Table 6.9 - Employment rates by gender, age and highest level of education attained (ISCED 1997) (%)**

		Lithuania					EU 15	
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
<b>15-19</b>								
<b>Total</b>	total	13.9	8.2	5.0	4.3	4.0	3.3	22.3
	male	16.2	10.0	6.5	5.6	4.6	4.7	24.2
	female	11.6	6.2	:	:	:	:	20.2
<b>Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2</b>	total	13.7	6.2	2.8	2.4	3.2	2.4	16.2
	male	16.1	8.0	:	:	4.5	:	19.0
	female	10.9	:	:	:	:	:	13.2
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4</b>	total	14.7	15.8	17.1	16.4	:	:	41.9
	male							43.9
	female	13.1	:	:	:	:	:	40.1
<b>20-24</b>								
<b>Total</b>	total	51.5	47.2	42.5	49.5	46.5	40.0	56.0
	male	54.1	51.1	44.3	55.8	55.2	48.4	60.1
	female	48.8	43.1	40.6	43.2	38.0	31.6	51.9
<b>Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2</b>	total	47.0	40.6	36.6	49.7	44.6	51.4	55.4
	male	51.0	51.4	35.0	52.6	55.3	61.6	63.8
	female	41.3	27.0	38.9	46.4	:	:	44.7
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4</b>	total	49.6	45.7	38.3	44.8	41.3	32.2	53.4
	male	51.0	49.3	43.6	53.8	52.1	41.3	56.8
	female	48.3	42.4	33.2	35.0	30.9	24.0	50.0
<b>Tertiary education - levels 5-6</b>	total	64.9	59.7	65.0	67.8	72.8	64.3	62.4
	male	73.9	56.5	61.0	71.0	72.8	63.2	62.9
	female	57.4	62.9	68.1	65.7	72.8	65.4	62.1
<b>25+</b>								
<b>Total</b>	total	57.5	55.8	54.8	56.4	58.8	57.7	54.1
	male	64.2	60.5	59.7	63.5	65.6	65.2	63.7
	female	52.1	52.0	50.8	50.6	53.4	51.6	45.3
<b>Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2</b>	total	20.1	20.0	20.0	19.6	22.2	20.5	36.9
	male	29.0	28.2	28.5	29.8	33.3	32.5	50.9
	female	14.6	15.0	14.3	12.5	14.7	12.8	26.0
<b>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4</b>	total	67.4	64.7	64.2	68.4	69.3	67.8	65.5
	male	71.8	66.4	67.5	74.2	74.0	73.5	71.7
	female	62.5	62.7	61.0	63.0	65.0	62.6	59.2
<b>Tertiary education - levels 5-6</b>	total	76.7	74.5	81.4	77.5	80.2	78.3	77.4
	male	79.7	76.1	81.1	79.0	82.0	79.7	78.9
	female	74.5	73.4	81.6	76.5	78.9	77.4	75.7

Source: EUROSTAT (internet, 06.05.2005): Labour force survey data, 2nd quarter of the year, education levels according to ISCED 1997

The employment rate in the youngest age group continuously decreased, corresponding to the increasing participation in further education. While in 1999 one in seven young people below the age of 20 was employed, this dropped to one in 30 in 2004. From the few years where gender-specific information is available from the Labour force surveys it is evident that female employment rates are well below the male.

Where do young Lithuanians who leave education for the first time work if they get a job, and what does this bear to the level of education they have attained? Some answers are given by the European Union Labour Force Survey 2000 Ad Hoc Module on transitions from

school to work (Kogan/Schubert 2003). First of all, the phenomenon of self-employment is widespread among young people in Lithuania – around 18% of school leavers resort to self-employment immediately after education. This is a high share compared to the EU 14 average of 5%. While this share usually gradually increases over time in Western European countries, indicating a smooth transition into self-employment, in Lithuania it starts to decrease after about 2 ½ years before a slight u-shaped development, a phenomenon seen on a much higher level in Romania, indicating a difficult transition (ibid. 16-18).

Recent school leavers in Europe are mostly employed in the tertiary sector of the economy. On average about 80% of young people with tertiary education, 70% with upper and post-secondary education, and only 55% of the least educated school leavers are employed in the service sector. In most of the Western EU countries, the variation in the service sector employment of young people by level of education is not very high. In the new member countries, where the development of the tertiary sector is less advanced, educational level is an important indicator for the sectoral stratification of employment. In Lithuania, among school leavers with tertiary education the share of those working in the service sector is close to 80%; for those with secondary and post-secondary education this share is about 50%; and among the least educated only 22% (ibid. 18-20).

For an assessment of the significance of both level and type of education for labour market participation, a distinction needs to be made between vocational and general tracks of education. As indicated above, there is a trend towards the general track rather than the vocational track. How do types of education relate to unemployment risks? Is unemployment only higher for the least educated, or also for those without any professional training? What are the differences between men and women and between people from urban and rural areas? Table 6.10 includes activity and unemployment rates by education differentiated by place of residence and gender.



**Table 6.10 – Activity and unemployment rates by education 2003 (age 15 and above)<sup>164</sup>**

	Activity rate					Unemployment rate				
	total	male	female	urban	rural	total	male	female	urban	rural
Higher education	81.8	83.5	80.5	82.5	77.8	5.9	5.8	6.1	6.2	4.0
Prof. colleges	86.9	89.2	85.4	88.9	79.8	8.4	10.6	6.9	8.0	10.0
Technicum	74.9	80.8	71.0	73.4	79.1	9.9	10.3	9.5	10.7	7.8
Vocational post-secondary	82.3	82.6	82.1	83.0	80.6	13.1	12.8	13.3	15.5	6.8
Upper secondary vocational	86.8	89.3	81.1	86.3	88.0	14.9	14.0	17.2	16.5	11.2
Upper secondary	60.7	66.3	56.2	57.6	67.8	16.6	13.9	19.2	19.2	11.5
Lower secondary vocational	78.3	80.6	70.6	76.8	80.6	18.0	19.5	12.2	20.8	13.4
Lower secondary	35.5	44.0	26.8	28.9	45.0	18.5	18.7	18.4	25.9	11.7
Lower sec. not completed	7.9	13.7	4.2	6.2	9.3	13.5	15.6	8.5	26.0	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004c); Labour force survey data: own calculations

Women and people living in rural areas have an activity rate well below the average. Those who have not completed basic education are the least active and most likely withdrew from the labour market; women without an education are especially disadvantaged and practically 'invisible' with regard to formal economic activity.<sup>165</sup> Among those with a general education below the post-secondary level the activity rates are also much lower when compared to those who attended the vocational alternative at the same level.

With regard to unemployment and education for both the upper and the lower secondary levels, additional vocational training does, in fact, make a difference in terms of unemployment risk, for women more than for men. However, the differences are not very distinct, and, vocational education or not, the unemployment rates remain above average. Taking the findings from both activity and unemployment together, it seems that, with regard to employment outcomes, differences in general and vocational tracks on the lower and upper secondary levels depend mostly on participation (or non-participation) in the labour market. The much lower activity rates of those having completed the quantitatively much more attended general track are probably an indication for their generally higher tendency to stay out of the labour market.<sup>166</sup>

Altogether, the situation is most polarised in cities, where educational attainment below the post-secondary level is associated with much higher unemployment rates; here, a lack of education is most critical. Somewhat strangely, the unemployment rates of the least educated, in particular among women and the rural population, are much lower than the average. In my

<sup>164</sup> These rates are calculated on the basis of the population at the age of 15 years and above, without any maximum age limit. This is why the rates may be different from those limiting age to 15 to 64 years.

<sup>165</sup> According to the estimations of the labour force survey 2003 only about 12.000 out of 280.000 women in this group are economically active.

<sup>166</sup> According to the labour force 2003 about 36% of the population completed education on the general lower or upper secondary level and only about 10% completed the vocational tracks.

opinion, this indicates that the vast majority of 'hopeless cases' in this group have already withdrawn from the labour market.

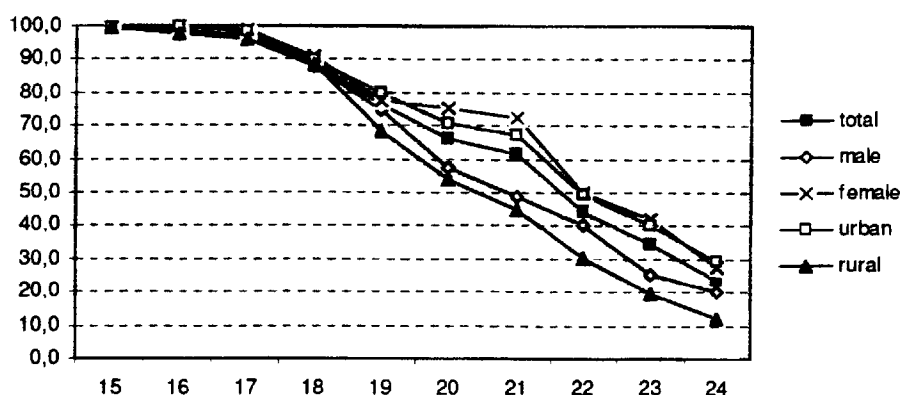
Being a member of an ethnic group other than Lithuanian is another feature that adds to disadvantage with regard to unemployment. While, in 2003, economic activity is more or less the same among all ethnic groups, the unemployment rates range from 11,7% among Lithuanians to 18,7% among Russians, and 13,9% for Poles. Among Russian women the unemployment rate climbs to 20,7% (no table) (Statistikos Departamentas 2004c: 15-16).

To what extent the reform of the educational system is contributing to the reproduction of education-based social inequalities, seems, for the time being, to be a question without a clear answer. The social, occupational and educational backgrounds of parents, the income situation of households and families as well as the significance of ethnic membership and place of residence still need to be studied more systematically for countries like Lithuania. Available papers suggest, unsurprisingly, the persistent effect of parental (especially the mother's) education on enrolment and completion of secondary and tertiary education, as well as the increasing importance of family income for schooling decisions. Ethnicity continues to be an important distinguishing factor, but the 'ethnic gap' is declining, at least in Lithuania (Hazans et al. 2005, Smith 2004a, 2004b).

### 6.2.3 Youth transition indicators

The transition from education to work sees some differentiation from the age of 19 onwards; before this, differences with regard to gender and place of residence are negligible (Figure 6.10). Rural young people and young men participating in the vocational track leave education earlier; at the age of 21 more than 50% have already left education. Young women and young urban people study well beyond this age; for this group the share still in education is around 70% at the age of 21. By the age of 24 the average share of youth still in education drops to 24%, and most of the rural youth have already left education at this point.

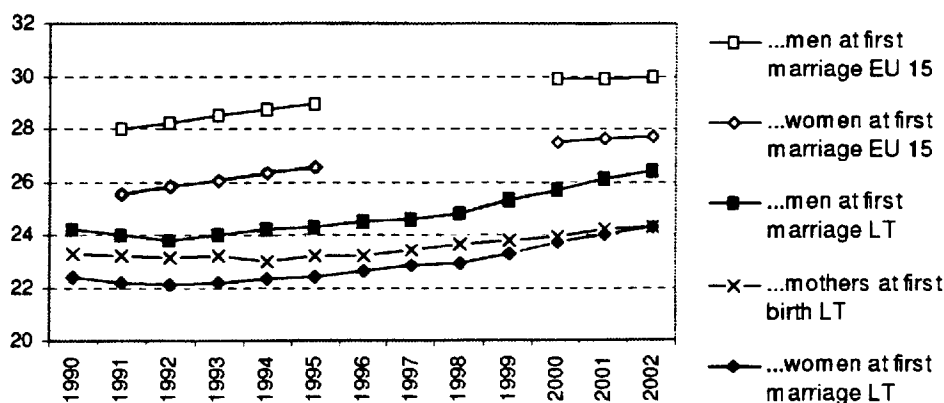
**Figure 6.10 – Shares of young people by age in education, 2003 (%)**



Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004c: 17-18). Labour force survey data

For Lithuanian women the age of 24 coincides with the average age for both the first marriage and the first birth (Figure 6.11). This convergence has occurred only recently; before, women tended to marry before childbirth.<sup>167</sup> The average age of Lithuanian men at first marriage is about two years above that of women; an average age distance between men and women that seems to be universal across Europe. However, Lithuanians are about three to four years younger at their first marriage than average Western Europeans.

**Figure 6.11 - Average age at first marriage/first birth, Lithuania (LT) and EU 15**



Source: UNICEF 2004 (61 table 2.3; 75 table 5.2; 76 5.3); EUROSTAT (internet, 08.05.2005)

As far as moving out of the parents' home is concerned there is evidence that this event is postponed. The Population Activities Unit (PAU) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) co-ordinated Fertility and Family Surveys which were

<sup>167</sup> For changing youth decisions on family formation in societies in transformation see UNICEF 2000: 10-15.

conducted in the 1990s in selected Member States including Lithuania.<sup>168</sup> For Lithuania the birth cohorts 1950-55, 1960-65, and 1970-75 are included. At the time of interviewing, from October 1994 to December 1995, the respondents were aged 40 to 44, 30 to 34, and 20 to 24 years respectively. The oldest members of the (most interesting) youngest cohort (1970-75) were around 20 years old in 1990/91.

The Lithuanian report (Stankuniene et al. 2000) indicates that young people are living for longer with their parents. This trend had already begun during the Soviet period, when it affected men and women equally. The subsequent societal change especially affected young men; only one in four in the birth cohort 1970-75 had left home by the age of 20 (Table 6.11).<sup>169</sup>

On the other hand, young men enter the labour market earlier than young women.<sup>170</sup> Two thirds of men and about 55% of women from the youngest birth cohort began to work by the age of 20. For women this share decreased from a stable 60% in the two preceding cohorts; for men it increased sharply from an equally stable 50% in previous cohorts. Again, the impact of the particularly difficult first half of the 1990s seems stronger for young men than young women.

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<sup>168</sup> For an evaluation of the Family Fertility Surveys and details see Festy/Prioux (2002); for general information see: [http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/ffs/ffs\\_h.htm](http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/ffs/ffs_h.htm) (10.05.2005). For the follow-up programme in the making, the 'Gender and Generations Programme' see <http://www.unece.org/pau/ggp/> (14.12.2006).

<sup>169</sup> The table includes information about age until respondents experienced certain events with regard to their transition to adulthood.

<sup>170</sup> To be precise, the questionnaire asked for the start of the first job (three consecutive months or longer). The questionnaire is available at: [http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/ffs/liith\\_engquest.pdf](http://www.unece.org/ead/pau/ffs/liith_engquest.pdf) (10.05.2005)

**Table 6.11 – Cumulated percent of respondents who experienced an event by a certain age, 1995**

**FEMALE SAMPLE**

	...first left their parental home by age			...first entered the labour market by age			...entered their first partnership by age			...had their first live birth by age		
	Age group			Age group			Age group			Age group		
	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44
	Birth cohort			Birth cohort			Birth cohort			Birth cohort		
70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	
15	5.6	7.4	8.7	2.0	0.8	3.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
16	7.6	9.9	12.5	5.8	2.3	7.3	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.8	0.3
17	12.0	17.9	24.2	13.4	8.5	16.0	4.4	2.0	1.1	1.1	1.5	0.5
18	25.3	42.0	50.5	32.1	28.0	37.4	13.7	8.5	6.2	6.7	4.4	1.5
19	35.9	48.7	59.8	45.1	44.9	51.1	30.0	7.5	14.2	13.9	10.3	4.8
20	43.0	53.6	65.5	54.7	60.4	61.0	42.9	28.4	27.3	25.6	17.6	13.0
21		57.1	68.8		68.9	68.8		41.9	38.3		26.9	23.5
22		61.8	72.0		78.6	81.2		54.4	50.9		37.7	35.7
23		64.7	75.3		90.3	89.6		65.1	62.5		50.3	46.2
24		68.1	77.4		93.4	93.3		73.8	70.2		60.2	56.9
25		70.2	78.3		95.1	94.9		79.2	76.1		69.4	66.6
26		71.6	79.9		96.3	95.8		83.5	81.5		74.5	72.2
27		73.1	80.4		96.5	96.1		85.7	84.7		78.9	77.8
28		74.6	81.0		97.1	96.9		87.5	86.1		82.4	82.7
29		75.4	81.8		97.5	96.9		89.1	86.9		84.5	84.7
30		75.6	82.1		97.5	97.2		90.1	87.4		86.1	85.2

**MALE SAMPLE**

	...first left their parental home by age			...first entered the labour market by age			...entered their first partnership by age			...had their first live birth by age		
	Age group			Age group			Age group			Age group		
	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44	20-24	30-34	40-44
	Birth cohort			Birth cohort			Birth cohort			Birth cohort		
70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	70-75	60-65	50-55	
15	5.8	9.1	11.3	3.2	2.2	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
16	7.5	13.0	14.5	9.7	5.1	6.2	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
17	10.9	20.4	22.7	17.6	10.1	14.8	1.7	1.4	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.4
18	16.7	44.2	53.1	38.7	28.5	24.3	5.7	3.8	3.1	1.7	2.9	0.4
19	22.2	49.1	57.0	56.6	40.4	34.6	11.1	6.8	6.5	5.0	3.5	2.6
20	28.0	53.3	63.3	65.9	49.8	50.2	18.8	11.9	11.9	7.6	6.1	4.7
21		57.5	64.8		65.0	66.3		21.8	20.0		9.9	8.8
22		61.1	68.4		76.2	76.5		36.9	32.7		20.2	16.8
23		64.9	73.8		87.0	88.5		50.9	50.4		33.7	28.8
24		71.6	76.6		94.2	93.4		62.5	65.0		47.4	42.3
25		73.7	77.7		96.0	95.5		73.4	73.1		57.1	50.0
26		75.1	78.5		96.8	96.3		79.9	78.5		63.8	60.9
27		77.2	79.7		98.6	97.9		85.7	81.9		69.9	68.2
28		77.5	81.3		98.6	98.4		88.4	87.3		76.3	74.1
29		78.6	82.0		98.6	98.4		89.8	89.2		79.2	78.5
30		79.6	82.4		98.6	98.4		92.8	90.8		80.8	81.4

Source: Stankuniene et al. (2000: tables 32 and 33).

The 'gender-impact' of the early years of social change appears the opposite with regard to partnership formation and childbirth. For women, the share of those among the youngest birth cohort that had entered their first partnership by the age of 20 increased sharply to over 40%; it also increased for young men, but remained below 20%. Finally, the share of young women from the youngest cohort that gave birth to their first child by the age of 20 increased to about 25%; this increase corresponds with both the then stable fertility rate and the adolescent birth rate, which rapidly increased until 1992. Both indicators declined in later years (UNICEF 2004: 61 table 2.4; 64 table 2.9).

The explanations given by demographers for these changes in reproductive behaviour and family formation move along two main lines according to Philipov (2003): a 'sociological' one stressing new freedom and autonomy, and a 'socio-economic' one stressing economic uncertainty due to unemployment and poverty. Both lines of argumentation have their weaknesses, but are not necessarily contradictory, and research is still insufficient to give priority to one set of explanations. 'Disorderliness', 'uncertainty' and 'anomie', finally, refer to a third set of possible interpretations put forward to account for the 'unexplained' shares of the phenomenon (as well as, perhaps, for the residual category in the equations) (ibid. 161-163). What is evident, is the substantial impact that societal transformation had on behaviour patterns. Its suddenness and scope are reflected in youth transition patterns and in the short-term change of trends, as well as their partial reversal soon afterwards.

#### 6.2.4 The labour market

The 'rapid rise of unemployment from zero to double-digit rates' is one of the key labour market features of 'one of the most fundamental economic phenomena of the twentieth century', as Svejnar (1999: 2852-2853) puts it in his assessment of the transition of formerly centrally planned economies towards market economies in the perspective of labour economics. Yet a high unemployment rate is only one of the indicators for the 'youth labour market disadvantage' (Kolev/Saget 2005) confronting young Lithuanians leaving education.

Rutkowski (2003) provides a comprehensive overall-assessment of the profile of the Lithuanian labour market for the first decade of transformation, and concludes with regard to the impact of the kind of flexibility that was achieved in recent years that 'labour market institutions in Lithuania do not seem to inhibit growth, however they produce 'jobless' growth and persistent unemployment' (ibid. 70). Some snapshots of the Lithuanian situation can be used to illustrate this diagnosis and draft some of the contours of the new institution of the labour market.<sup>171</sup>

Job turnover (i.e. job creation and destruction), for example, is extremely high and 'far exceeding that observed in most other countries' in Lithuania. The intensity of enterprise

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<sup>171</sup> For a broader picture of labour market development in the Baltic countries see Eamets (2004), for post-communist labour markets Cazes/Nesporova (2003), Riboud et al. (2002), Nesporova (2002); European Commission (2003). The recent drop in unemployment and possible reasons including mass emigration are not yet analysed in the literature and not considered here in this general account of labour market conditions. Yet reduced unemployment alone does not necessarily imply improvements inside the labour market. For an updated and comparative account see Rutkowski (2006).

restructuring is 'hardly paralleled by any transition or mature market economy' (ibid. 13).<sup>172</sup> In Lithuania this high job turnover, which is theoretically associated with shorter unemployment periods, goes hand in hand with long average durations of unemployment. The explanations for this are productivity improvements and, somewhat related, a mismatch between demand and supply for skills. Low skilled industrial jobs that were destroyed were not (or insufficiently) replaced. The overall diminishing availability of jobs led to 'the disenfranchisement of many long-term unemployed, whose employability has dramatically diminished due to the erosion of their skills and morale' (ibid. 40).

Job related uncertainties have become more concrete from the worker's perspective. The risk of losing a job is extremely high. The reported 'job-separation rate' (i.e. being unemployed one year after having been employed) of 5,7% exceeds both OECD and transition economy levels.<sup>173</sup> Together with the relatively short average duration of employment relationships, spells of unemployment are on average very long. According to Rutkowski (2003: 46) the average duration of a job search has to be estimated at over three years. Young unemployed people and those with a university degree can expect much shorter average unemployment periods, but still lasting 14 months or more.

About 16% of the unemployed become 'discouraged', cease to seek employment and withdraw from the market (ibid. 48). Having been unemployed significantly decreases the chances of finding a job. Only 46% of new employees are recruited from the pool of unemployed people. 46% are job-to-job transitions. Besides, new entrants to the labour market (i.e. school leavers) are preferred. Job security and stability are extremely low. With a median job tenure of only 5 years (3,2 in the private sector) Lithuania is equal to the UK and comes close to the USA (4,2) with the least regulated labour market within the OECD; in Germany median job tenure is 10,7 years (ibid. 53). Due to a relatively 'inflexible' job structure, where the majority are traditional permanent, full-time jobs, the main means of achieving flexibility are forms of 'employment adjustment' - i.e. firing and hiring. A second set of employer's constraints is related to wage adjustments; they consider the minimum wage to be too high. Furthermore, there is evidence avoiding the minimum wage is common practice and the share of sub-minimum wage employment high. Rutkowski (2003) concludes that in Lithuania employment protection regulations are 'modestly restrictive', but that the

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<sup>172</sup> The rapidity of the economic reform and especially, privatisation in Lithuania is also discussed in Mygind (1997).

<sup>173</sup> According to figures reported from secondary sources the job separation rate even exceeds those of Russia and Bulgaria (Rutkowski 2003: 42-43).

degree of enforcement of legal norms is not evenly distributed across different economic segments.<sup>174</sup> Three clusters can be distinguished:

There is a *flexible segment*, consisting of small private non-unionized firms, where enforcement of regulations is weak and thus they hardly constrain employers' ability to adjust employment and wages. At the same time, there is a *less flexible segment*, consisting of large public or privatized firms with strong unions, where actual firing and hiring costs are higher, and thus the adjustment capacity is lower. And on top of this there is a substantial *informal sector* where employers by definition face virtually no regulatory constraints and flexibility is unfettered' (ibid. 68-69; emphasis added).<sup>175</sup>

Youth transition research claims, albeit carefully, that a low level of employment protection and other measures of labour market regulation have a rather positive effect on the integration of young people into the labour market (e.g. Van der Velden/Wolbers 2003). For young Lithuanians this would mean that the first and third clusters of companies mentioned in the above quotation would be the most likely steppingstones to the world of work. To put it bluntly, whether this is good or bad news for young Lithuanians remains to be seen.

Trade unions became dysfunctional with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and their re-establishment was slow as a result of their low popularity and their image as representing the old system. They have advisory functions, including for VET development, but their influence on policy remains limited (Dovydeniene 2002; also Woolfson/Beck 2002).

With the new Law on Social Insurance of Unemployment, which came into force at the beginning of 2005, eligibility for unemployment benefits depends on a previous employment record of at least 18 months during the last three years. Benefits are paid for 6 months if the previous employment record is less than 25 years, but the full amount of benefits (i.e. up to a maximum of 70% of the insured income) is paid only for the first three months in order to encourage job seeking. Furthermore, participation in active labour market policy measures is a condition for receiving benefits (European Commission 2005: 50). Before, access to benefits was possible via public work and, for young people, after vocational training (Jasiukaityte/Reiter 2002: 96-97). Lithuania now has the strictest qualifying conditions for unemployment benefits of all Baltic countries, together with a very low replacement rate (OECD 2003: chapter 2; Aidukaite 2003: 69-73).<sup>176</sup> Labour market policy measures for young people include vocational training, but the majority are involved in forms of counselling. The

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<sup>174</sup> For Lithuania's performance with regard to 'this year's' 'rigidity of employment index' of the World Bank, which finally managed to meet the demands of 'many business people' to incorporate information about the actual 'cost of firing a redundant worker' (13) see World Bank (2004). For a comparative study of labour regulations, on which the methodology is based see Botero et al. (2004). For a study into the actual perception of employment regulations by employers see Pierre/Scarpetta (2004). See Eamets/Masso (2005) for an assessment of the problems of enforcement related to employment protection legislation in the Baltic states. Also Davulis (2006).

<sup>175</sup> For a comparison of the strictness of employment protection legislation in the Baltic countries see Eamets/Masso (2004, 2005).

<sup>176</sup> For an overview of unemployment benefit systems in CEE see Vodopivec et al. (2003).



funding of active labour market policy measures has been notoriously uncertain because of a chronic lack of funding and the priority placed on other policy areas (Gruzevskis/Beleckiene: 1999: 48; Beleckiene et al. 2002).

In the year 2002 only 20% of all unemployed people registered at the labour exchange received monthly unemployment benefits of between LTL 135 and LTL 250 (EUR 39 to 72); at that time, the minimum monthly wage was LTL 430 (EUR 125) (Gruzevskis/Moskvina 2004). Results from the Labour force survey one year later, in 2003, indicate that about 40% of unemployed people expected their monthly earnings to be below the minimum wage; among women this share was more than 10 percentage points higher than among men, and climbs beyond 50% among people from rural areas (Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12 – Earnings of the employed and of the unemployed, 2003 (10 LTL = 2,9 EUR)<sup>177</sup>**

	Unemployed (expected monthly earnings)					Employed (net wages and salaries)					
	total	male	female	urban	rural	total	male	female	urban	rural	
till minimum	40,0	34,3	46,1	36,1	53,1	23,8	19,8	27,6	21,4	33,2	till LTL 430
LTL 400-599	12,0	8,8	15,3	12,6	9,9	22,8	20,5	24,9	22,1	25,4	LTL 431-600
LTL 600-999	32,6	33,8	31,2	34,1	27,3	27,9	31,0	25,0	29,4	22,1	LTL 601-1000
LTL 1000-1499	12,4	18,4	6,0	13,8	7,7	6,4	8,0	4,9	7,0	4,0	LTL 1001-1500
LTL 1500+	3,0	4,6	1,2	3,3	1,7	3,1	4,5	1,8	3,6	1,0	LTL 1501+
						16,1	16,3	15,9	16,5	14,3	no answer
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	total

Source: Statistikos Departamentas (2004c: 34, 49); Labour force survey data, yearly average; own calculation

Yet the net wages of employed people also leave many, about one in four, earning less than minimum wage. In this group too women and people from rural areas are obviously disadvantaged. According to findings from the New Baltic Barometer in 2001, about 80% of Lithuanians answered that they get 'not quite' or 'definitely not enough' money from their 'main source of income to buy what they really need'. Some 60% answered that their household had 'just got by' in the past year (Rose 2002: 29-30).

What keeps people in Lithuania motivated to stay in the labour market and not withdraw? One answer could be that employment, or the chance of becoming employed by remaining available for work (i.e. 'active'), is a way of escaping hardship. Bardone/Guio (2005) assessing the poverty risks of employed and unemployed people on the basis of recent statistics from the EUROSTAT confirm this in principle, and conclude that 'being in employment is by far the most effective way to secure oneself against the risk of poverty' (ibid. 2). However, for Lithuania the statistics also show that more than 40% of the population

<sup>177</sup> The different categories of earnings of employed and unemployed have been adapted from the aggregate data in order to allow for an approximate comparison; however, the categories do not match perfectly.

over the age of 15 at risk of poverty are actually employed.<sup>178</sup> The 'working poor', formal inactivity combined with informal activity, and bogus unemployment have become common phenomena.

Initiative and informal contacts were highly important for job mobility in the Soviet Union; institutions that facilitated labour mobility and organised transfers of human resources did exist but had very limited significance (see Chapter 5). In post-Soviet Lithuania, offices of the new institution of labour exchange opened their doors in 1991, but initially suffered from very little popularity. Meanwhile, their role is consolidated and they have become one of the most important means of job seeking (Table 6.13).

**Table 6.13 – Methods used for seeking work**

	Lithuania							EU 15						
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Contact public empl. office	25.0	30.2	26.9	28.7	24.5	21.6	25.1	29.8	28.2	28.1	24.1	24.0	22.1	21.0
Contact private empl. office	2.3	3.2	4.6	1.8	2.3	2.1	2.0	5.2	5.7	5.9	6.7	7.0	7.1	6.3
Apply to employers directly	13.0	13.6	16.3	19.4	20.0	19.7	21.7	11.9	13.0	12.8	13.8	13.9	13.6	14.0
Ask friends, relatives etc.	33.2	28.0	23.9	22.2	23.0	25.6	21.3	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.7	17.1	16.2	16.9
Publish/answer to ads	4.1	3.0	5.3	3.8	4.3	3.6	2.9	12.8	11.3	11.2	12.3	12.7	13.0	12.6
Study advertisements	21.8	20.9	21.0	20.5	23.2	23.9	22.6	14.7	16.2	16.2	17.0	16.7	17.4	18.0
Other, not indicated	0.7	1.0	2.1	3.6	2.8	3.4	4.3	8.6	8.6	8.8	8.4	8.7	10.6	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: EUROSTAT (internet. 06.05.2005); Labour force survey data, 2nd quarter of the year; own calculations

Searching for a job by making use of one's social capital and by directly applying to employers are the two activities that have changed most. Utilising one's social network has continuously lost importance among Lithuanian unemployed people. It remains a method for job searching for about one in five, together with direct applications to employers, which have also become more and more popular. Studying job advertisements is the second most popular method of job seeking. The general trend of public employment offices gradually losing importance in Western European countries cannot be observed in Lithuania, where one in four unemployed people contact the public employment office. According to the labour force surveys this share has strongly varied over recent years, but has always remained above 20%.

### 6.3 Concluding remarks

The purpose of this chapter was to describe and discuss some features of the Lithuanian transition arrangements in order to provide information about the context of the study. Against the background of the former Soviet system, the chapter first focused on the

<sup>178</sup> The EU 15 average is 26% (Bardone/Guio 2005: 10). Altogether the number of in-work poor in the EU 25 amounts to 14 million people. The most relevant definitions: In-work poor are defined as 'individuals who are employed and whose household equivalised disposable income is below 60% of national median equivalised income. The employment status of individuals is measured on the basis of their 'most frequent activity status', that is, the status they declare to have occupied for more than half the total number of months for which information on any status is available during the income reference period' (ibid. 2-3).

reorientation of education, and then on the transition into the labour market. On the one hand, the education reform brought a devaluation of vocational tracks, which are now almost exclusively provided by state institutions. Work-based routes to vocational qualifications or other direct links with the world of employment during vocational training disappeared with the Soviet regime, and the breakdown of most industry. Instead, further education is promoted in line with European Union policy agendas. In this way, the former system of three educational tracks was transformed into a two-track system of low prestige vocational education on the one side and general education leading to university or college on the other. Less gifted students have little chance to progress beyond the lowest levels of compulsory education, and uneducated women are practically absent from all formal economic activity. At the upper end of this internally polarised system of secondary education, access to university is possible only through the bottleneck of a highly selective system of quasi-placement, and competition for a limited amount of places. In practice, interests in the location of study compete with interest in the subject.

On the other hand, with regard to the transition from education to work, this chapter first compiled and discussed cross-sectional administrative data available from Lithuanian and international sources. Original quantitative or longitudinal studies of the transition from school to work are not yet available. Some main findings are as follows. After the turning point of 1993, enrolment in education once again increased, and strongly for higher education. Correspondingly, economic activity is postponed, especially by women, to the second half of the 20s. The undiminished value of education and the hostile labour market are among the reasons for this development. Recent school leavers face high unemployment risks, among other reasons because they lack practical experience. Rural and unfavourable family backgrounds, as well as non-Lithuanian ethnic origin, add to labour market disadvantages. Finally, the labour market on the other side of the transition does not offer anything like the security or continuity of the former Soviet system. Placement has disappeared: support and protection are low.

Against the background of this transformation from a Soviet to a post-Soviet model producing considerable unpredictability and uncertainty, the main aim of the present study and the chapters in the following Part IV is the provision of the perspective of young people inside these transitions, and the analysis of how they make sense of the now available outcome of unemployment as a feature of their social environment and, possibly, their own transition and future biography.



## **Part IV Dangerous transitions in the 'New West'**

The previous two chapters provide some contextual framing and complement the discussion of the post-Soviet changes in the world of work in Chapter 2 as well as the changes in the gender regime and order included in Chapter 9. This framing information should be sufficient to embed the substantive discussion of the findings in the following Chapters 7 to 10 which make up Part IV. In particular two issues that are implicit in the discussions above need to be emphasised. First, the transition of the system from the Soviet past to the Western present involves a considerable change in the role of 'the state' as reflected in the organisation of youth transitions to working life before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the transformation simultaneously affects the status of the individual vis-à-vis both this very state and the form and possible outcome of the – now uncertain – transition to work. Both issues are directly relevant to the discussions in the following chapters.

Chapter 7 reproduces some of this 'transition from the past to the west' with regard to the constitution of individual and state perspectives of (mis-)recognition of unemployed people as new figures in post-socialist society. Chapter 8 takes the main issues further in an analysis of all the cases carried out, arriving at an 'empirically grounded', heuristic typology of current configurations of (mis-)recognition of unemployment within the triangle of the individual, the state, and the unemployed. Furthermore it discusses 'exit' options, that is options for 'leaving' the triangular relationship as proposed by the young people deliberating some of the possibly 'old' qualities of these modes of exit. Chapter 9 is an attempt to reflect the particularly urgent situation for young women who must negotiate their new roles in a newly capitalist work society. After a brief review of the Lithuanian gender order and regime, their proposed methods for combining work with motherhood, partnership, and earning a living are synthesised into a classification of imagined patterns of gender-work relations. Chapter 10, finally, addresses the new transition uncertainty affecting young people's biographical planning. By integrating time concepts of uncertainty into the discussion of three patterns this chapter sketches time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions to working life.



## 7 Meanings of work and unemployment between the West and the Past<sup>179</sup>

'East Central European transformations take place in the dual context, or cognitive frame of reference, of the 'West' and 'the past,'" as Offe (1996: 230) wrote some ten years ago to describe the fundamentally different starting conditions for the development of political economies in post-socialist countries. A few years later, it seems that images of the future of social cohesion in extended Western Europe need to shift their perspective towards the 'East', and what has become of it. There is concern that the 'post-communist solidarity crisis' (Outhwaite/Ray 2005: chapter 3) may be critical, perhaps a contagious feature of the somewhat vague European social model. Unemployment is one of the major challenges to solidarity in the 'New West', that is in those post-communist countries that joined the European Union in the year 2004 (see Part I). A few million young people now grow up in societies where the former constitutional right and obligation to work, together with actual full employment, did not survive the socio-economic transformation. After the collapse of the communist regimes mass unemployment formed a part of the socio-economic reorientation of society.

Institutional matters aside, unemployment in post-communism is at the core of two interrelated problems. On the one hand, it needs to be dealt with as an integral element of many individual (and family) biographies. On the other, unemployment in post-socialism requires a re-evaluation of criteria for and knowledge about full membership in society, as it establishes a new set of relationships and mutual expectations. This second issue of changes in the balance of the triangle of (non-) solidarity (see below), which is constituted by the individual, 'the other' (here: the unemployed), and 'the state', is discussed in this chapter and the following. The starting point is the assumption that the post-communist societal topography is populated with new 'figures' like the unemployed. Their appearance is part of the socio-economic transformation and their future status will very much depend on the way they are introduced to and 'appropriated' in social relations.

The introduction of unemployment management institutions brings with them new definitions of 'right/good' or 'appropriate/tolerable' behaviour. Beside their function as an

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<sup>179</sup> A first version of this chapter, published as Reiter (2007), was presented with the title 'Exclusion in the making – the establishment of knowledge of (non-)solidarity in the 'new West' in young people's narratives of transition' at the conference: 'European Solidarity and Solidarity beyond Europe', 28-29 October 2005, European University Institute, San Domenico di Fiesole. Since then many people have contributed to improving the argument. I especially wish to thank Nathalie Karagiannis, Thomas Fiegle, Michael Vorisek, Annika Zorn, Irene Becci, Thomas Fetzer, Jaap Dronkers, Martin Kohli, Olaf Struck, and Claire Wallace for most helpful comments and discussions. The usual disclaimer applies.

interface between labour supply and demand, they also, as Juska/Pozzuto (2004) criticise with a Foucauldian undertone, become bureaucratic institutions reproducing rituals of supervision, discipline and control. Based on an ethnographic study of both labour exchange clients and practices in Lithuania, the authors argue that the labour exchange has become a crucial player in the new, post-Soviet establishment of patterns of exclusion and marginalisation, by operating on a moralising distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' unemployed/poor. Whilst having little impact on the actual unemployment level, the labour exchange involves unemployed people, roughly divided into three groups, in a continuous 'search for non-existing jobs' in order to assure their (moral) eligibility for benefits. The 'active unemployed' deserve support: they have lost their job through no fault of their own and are willing to work. The 'passive unemployed' show little interest in actual work; they refuse public work and confront the labour exchange with their demands to be provided with jobs; besides, they are inactive in the private sphere. The 'formally unemployed' finally, combine features of the first two types; they have other sources of income and are not actively searching for a job, they are registered at the labour exchange for the (additional) unemployment benefits and health insurance. Due to their ability to exploit the desirable features of both the old and new systems by combining the capacity to cheat the state with a high degree of activity – both monetarily rewarding – they are recognised as integrated into society. Abusing welfare is not (yet) as such perceived as a problem, as the redefined image and role of the state has not entirely penetrated all layers of society. As Juska/Pozzuto (2004) write:

'(...) (A)busing the welfare system in post-independence Lithuania has not yet acquired a connotation of being morally or ethically antithetical despite growing reports in mass media about actual and/or alleged abuses of welfare clients. During the Soviet era cheating the state, mostly through various forms of pilfering, was common. Those who managed to use their positions and connections to improve their material well-being were even admired for their capacities to wangle the state (*kombinuoti*). The attitude that cheating the state is a semi-legitimate activity remains widespread. At the same time, the Soviet state did provide, almost as an inborn right of a citizenship, all the social services that the formal(ly) unemployed were signing to receive. The Soviet state also ensured full employment. It is not surprising that the unemployed continued (to) demand the provisions to which they were accustomed' (ibid. 13; original emphasis).<sup>180</sup>

Altogether it may be assumed that the messages young people in the 'New West' receive as a basis for assessing the transforming meanings of formal employment and unemployment are ambivalent. On the one hand, and according to the given opportunity structures, formal employment is defined as one option amongst many for survival; formal unemployment does

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<sup>180</sup> Kornai (1992: 86 Fn38) quotes Trembl (1990: 2) quoting Brezhnev as stating in a magazine: 'You don't know life. No one lives on wages alone. I remember in my youth we earned money by unloading railroad freight cars. So, what did we do? Three crates or bags unloaded and one for ourselves. That is how everybody lives in (our) country.'



not necessarily mean being out of work. On the other hand, individual orientations to a successful employment performance and a continuous contribution to the social security system have become a new 'requirement' for both the reproduction of the system and individual well-being. Recent policy-driven changes in the assessment of this orientation among young people have contributed to an increasingly contradictory character of youth transitions to the world of work (Reiter/Craig 2005).

The advent of the figure of the unemployed in the 'New West' is framed by these tensions, which characterise the re-definition of the role of work in the life course, and by the struggle over the constitution of what can be called a 'socially recognised contribution to social reproduction' (Honneth 2002: 54). Honneth's conceptualisation of solidarity in the frame of his theory of recognition (see Chapter 2) is one of many. The notion of solidarity is contested: it can mean everything from being a social *a priori* to being a good reason for redistributive taxation and welfare.<sup>181</sup> In my opinion the issue of solidarity first and foremost represents one way of synthesising the general question of chances, beyond individual freedom and dis/advantage, to moral as well as material integration due to standards shared by the members of a community.

Young people hold a particularly delicate position in this process of renewal of both standards and knowledge, as it is largely up to them to renegotiate 'old' meanings and carry them into a new society. This is a common but usually gradual process. In the case of post-communist transformations to capitalism the devaluation of knowledge represented by the parents' and grandparents' generation can be expected to be more profound (Tomasi 1995; Juozeliuniene 1995; Fülöp 2005). However, while the (legal) framework of institutions and official discourses can be changed very quickly, the socially available patterns of interpretation and the moral readjustment of people to the new circumstances cannot. What Srubar (1998: 131), referring to Parsons, calls 'latency of values', is operating in the background with a certain stabilising or at least decelerating effect. Representatives of the old system, whether perceived as such or not, will still be around for some time, both physically as well as in terms of ideas.

Against this background this chapter establishes a first perspective on the issue of post-communist unemployment in the 'New West'. By focusing on the establishment of an image of the recent and frequent 'figure' of the unemployed, this chapter looks for the type and

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<sup>181</sup> See, for example Baldwin (1990), Crow (2002); Brunkhorst (2005); Fiegle (2003); Mau (2003), Stjernø (2005).

sources of knowledge about unemployment and the unemployed that might nurture feelings of suspicion towards this 'other'. The notion of 'knowledge' applied is that of everyday life as suggested by Berger/Luckmann (1967; Schutz/Luckmann 1973). It is contextual, taken-for-granted, and action-relevant. I base this on the interview with SAULIUS, one of the respondents in linear transitions (interviewed during the second round). This case provides the opportunity to complement the dimension of intergenerational transfer of knowledge about 'the past' with the second 'cognitive frame of reference' of 'the West' (Offe 1996; see above), both represented by significant family members. It also allows the observation of how these two perspectives come together in the work- and unemployment-related criteria of a young 'post-socialist EU citizen' for organising social space and establishing images of 'outsiders' in the new society.

In order to contextualise this case discussion, I first develop, on the basis of three different approaches, a research perspective based on the 'post-communist paradox of desolidarisation' which characterises the solidarity triangle of mutual relations between individuals, 'the other' (i.e. the unemployed) and the state. The presence of essentially unknown social figures, such as unemployed people, a result of the mainstreaming of society and its institutions according to Western standards, could be in the background of this paradox.

The conclusions of this chapter, specific conclusions on the basis of one case, unfold a universe of possible general hypotheses *qua* directions of analysis. Some of these are carried further in a cross-case analysis resulting in the empirically grounded, heuristic typology presented in Chapter 8. The conceptual frame of reference briefly introduced in the following holds for both.

### ***7.1 The post-communist paradox of desolidarisation and the triangle of (non-) solidarity***

Findings from survey research on the one hand, and civil society research in post-communist societies on the other provide an ambivalent picture allowing us to identify what could be called a 'post-communist paradox of desolidarisation' - i.e. persistent egalitarian values but low levels of involvement in solidary activities. A third research approach, biographical research into post-communist coping strategies, establishes the crucial link between the individual and the state between private and public trajectories through the transformation, and indicates a possible path beyond this paradox. My discussion in this and the next chapter will move in this direction.

### 7.1.1 Persistent solidarity in attitudes/values

Notions of solidarity, at least those directly related to distributive issues, are context-dependent: yet quantitative comparative research indicates that they also have a universal dimension. Arts/Gelissen (2001), for instance, find that according to survey research the different emphases on social justice in certain welfare regimes do matter for people's notions of solidarity. Furthermore, levels of education, gender, as well as household income and labour market status also matter. Higher education and a higher income entail lower levels of solidarity; women generally have higher levels of solidarity; and with regard to labour market position only the unemployed show a higher preference for solidarity. However, this research also finds a generally high level of commitment to solidarity independent of context. In addition, the average values of the different welfare states are relatively close together, indicating either a convergence of opinion across countries, or a levelling out of variation as soon as differences in emphasis are neglected, indicating once again that some notion of solidarity is common to all people.

This kind of survey research into changing norms of social justice in European post-communist countries has flourished over the last fifteen years. It essentially tries to assess the degree of synchronisation of development of people's knowledge-bases (including values) as compared to rapid institutional changes, to what extent socio-economic background produces differences in attitudes, and what the consequences might be for welfare related reforms and policy making.<sup>182</sup> The results are largely similar, but not with regard to details. A recent study indicates that public support for 'market justice' (vs. 'government intervention'), as, for example, Arts et al. (2003) term it, is (still) significantly lower in former communist countries. Some scholars identify a trend towards convergence over time, others do not. However, there is agreement with regard to the impact of some socio-economic variables: for example, men tend to favour market justice more strongly than women; higher education, as well as no education at all, facilitates a positive attitude towards market justice, as does a higher household income. Retired and unemployed people tend to be in favour of government intervention. With regard to age, Arts et al. (2003) find that 'the overall effect of age group is rather limited' (ibid. 212); they conclude: 'The *culturalist assumption* that in Eastern Europe the younger generation would take lead in the transition to market justice has also been

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<sup>182</sup> To name a few examples: Arts et al. (2003), Arts/Gijsberts (1998), Örkeny/Szekelyi (2000), Kreidl (2000), Kluegel et al. (1999), Redmond et al. (2002). As a research curiosity Arts et al. (1999) deserve a special mention, as they try to apply Durkheim's theory of anomie directly by testing derived hypotheses and predictions by data surveying post-communist attitudes towards distributive justice and well-being.

proven wrong' (ibid. 214; emphasis in the original). Somewhat strangely, no 'explanation' can be found for the fact that economic growth has a negative impact on support for market justice (ibid. 205), as if economic growth came without individual costs.<sup>183</sup>

### 7.1.2 Weak solidarity in action

The main disadvantage of attitude research lies in the fact that it usually has a blind spot with regard to what people, supposedly members of a certain moral community, actually 'do' or not, given their apparent strong disapproval of inequality. This gap is, to some extent, filled by a second strand of post-communism studies, research into civil society development. Again, this is a rather vast and growing area of research, usually associated with democratisation rather than solidarity issues. However, from my point of view the establishment of a link between what could be called 'good society', operationalised in terms of democratic structures including a strong civil society sector and some form of social cohesion is necessary. All the more since the link is crucial with regard to theorising post-communism (Outhwaite/Ray 2005: chapter 7).<sup>184</sup> Referring to voluntary association primarily as a self-organised societal alternative to or substitute for 'the state' and what it represents is only one option.<sup>185</sup> Another option is to consider it a manifestation of transferable moral dispositions by 'doing something together' and, possibly, also for the sake of some more or less non-specific other.<sup>186</sup> The latter perspective is applied very little to post-communist societies.

The unambiguous finding of the weakness of civil society in post-communist Europe may urge scholars, like Howard (2003), to take a position and invest their efforts in improving

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<sup>183</sup> For a somewhat more differentiated discussion and analysis, though with older data from 1992/93, see Delhey (2001).

<sup>184</sup> It seems important to note that what is referred to as civil society is not necessarily unanimously considered 'good', as Outhwaite/Ray (2005: 171) ask us to bear in mind. In fact, there are examples within the communist-to-postcommunist development of civil society in Europe with questionable statuses, especially when attempts are made to continue national history where it appears to have been interrupted by the Soviet occupation, ignoring changes. Jasiukaityte/Reiter (2004) discuss the contribution of post-communist youth policies to civil society development and find that, for instance, in Estonia girls and boys from the age of eight years upwards are entertained in youth NGOs like 'Young Eagles' and 'Home Daughters'. Both associations are affiliated to the 'Defence League', a voluntary military national defence organisation that was re-founded in 1990. The description of these publicly supported youth NGOs notes that these 'specialised organisations of the Defence League involve citizens in state defence activities and train young people to increase patriotism and positive attitudes regarding the Republic of Estonia.' (Rennit 2000: 148 quoted in Jasiukaityte/Reiter 2004).

<sup>185</sup> A similar argumentation may be developed with regard to the social category of the family (i.e. family solidarity) (Ostner 2004).

<sup>186</sup> For a recent suggestion of close association between solidarity and civil society see Muenkler (2004). For a recent comparison of post-communist citizens' associational membership including Lithuania see Barnes (2006).

the situation.<sup>187</sup> Sensitivity to context, history and people's experiences can, as in the case of Howard's study of Russia and Eastern Germany, reveal the deeper causes of the problem behind what he diagnoses as a democratic deficit. Moreover, the way qualitative evidence on weak voluntary associations is presented allows it to be directly connected to what I will discuss below under the label of 'desolidarisation'.

On the level of personal motivation Howard (ibid. chapter 6) explains the situation by distinguishing three inter-related 'main causal factors' for non-participation in voluntary organisations, all three referring to experiences and related expectations. The first reason is a distrust of public organisations. Compulsory commitment and the universal character of institutional life under communism resulted in the exhaustion of what might be called the people's 'spirit of collectivism'. A second reason for civic non-participation, which has its roots less in communist experiences than in those of the last 15 years, is that of disappointed expectations and hopes during post-communism. This includes frustration related to the slowness of change for the better; the scope of economic deterioration, poverty and unemployment; unjust property redistribution; the use and manipulation of an inexperienced electorate together with the exploitation of its emotional potential etc.

A third reason for people not to get involved in voluntary collective activities is what Howard (2003: 129-136) labels the 'persistence of friendship networks' that have survived despite or because of a general deterioration in social relations, and that make other forms of socialising redundant. From my point of view, the change of interpersonal relations indicated here corresponds more to the destruction of preconditions for friendship relations. Altogether it seems that the material presented in the study has greater potential; yet the author leaves it somewhat under-analysed. The four identified sub-themes deserve attention with regard to the question of the changing qualities of social bonding under post-communist conditions. I reproduce some of the quotes from Howard (2003) here in order to illustrate, without further comment, since they speak for themselves.<sup>188</sup>

a) People increasingly focus on personal lives; they withdraw from each other for reasons of survival (poverty) or available alternatives (commodification).

32-year-old bookkeeper, female, Russia - 'Before friendship relations were somehow closer and better. That is, before there was more of genuine friendship. Today it's somehow being lost. Why? I don't know, life has become such that everyone is fighting for his piece of bread. Before, the government gave it to

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<sup>187</sup> Howard (2003: 160) concludes after discussing the persistence of a 'weak' civil society for years to come: 'The discussion – and, indeed, this entire book – begs the crucial, yet frustrating, question of what can be done to help encourage more post-communist citizens to take part in public organisational activities.'

<sup>188</sup> The differences found between Eastern Germany and Russia need to be neglected here.

him, and he didn't really think about it. He had time to get together with friends every day, to go here or there, but now, well, it's every person for himself. Every person for himself, yes.' (ibid. 131)

32-year-old gardener, male, East Germany - 'It's become colder .... In the GDR there was this warmth between people. Maybe they couldn't stand each other, but they needed each other somehow, because of those connections. But that's entirely gone now. Everyone does his thing, and everyone thinks, or maybe tries to convince himself, that 'I don't need him, that ass! No, I don't need him at all, I can buy anything, go away!' So it's become more aggressive, and it's colder.' (ibid. 131)

b) Money, now representing 'real value' and revealing its distinguishing power, has a 'newly prominent and destructive role' (ibid. 135) with regard to relations between people and within families.

27-year-old unemployed former cook, female, East Germany - 'Before it was community. Families would go away [on vacation] together, and people did many things together. There was no envy. These days, only money matters. Today many families are fighting over financial affairs, over inheritance, mainly things that used to be completely banal. In my family it's no different, and I can give many examples. It's mainly because some people haven't done well after the *Wende* - [two are] unemployed, for example .... Others live up by the Ostsee. They inherited land from their mother, started a business there, and are now millionaires. Yes, they're both in the same family. Of course, they both don't speak a single word to each other anymore, because the [unemployed] ones say, 'They took it away from me.' And because of that, it's very very complicated, yes. This thing, that I was saying, the *Wende*, and especially these financial things, have destroyed much, so much. This is because all of a sudden envy plays a role where it didn't exist before.' (ibid. 132; original emphasis)

c) Social inequalities and polarisation have both increased dramatically and become visible.

46-year-old secretary, female, East Germany - 'The financial situation has become very different. In the GDR, everybody was basically at one level, with few variations. Of course a boss made more than a secretary. But the differences were not very big. Today it's really a financial problem, and this prestige-thinking has become much more prominent, I think .... If someone buys a bigger car, then someone else looks at him strangely, or if someone builds a house, but someone else only lives in a rented apartment.... These kinds of things create friction. I mean there are certainly people who don't care. But there are also people who suffer under these conditions and who say, 'I won't go see them anymore; they've become too conceited for me,' or something like that .... In that respect, I think, that camaraderie, which used to exist, isn't there anymore.... There are certainly good friendships that stick together through thick and thin, and that live through everything, but some also fall apart, I think' (ibid. 132-133).

d) Interpersonal relations in the workplace are transformed, for instance by the increased turnover of staff, the introduction of unusual formality codes between colleagues at work and by the deconstruction of the workplace as a platform for establishing friendship relations and for meeting friends.

35-year-old salesclerk, East Germany - 'Before, at work, there was a different 'togetherness,' now, there isn't. People were in a 'collective.' People were in a community, [and] they worked together for many years .... [Now,] one person stops working, a new person comes in, and *you don't have that contact anymore*. Before, with our co-workers, for example, on international women's day we had a party, and for Christmas, and for this and that too .... Now it's only work. Work and maybe just 10 minutes in between to talk, and that's it.' (ibid. 134)

47-year-old bookbinder, female, East Germany - 'Nobody wants interaction anymore. And partly because, according to our experience, in many companies a so-called 'Wessi' is the boss, and they [the West German bosses] don't want that. They don't want co-workers to get together in private.... And they want us to say 'Sie' to each other, something we never did back in GDR times. We used to have a circle of co-workers, where we only said 'Du' to each other, and that was somehow more friendly. But today that is unfortunately no longer the case.' (ibid. 134)

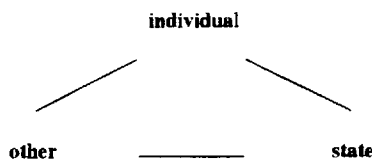
49-year-old freelance, male, East Germany - 'When people say that friendliness has decreased ... it's mainly justified by saying, 'well we don't need those connections anymore, that one-hand-washes-the-

other isn't really necessary anymore.' I don't think that's exactly correct. You have to realize that most acquaintances and friendships came out of the workplace, and that for 80% of former GDR citizens, the old workplace has disappeared, or almost 80%. That also includes, basically, the personal connections to co-workers, to friends and colleagues. This means that they have to build something entirely new. And you have to realize that the majority of GDR citizens only rarely changed their workplace – they often stayed in the same company for 20, 30, 40 years, and these companies were made bankrupt. To find a new friendship circle 20 years later is almost impossible.' (ibid. 134-135)

### 7.1.3 Beyond the paradox of desolidarisation

Research of the kind Howard (2003) presents penetrates the deeper layers of the disappearing preconditions for social bonding in post-communist contexts. Sennett's (1998) account of the culture of contemporary capitalism does something similar for the West, concluding that the social bond is at risk because of an apparent decline in mutual dependence due to an increasing 'shame' about it. In view of the findings from Howard (2003), I tentatively argue, albeit with a similar conclusion, that in former communist contexts the social bond is at risk because of the *introduction* of mutual dependence. The assessment of the rebuilding of civil society *qua* solidarity needs to consider the very fact that 'the socialist state was programmatically an individualizer trying to break all other kinds of social relations', as Wagner (1994: 102) notes against the mainstream. The socialist state mediated and corrupted interpersonal relationships. Besides, people were equally replaceable (as parts of the labour force) but were not replaced as this did not make sense within the logic of a socialist economy of shortage.<sup>189</sup> Thus, Sennett's (1998) conclusion with regard to the erosive effect of 'shame about dependence' (ibid. 141) in capitalism may also apply to the post-communist condition, but with opposite signs.

**Figure 7.1 - Triangle of (non-)solidarity**



Now that the socialist state is gone, mutuality has become a prerequisite of the common. To put it differently, the re-evaluated relationship between the individual and 'the other' complements the weakened relationship between the individual and 'the state'; together they establish a relational triangle (Figure 7.1).<sup>190</sup>

<sup>189</sup> There were of course other ways to show the unworthiness of a person.

<sup>190</sup> 'The other' in the triangle can be any significant figure opposite the individual; in the context of this thesis 'the other' refers to 'the unemployed'. Also the party of 'the state' in the triangle could be specified for certain purposes. In the context of this study it refers to what in the Lithuanian language is the general translation of 'valstybė' ('state'). This word was used in the interviews.

Searching for a definition of the 'other' has become a part of coming to terms with the sudden possibility *and* necessity of intra-society relations based on what Honneth calls 'recognised contributions'. This process seems most difficult, and yields the most painful outcome, where the features of the 'other' are radically new, like in the case of the 'unemployed', or, to take another example, the immigrant.<sup>191</sup>

Taken together, the findings of the two research approaches introduced above – survey and civil society research – point to a contradiction: persistent solidarity in attitudes/values coinciding with weak solidarity in action. As a third type of research alongside survey and civil society research, biographical research into the societal transformation towards a market economy provides some answers to this puzzle. It does so by confronting individual trajectories of (non-)solidary action with the trajectory of public (non-) solidarity (i.e. welfare). Yet, as discussed below, the shifting balance within the relational triangle remains still neglected. Struck (2003), for example, reports from a study into coping and decision making within the life course among adults under the 'new conditions' of an 'individualised market economy' in Eastern Germany.<sup>192</sup> He concludes that the observable 'signs of desolidarisation' among the respondents are not merely due to the loss of an over-protective state or deficient socialisation (ibid. 212).<sup>193</sup> Instead they have their roots in the fact that a 'willingness to succeed', where observed among individuals that have survived the societal transformation, does not have 'counterparts at the level of the social system' (ibid. 221). Against the background of one of the research interests, the study finds, for instance, that 'habitual dispositions' (Bourdieu et al.) remained stable after societal transformation but triggered different and pragmatic patterns of behaviour towards occupational security. Disappointed expectations towards an equally stable continuation of state responsibilities for citizens' welfare, on the other hand, thwart individual readiness for solidary action.

Under this constellation of circumstances, pragmatic, instrumentalist action does not lead to a consciously egoistical attitude. The ideal of a community is still very much alive, and the interviewees regretted the exclusion of many social groups. There are, however, no active efforts being made to build new solidarities or communal and state support. This finding incorporates a paradox. It is precisely because of the high expectations of the state as a fair arbiter that the necessary personal, solidaristic contribution is not made (Struck 2003: 221).

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<sup>191</sup> For a taste of 'welfare state xenophobia' (solidarity violence?) in the shape of skinhead violence in unified Germany see for example Ostow (1995). For a hint that this concern is not implausible see paragraph 140 of the interview discussed below.

<sup>192</sup> The reference publication for the study is Sackmann et al. (2000).

<sup>193</sup> This latter argument is, for instance, put forward by Sztompka (1996). With a strongly normative argument he identifies a 'cultural lag' between institutional transformation and cultural resources: it is because of this 'incongruence of institutional and cultural levels', that a whole generation of people socialised in the old system would at once be devalued.



On the basis of these findings, one could hypothesise that the asynchronous trajectories of individual versus public action through transformation do not facilitate the activation of notions of good life and moral behaviour. This research manages to transcend and bring light to some aspects of the paradox surrounding post-communist non-solidarity. However, it presents its arguments mainly at the level of the individual and the state, neglecting the above-indicated fundamental shift within societal relationships and the necessary revision of images of the 'other' as an additional dimension.

Thus, an alternative and complementary rather than exclusive hypothesis – which I will follow up in the rest of the chapter, adds the dimension of knowledge about the 'other', the unemployed, to the puzzle partially solved above. Desolidarisation may have some roots in the confusion, *qua* lack of knowledge, about the possible beneficiaries of articulations of solidarity within the triangle individual-other-state. It may be due to this knowledge gap with regard to societal groups dependent on support (e.g. the unemployed) that, as the above biographical research finds, state action is awaited but perceived as inadequate. Concretely with regard to post-socialist transformations in the world of work one could assume the following: in order to be able to act upon him/her as a companion or an outsider, the contemporary figure of the unemployed may still need to be constituted as well as related knowledge consolidated. Obviously, the persona<sup>194</sup> of the actor evolves alongside that of the figure acted upon.<sup>195</sup> The availability of representations of the figure as concrete or abstract, specific or non-specific – in analogy to G. H. Mead's move from significant to generalised – are relevant.

The case introduced in the following and his perspective on the unemployed - a social category constituted together with transforming notions of work and unemployment - supports this assumption.

## ***7.2 Work, unemployment and the figure of the unemployed – the case of SAULIUS***

SAULIUS belongs to the group of young people in 'linear transitions'; they are for the most part still in education and, like the majority of young people, 'on track'. SAULIUS is a 16-year-old student in his last, 10<sup>th</sup> year of compulsory education. He is 'on track' in the sense that there is no indication that he will drop out of school; his environment is supportive and at least until finishing upper secondary education his plans are fixed. SAULIUS is an interesting case for many reasons, yet it is because of his family relations that he seems most suitable to

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<sup>194</sup> I avoid the term 'identity' in order not to introduce theoretical connotations of whatever kind here.

<sup>195</sup> Actor and figure could be collectives; assuming individuals facilitates abstraction.

illustrate, not explain, how new meanings are established between different worlds and their representation.

In short, when his parents, both university educated, divorced some 10 years ago, his mother left to work in the USA. As she did not want him to live with his father, SAULIUS, their only child, moved away from the capital Vilnius to a small town to live with his maternal grandparents. Together with them and his now 26-year-old uncle they share a three-room flat. Before she died, his great-grandmother, who had to be brought from Russia after the collapse of the USSR and who never really became integrated, as he says, had also been living with them for five years. His grandparents are both retired and get '*good pensions*' (150).

His family relations may be considered exceptional and, thus, not 'common' enough. However, the fact that his parents divorced during the mid-1990s and that one of them went abroad to work to maintain the family back home, was, and still is, a very common phenomenon; even if the one who left was his mother. In general, knowing somebody who works abroad (siblings, friends etc.), is not exceptional. Yet, the closeness of the contact with his grandparents, and especially his grandmother, is probably above average and may make him an extraordinary case.<sup>196</sup> However, it is exactly this exaggeration that allows the reconstruction of what I want to call the *dialogue with the past* represented by his grandmother. His mother is the second significant reference person. She returns to Lithuania from her job in the restaurant of a cruise ship for one or two months every year and stays with him in the same room. She is his main partner in his *dialogue with the West*.

The discussion of the material in terms of *dialogues* is 'analytic' and metaphorical; it follows Offe's (1996) suggestion to study post-communist transformations in the dual 'cognitive frame of reference and comparison, of 'the West' and 'the past' (ibid. 230). Obviously, these are imagined dialogues, heuristic tools without exclusive character. Knowledge constitution cannot be reduced to a transfer between family members; this would underestimate its complexity.<sup>197</sup> Nor does knowledge originate only *from* the West or the past; this would question the availability of knowledge in present-day Lithuania. This spatial and temporal *present* needs to be considered as the primary arena of meaning negotiation and the

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<sup>196</sup> The role of grandparents in upbringing should not be underestimated. According to oral sources, and there are certainly no statistics about this, it was a feature of the survival strategy of families that children were put up for custody only to be then taken by their grandparents; in this way, the child remained within the family and an application could be made for the financial support offered by the state for custody.

<sup>197</sup> The significance of this kind of knowledge transfer is demonstrated by research into transgenerational meaning construction (e.g. Kreher/Vierzigmann 1997).

frame of reference for both action and time structuring.<sup>198</sup> Yet placing the emphasis on the significance of family members seems appropriate in this case: SAULIUS himself stresses the importance of this intergenerational transfer of knowledge for the constitution of his, and people's opinions in general (150).<sup>199</sup>

With regard to the issue of unemployment, the second forum of knowledge, i.e. dialogue with his mother, seems less relevant - at least in terms of a direct influence on his opinion - as it is determined mostly by what he observes in his immediate environment. Unemployment is here and now; what is abroad is his mother and her successful career. However, his mother's experiences and what he learns from communicating with her about the new world of work in the 'West' are part of his developing professional persona.

I will therefore first take a brief look at what SAULIUS thinks about the world of work and the requirements for success, as well as, implicitly, failure. In a second step this needs to be confronted with his image of the unemployed. The conclusion is that the world of work, like his mother in the West, is closer to him than the world of unemployment and his grandmother, who is a source of knowledge from which he tends to dissociate himself.

### 7.2.1 Dialogue with the West

SAULIUS's mother is his role model for success in the Western world of work; a world that he generally describes as demanding and hostile – *'I wouldn't like to go to America. My mum has told me terrible things, terrible people are there, they require a lot, that is why I don't like it. People are better in Lithuania, more sincere, not spoilt yet [he is laughing]'* (118). His mother left after divorcing his father, and over the years she worked her way up from being a waitress to the position of restaurant manager on a cruise ship.<sup>200</sup> Although SAULIUS obviously misses her he recognises her accomplishment. In fact, he cannot even visit her because she needs to make sacrifices in her private life - *'She doesn't work on the continent, she is on the ship all the time, so she doesn't have a permanent place to live, that is, she has a cabin'* (122). He understands that she sustains him financially and that, in spite of her promises, she probably will not come back *'because here there is no work for her'* (124) that would be equally well-paid.

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<sup>198</sup> See Reiter (2003) for an account of youth's biographical time structuring.

<sup>199</sup> In order to establish a more precise link to interview passages here, the numbers indicated refer to paragraphs in the interview. For this interview the paragraphs 129 to 150 are fully displayed in Appendix 7. In the rest of the thesis quotations from the original interviews are labelled with the reference number attributed in AtlasTi. For this passage it would be the interview sequences 26.28 to 26.32. The first number refers to the interview, the second to the quotation with the respective codes attached.

<sup>200</sup> It seems important to note that SAULIUS never claims that the cruise ship actually sails under an American flag; however, his generalisations address 'America'.

The idea of (labour) mobility is something he easily integrates into his own life plan. In view of his family's plans to move back to the capital Vilnius, where he grew up as a child, he demonstrates his willingness to change place, as he expects this to be a natural feature of working life – *'But somehow I want to change the environment, because I think one needs..., because anyway, as one will go through life, anyway, you will change workplaces. So I need to get used to that'* (24). Even going abroad for work is something he considers.

The expression of his readiness to adapt to the anticipated requirements of the new world of work at the end of this passage (i.e. mobility) is not unique. He gives the impression of an attentive observer with broad 'knowledge'. Throughout the whole interview SAULIUS keeps associating his plans, priorities and perspectives with expectations of this kind.

Referring to his mother's stories about working in the USA as well as to job advertisements that he has read, he understands that what counts these days in CVs, job interviews and recommendation letters is *'experience, experience'* (84, 92). Experiences are the *'foundation for the future'* (92), even at the price of *'working for nothing'* (84) at first. Another reason why it has become so difficult to find a job is the fact that many well-educated people compete for the same jobs but only the *'the best ones are chosen'* (110). His reply to the question of whether he intends to study is:

Of course I do. How can I do without studies [he is laughing]? One is not hired to clean streets without having studied these days [he is laughing]. Studies are necessary. In general, a person studies all his life. (72)

He strives for a *'good education'* and when he thinks about all the *'dumb people'* in the USA which his mother mentioned to him, he feels obliged to become educated and smart, in order *'not to be the only one stupid among many clever people'* in *'a small country like Lithuania'*, where *'it is possible to get good education'* (74). What counts is education as such, not the track one has completed; knowledge of languages in particular will be important in the European Union.

He knows that education has become a minimum job requirement and that specialisation and professional skills need to be constantly updated. Asked whether a career would be important for him when he starts working, he emphasises virtues like flexibility, ('natural') ambition and lifelong learning:

Of course it is important. You would not work in one position for the whole life. It is necessary to climb the career ladder and try to achieve the top, because anyway, those people who are bosses, anyway they leave one day and someone has to take their position. So this is how everything is always moving forwards. I also hope to always move forwards like this. Of course, career is important. One needs to put much effort and to study all life. To study in order to climb the next step of the career ladder. (203)

Finally, he has learned that apart from education or communicative slickness, *'contacts'*, acquaintances and friends, can be essential for success. Furthermore, having contacts is most powerful as a complementary feature - for talented or intelligent people who *'have a couple of contacts (...) everything is fine, life is put in order'* (128). SAULIUS seems to deal with his *'contacts'*, friends mostly, very consciously. He collects them or leaves them by the wayside as required – very early in the interview he says, *'I combed out my friends'* (12) as interests and priorities changed over the course of time. Many of his friends are older by about five years (106), and he has more in common with them than with his peers (34); he likes to attend the theatre and to act, he is interested in art and *'chooses'* his friends accordingly (42). Reflecting on what is important about work he illustrates his understanding of how contacts operate:

Most important, it seems to me, is making new contacts, getting acquainted. Because anyway, in the future, when you live, these contacts become very useful. Because sometimes when you need some help or some favour, contacts are important. And in general, nowadays, if you listen to people, it seems that it is impossible to get anywhere without contacts. (104)

### 7.2.2 Dialogue with the Past

SAULIUS's strongest and most present link to the past is his grandmother, and he refers to her throughout the interview. She is an ambivalent source of knowledge which he rejects in principle, but appreciates when alternative interpretations are unavailable.<sup>201</sup> SAULIUS describes his grandmother as *'too conservative'* (154), and unlike his parents, who let him find his way, she can be very direct about her *'stupid wishes'* (172) for his career. When she says things like: *'I would like you to be a doctor,'* he would just *'laugh at her, and that's it, nothing else'* (172). This is also how he would, sometimes to her embarrassment, stop her from telling stories about how it used to be *'when (she) was young'* – *'I start laughing aloud at once [he is laughing], she stops and becomes embarrassed and realises that she has told something ridiculous and that's it. And earlier, when I wouldn't laugh, she used to tell me that people used to behave quite differently and they were not that carefree as they are now'* (183).<sup>202</sup>

SAULIUS's assessment of unemployment and unemployed people in Lithuania is a complex articulation tying together many associations. I restrict my discussion here to three

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<sup>201</sup> SAULIUS mentions that he compensates for his grandmother's advice, which seems to be *'from the last century'* (158) with talking to his friends or the internet, which he considers a *'good thing'* - in fact there are clever people on the internet and I can ask them' (158).

<sup>202</sup> Dissociation through laughter may be an important general pattern of how young people deal with the communist past, which could be investigated further. Zaslavsky (1982: 15, reference Fn 24) discusses the revival of a fascination in Stalin's radical communism among young people in the late 1970s and quotes the Russian author Analoi Levitin-Krasnov as having *'described the mood of Soviet young people as a 'profound disillusionment with the idea of communism, in which three former generations had faith. The young neither fight against communism, argue against it, nor curse it; something much worse has happened to communism: they laugh at it.'*

main issues relevant to the present work; although they are interwoven I analytically separate them here. They are as follows: a) unemployment and the unemployed, b) the assumed role of the state, and c) general and personal opinions about the unemployed.<sup>203</sup>

(a) Although SAULIUS recognises the problem of job shortages as well as the state's responsibility in this respect, he does not accept unemployed people who do not even try to find a job, either in Lithuania or abroad, but exploit the welfare system by living on child benefit for example. He considers work as one of a person's duties and is convinced that work can be found with the appropriate attitude. He repeatedly calls unemployed people '*lazybones*' and dissociates himself explicitly from them – '*I don't support such people. I somehow do not like such people*' (132). Asked for his opinion about unemployment and its reasons he answers:

Hmm. (3) (These) people are lazybones [he is laughing]. This is the first reason. In fact, those who want, can surely find a job. It is not that, 'Look, there is no work and altogether what I ...', if (one is) in some village, 'I came here and cannot find a job.' You have to look for it, the one who looks for, that one does find it. If you will lie on a couch with a glass of brandy [he is laughing], life will surely not get better because of that. The state, of course, cannot create work for everybody but for many. If you cannot find a job, so what, you can go abroad. I don't think that it is absolutely impossible to get a job. Of course, it is possible. But sometimes people are very demanding and lazybones, exactly those, who do not have (work). They think that it is much easier to live on the state's pocket by making themselves lots of children, that it is much easier than to work, like all normal people. (130)

SAULIUS's general image of the unemployed is associated with idleness, a reluctance to take chances and a form of social parasitism lying outside societal normality. They represent discouraged citizens who complain but will not articulate this through democratic participation (140). Furthermore, unemployment goes hand in hand with alcoholism, and most of the unemployed people he knows are, in fact, drinkers (144) - '*and employers do not want such people*' (142). He has little sympathy for them in general and does not consider them '*common people like others, but simply without job*' (144). The only exception he can think of, and this indicates the possibility of alternative behaviour among the unemployed, is his aunt's husband who actually '*does something*' (146), he takes care of their piece of (formerly collective) garden. Nevertheless, the general image of the unemployed is that of the filth and stink associated with a '*shabby home*' (146), or of '*asocial families who do not take care of anything*' (140). Referring to his aunt's husband he says:

And her husband even though he drinks, anyway he does something, at least this is good. Because there are such (people) who don't do anything. It is absolutely terrible. Shabby home. These social workers, when they enter there, it makes them wrinkle their nose. It is terrible. Or like they show on TV, let's say, so many famous people are forgotten, disabled, it is terrible. The state doesn't take care properly. It is still young as a state, it doesn't take care of all yet. That is why people are cheerless and disappointed with life sometimes (146).

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<sup>203</sup> See Appendix for the full representation of the relevant interview passage quoted in the following (paragraphs 129 to 150).

(b) In the final part of this last quotation (146) SAULIUS articulates a variation of the disappointment people in post-communist countries feel about state responsibility similar to that described by Struck (2003; see above). SAULIUS identifies insufficient state support as the reason for people's general dissatisfaction. However, he considers this to be a temporary problem associated with a '*young*' state. Within the frame of the whole passage related to work and unemployment, this statement has the status of a conclusion based on previously related accounts.

SAULIUS indicates that there is a state responsibility with regard to unemployment, but that it is necessarily limited and that there is a risk of abuse (130). He supports the idea of paying unemployment benefits because there are people who simply could not live otherwise, for instance '*people without education*' or those with less useful qualifications (134). On the other hand, he trusts in public support on the municipal level and refers to offers for voluntary work that should be accepted (134, 136). However, he considers benefits to be too low ('*a person wouldn't survive*', 136), and is upset with the low level of retirement pensions. The state's inadequate answer to a life of hard work is a case of misrecognition in the sense of Honneth (1995); but again this is considered a temporary problem.

(...) And the pensions, altogether, are not more than mockery [he is laughing]. A person works hard for all his life and then gets some pennies, and is not able to live on them. But Lithuania is a growing state, everything will be fine in the future. (136)

Apart from the '*ridiculous pensions*' (138) SAULIUS also laments the poor levels of compensation for health expenditure, and doubts the state's readiness to take responsibility for education despite its actual benefits for a capable labour force (138). Altogether however, state responsibility for coordinating institutionalised forms of solidarity like pensions, health provision, education and job creation is not put into question.

Even though SAULIUS is critical of the current situation he thinks that the change of the '*state system*' to how it is nowadays is on the whole a positive one, especially with regard to the '*possibilities*' and choices it offers. It is true that under the '*communist regime*' people used to have jobs and '*nobody was hungry*'. But now that the state has become '*capitalist*' people '*can earn more money*', and '*go abroad*'. What his father told him about how people used to work under communism is his starting point for reflecting upon the former system:

(...) Talking about work, my dad used to tell me [he is laughing], when he was fourteen, he worked at constructions and when he did not need to do anything, not that he had nothing to do, but after finishing with what he did, he could not just leave or hang around for a while. He tells me: 'Take an empty bucket and walk back and forth.' So I understood that that's what the communist regime was like, things used to be like this. Everyone did whatever, the way they liked, and they did all kinds of nonsense. And now things change and are really different ... when my parents, and especially when my grandma were young

compared to how it is now. The possibilities are absolutely different now. Especially that the so-called state system has changed. Everything has changed very, very much.

Interviewer: Do you think it has changed for better or for worse?

SAULIUS: Hmm... With regard to the state it has changed for the better, but regarding people for the worse probably, although I don't even know. There are a few things, let's say, everybody had to eat, nobody was hungry in this communist regime. And now everyone has to look for a job and work, really work, not to carry a bucket forwards and backwards [he is laughing]. But now there are much more possibilities and you can earn more money. The state now became capitalist.

I: Are there more possibilities now?

S: Yes. In the end you can go abroad, not like it used to be earlier, that's it... (183-187).

c) The other level of possible support for unemployed people aside from the state is that of the potentially sympathetic individual in a generally indifferent or even hostile social environment. 'Pity' (1-8) is people's general attitude towards the kind of unemployed people he has in mind here. The example is an obviously miserable woman who, distinguished by a 'swollen face' (150) from drinking, successfully approaches his grandmother for a pittance. SAULIUS adapts this attitude of pity for some, especially long-term, unemployed people. Furthermore, he assesses them against his own situation on the basis of what could be called a 'reflexive sense of equity'; they are less lucky and live less well than he:

(...) And especially those who haven't become unemployed recently, but those who have not found a job for a long time, so I feel pity for these people most of all, that they are not lucky in life that they cannot live well and have all that, what, let's say, I have. (...) (150)

Nevertheless, his final assessment takes him back to his starting point - the unemployed are the 'lazybones' (150) described before. He is not alone in this opinion and explicitly acknowledges the strong influence of other people, especially grandparents or parents. Reflecting upon general opinion he says:

How do they look at them (the unemployed, H.R.)? First of all they call them lazybones, like I do, [he is laughing], I also agree with their opinion. Maybe they made us get used to the idea that they are lazybones, those people. So they think the same like I do. Always people think the same way adults do, their grandparents or parents. (150)

### 7.2.3 Conflicting perspectives

The world of work beyond his personal context, associated with his mother working in the West, appears to be closer and more real and relevant to SAULIUS than the present world of unemployment surrounding him, which he associates with his grandmother, who in turn represents a source of distant knowledge. SAULIUS's *dialogue with the West* is about getting work, keeping it and moving up the career ladder; it is not unlikely that these have become the most important features of work in the 'New West'. Partly in correspondence with his mother's experiences he establishes a perspective that is necessarily forward- and future-oriented. Work is ahead of him and may be abroad rather than in Lithuania, and he must prepare for this now (i.e. first part of tripartite life course). A good education and the right contacts, already important criteria for social mobility in the old system, are complemented by other



requirements, such as the primary investment of 'working for nothing', mobility, flexibility and a willingness for continuous learning. All this facilitates upward mobility, which is a built-in feature of both the system of work and individual effort. Finally, work and one's career - in the example of his mother working on a ship somewhat remote from reality - go hand in hand with sacrifices in one's private life. The role of companions, who used to be friends and acquaintances, has become either that of 'contacts', a pool of potential favours, or that of competitors in the race for good jobs. SAULIUS seems to have learned and understood this part of life extraordinarily quickly and the availability of a close and 'successful' representative of the new world of work certainly contributed to this. However, he does not establish any link between the transformation of people's personalities towards individualised 'life course runners' and the image of the *'terrible people'* of his mother's account of contemporary *'America'*.

On the other hand, SAULIUS's account of unemployment and unemployed people evolves from a *dialogue with the Past*, any connection between the issue of unemployment and what he knows about the West remains implicit. The unemployed he can think of are either redundant, old or ill-qualified; or, they are miserable and reluctant to work. For them getting and keeping a job under the new conditions is necessarily problematic, given the presumed lack of the basic necessary personal qualities. According to SAULIUS the state is not released from its life course responsibilities even if it can barely fulfil them, as seen, for instance, on TV shows. Education, job availability and creation, pensions, and citizens' survival are still a part of the state's solidarity burden. State support is described as remedial and requires voluntary involvement; its contribution to the re-establishment of a person's 'status of worth' is minimal. The increasing possibilities associated with the new regime are placed in contrast with the characteristics of the old system. In this account public forms of recognition are altogether inadequate or closely tied to individual contributions through employment. The social environment is characterised by a basic suspicion towards this exaggerated figure of the unemployed; it is overcome by occasional 'sympathy', to use a general term. Suspicion seems to reflect both common attitudes and forms of private misrecognition. Sympathy is not unconditional, requiring attention as well as comparison and 'discrimination' in the sense of the establishment of difference. While a sense of equity is also evident in SAULIUS's account, the question is whether and in which direction stable and reasonable criteria for an assessment of unemployed people will crystallise.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

This respondent's dialogue with the West produces highly individualised criteria for a successful professional life and upward mobility where his personal orientations and way of life strictly follow and conform to the socially defined criteria of achievement in the new world of work. Personal qualities, features and priorities need to be developed or adapted accordingly; success is attributed to internal characteristics. From his dialogue with the past, on the other hand, he contrasts this idealised image of work and success with an account of unemployment as an individual's failure to establish such personal qualities. However, the two perspectives on the past and the possible future of post-communist societies, which I suggested for analytic purposes, produce largely inconsistent accounts. While the dialogue with the West overtakes reality and leads to larger-than-life expectations, the dialogue with the past lags behind and gets stuck in outdated stereotypes with regard to both unemployed people as societal outcasts and the role of the state as responsible. The reality of mass unemployment, the working poor, poverty and social polarisation is somewhere in between, but remains a blank field insofar as appropriate interpretive patterns are unavailable. The case of SAULIUS illustrates the current struggle for a consolidation of knowledge about unemployed people by negotiating and confronting available and inconsistent claims. His direction, however, is towards a prioritisation of internal attributes over collective forms of responsibility.

As one representative of young people in former communist countries, which one may assume to be particularly sensitive filters of knowledge, SAULIUS needs to make sense of what could be rephrased as 'convergent vs. path-dependent knowledge shares', or first (local) and (distant) second-hand experiences vs. transferred (local) knowledge. A rapid knowledge turnover in the 'New West' cannot be expected; habitual knowledge is still in place and continues to be reproduced due to the continuing significant role of socialising agents representing 'old' interpretive schemes. The stereotypical figure of the contemporary unemployed seems anachronistic in the post-communist context. S/he has features from Soviet ideology: an idle, asocial alcoholic trying to exploit meagre state benefits. S/he is a figure that continues to live even in statistical categories such as the 'asocial family' (Poviliunas 2003: 55-57). 'Real' victims of the (labour) market – for instance, the elderly or the ill-qualified – are perceived as exceptions.

### 'The asocial'

The use of the term 'asocial' (Lithuanian: 'asocialus') is still common, both in the media and legislation, although it may eventually be replaced in official language by the term 'at risk'. Two examples:

1) Parliament Resolution No. IX-1569, 20 May 2003, on the Approval of the Concept of State Policy on Child Welfare uses the term in both the Lithuanian original and in the translation. Article 2.4: '(...) *The families, in which children are being raised under conditions of risk, are termed as 'asocial' and experience social exclusion.*'

2) On March 14, 2007, the internet-based news platform delfi.lt reported the reaction of the Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament to a fire that broke out in Vilnius:

'Following the fire this weekend in the Zirmunai district of Vilnius, which, it is suspected, broke out due to the irresponsible behaviour of asocial people, a discussion about more drastic measures with regard to such residents began. The speaker of the Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament), Viktor Muntianas, thinks that fines alone will not solve this problem.

In today's morning show 'Position' ('Pozicija') on 'News Radio' ('News radio') V. Muntianas said:

'Whether we want it or not, there will always be asocial people in our society. But power and order in society should not provide the possibility to violate the interests of others, and all that. It is difficult to expect them to pay fines. Obviously, their lives must be adequate, and there could be social programmes, perhaps low-storey buildings, where there is no such danger, where it would be possible to guarantee a certain permanent surveillance, to make some sort of dormitory-type buildings, where these families or individuals could stay; they would get less services, so that it would be cheaper to taxpayers; they would have a roof above their heads and adequate living conditions. And they would not make problems.'<sup>204</sup>

Given the scope of the unemployment problem, the position of 'the other' in the (non-) solidarity triangle is occupied by a figure that represents, in its current form, a caricature of an unemployed that is both false and inadequate. It probably describes one specific group in the post-communist social landscape, but it seems inappropriate as a general representation of market-induced mass unemployment. It will be crucial to observe in which direction the balance within the triangle will develop in light of the consolidation of new representatives of the state, such as institutions of un/employment management and their criteria of inclusion/exclusion. Undefined relations between potential strangers within this triangle, however, seem to account for some of the enigma of post-communist non-solidarity.

The following Chapter 8 takes some of the findings and conclusions from this one case further into a discussion of all respondents in the sample.

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<sup>204</sup> <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=12496582>; 14.03.2007



## 8 The individual, the unemployed, the state, and the exit option – a heuristic typology<sup>205</sup>

*Interviewer:* Ok, now, look, regarding this work theme, but something a bit different, when there's no work. In fact there are many unemployed in Lithuania, unemployment is high. and what do you think. what could be the reasons for that?

*Saulius:* Hmm. (3) (These) people are lazybones [he is laughing]. This is the first reason. In fact, those who want, can surely find a job. It is not that. 'Look, there is no work and altogether what I ...', if (one is) in some village. 'I came here and cannot find a job.' You have to look for it, the one who looks for, that one does find it. If you will lie on a couch with a glass of brandy [he is laughing], life will surely not get better because of that. The state, of course, cannot create work for everybody but for many. If you cannot find a job, so what, you can go abroad. I don't think that it is absolutely impossible to get a job. Of course, it is possible. But sometimes people are very demanding and lazybones, exactly those, who do not have (work). They think that it is much easier to live on the state's pocket by making themselves lots of children, that it is much easier than to work, like all normal people. (26.28)

The previous chapter found, among other things, an inconsistent image of the unemployed on the basis of a single case. The findings indicated that this inconsistency may originate from an ongoing process of consolidating old and new knowledge into an appropriate assessment of the origins and consequences of the new phenomenon of unemployment. The present study's data do not allow for the substantiation of this dialogic production of meanings involving processes of intergenerational (intertemporal) and intercultural (interspatial) knowledge transfer and constitution. The mere fact of its discovery could nevertheless be considered one of the outcomes of the exploration suggesting follow-up research.<sup>206</sup> Yet the observation of an inconsistent image of the unemployed identified by a post-communist young person whose immediate environment is *not* affected by unemployment needs to be picked up with other findings and fed into a general analysis of all the cases in the sample. The specific conclusions on the basis of this one case unfold a universe of possible general hypotheses *qua* directions of analysis. Some were explored further, substantiated and diversified on the basis of all cases. The outcome of this cross-case-analysis is represented in this chapter, which deals with the same topics as the previous in a different perspective. Thus, the more general conclusions at the end of this chapter refer to the discussions of both chapters.

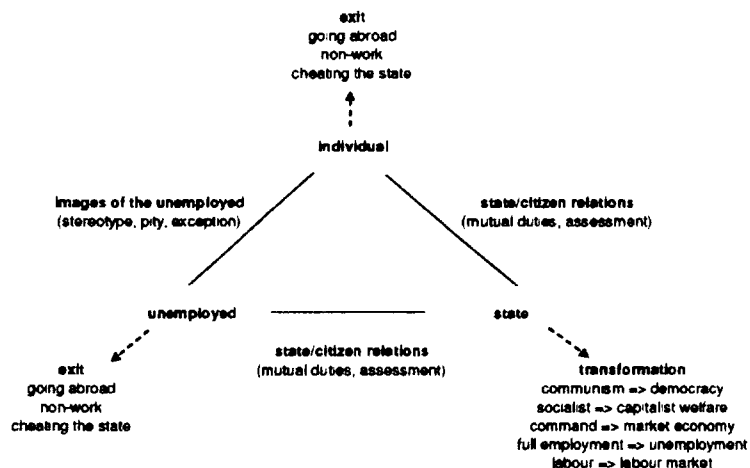
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<sup>205</sup> A first version of this chapter on the basis of only three cases was prepared as Reiter (2007b). I want to thank the other authors involved in the book project for helpful comments. The argument also benefited from two presentations and discussions of parts of the charter. First: 'I giovani, lo stato ed i disoccupati nel 'Nuovo West'' at the international seminar 'Giovani adulti: nuove strategie di vita?' presented at the Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale, Università di Milano-Bicocca, May 15, 2007. Second: 'Post-communist youth, the unemployed, the state, and the option of exit: a heuristic typology' presented at the 8th Conference of the European Sociological Association, Glasgow 3-6 September 2007.

<sup>206</sup> The research design would need to involve older family members. For possible approaches see Alheit (2005), and Wohlrab-Sahr (2006). For a pool of meanings of the transformation available in Czech families see Hrabá et al. (2000).

Based on the triangle of (non-)solidarity introduced in the previous chapter, the analysis of all cases focussed on the relationships within the triangle according to the young respondents – i.e. the state-citizen relationship and the individual-unemployed relationship. The former can be considered as reflecting perceived public notions of (mis-)recognition; the latter expresses mostly private notions of (mis-)recognition. An associated issue that emerged as important from the analysis refers to the questioning of the imagined triangle and its inherent mechanisms of sanctioning unemployment altogether – i.e. the exit option. These three main dimensions are illustrated in Figure 8.1 and introduced in the following. Some important dimensions of the transformation of 'the state' are discussed in other chapters: Chapter 2 discusses changes in the post-communist world of work and employment, Chapters 5 and 6 review the link between education and employment in Soviet and post-Soviet Lithuania, and Chapter 9 provides an outline of the changing gender regime. Altogether, this triangular framework highlights the fact that attitudes towards unemployment and the unemployed do not stand alone and are in no way isolated accounts.

**Figure 8.1 – Triangular configuration of individual-state-unemployed**



The representation of these three topics in the individual accounts is heterogeneous and can be synthesised into a heuristic typology covering the relations between the individual, the unemployed, and the state. It is an 'empirically grounded typology' in the sense of Kluge (2000), and is thus the result of a dialogue between concepts, cases, and categories.<sup>207</sup> Each of the types stands for a distinct combination of patterns with regard to these three main dimensions. In order to demonstrate the 'empirical groundedness' of these dimensions, each of

<sup>207</sup> For the methodological background and practical issues of the empirically grounded construction of types and typologies, as well as the status of 'empirical typologies' within the geography of typologies see Kluge (1999) and Kelle/Kluge (1999).

the introductions begins with a brief reference to the findings for SAULIUS.<sup>208</sup> Due to the large number of cases the representation of individual details and their complex interconnectedness is necessarily limited: single prototypes representing the types are introduced.

As an outcome of the academic appropriation of an unfamiliar social reality – an enterprise that is probably best described following Jean Piaget as an interplay of assimilation and accommodation – the 'constructed types' are 'second order constructs' in the sense of Alfred Schütz, as McKinney (1969: 2; also 1970) notes, distinguishing them from 'existential types'. The latter would be 'first order constructs' or 'folk typifications' (ibid.). In the context of the present study, the typology should allow the condensed representation of an otherwise extensive process of analysis, comparison and contrasting of cases by giving priority to sociological interpretation and 'contamination' in the sense of Faraday/Plummer (1979) (see Chapter 4). As the result of a systematic reflection on the 'empirically given' (Becker 1940), and by expanding its frame of reference, 'empirically grounded, constructed types' allow me to juxtapose 'existential types' *qua* stereotypes. Becker (1940) proposes that the 'ordinary stereotype', the unemployed in this case, 'affords an instructive contrast', here, a typology of the stereotyper. The present typology allows this alternative reading.

The ordinary stereotype affords an instructive contrast: it is an unconscious, unplanned exaggeration of the 'empirically given,' mixed with much that has not been observed at all, and includes a large emotional freight of praise or blame; the constructed type is a conscious, planned selection and combination of the 'empirically given,' relatively free from value judgement' (Becker (1940: 55).

## 8.1 *Dimensions of the typology*

### 8.1.1 The image of the unemployed

The common perception of unemployed people is neither one-dimensional nor entirely 'negative'. It transcends the biased ideological constructions that perpetuate this figure's status as the archetype of laziness, apathy and danger as seen throughout the history of capitalism.<sup>209</sup> SAULIUS's image of the unemployed, for instance, is characterised by contradictory views resulting in a stereotypical generalisation alongside the identification of 'exceptional cases'

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<sup>208</sup> The sequence of SAULIUS's interview in Appendix 7 includes the related issues identified in single paragraphs. In fact, all three dimensions – image of the unemployed, citizenship relations, response/exit-options - are already suggested in the single paragraph of SAULIUS's interview included at the beginning of this chapter (quotation 26.28). This paragraph is the first section of the interview directly addressing the issue of unemployment and the unemployed.

<sup>209</sup> Many references could be added here. I want to mention two very different examples that indicate the scope and longevity of the issue. Zukas (2001) reconstructs the image of unemployed workers suggested by major (political) interest groups in the German Weimar Republic. The paper also discusses the specific notion of the unemployed worker in communist ideology. A recent report by the German Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit (2005), on the other hand, is an example of the ideologisation of the discourse in Germany today (some 70 years later).

that deserve sympathy despite unemployment. The concurrence of these same three elements – stereotype, sympathy, and the acknowledgement of exceptions or external reasons for unemployment – in the accounts of other respondents suggests that contradiction and inconsistency need to be considered in this dimension of the typology. With regard to *stereotypical evaluations*, indications of laziness or a reluctance to work, the association of unemployment and alcohol, as well as the abuse of benefits are relevant. *Sympathy*, the second element, refers to expressions of pity, the consideration of economic explanations like the lack of jobs, and to the declared necessity of benefits for survival. The third feature of this dimension is that it requires the recognition of *exceptions* within the group of unemployed people. Here statements pointing to unemployed individuals as victims of, for instance, the impact of the socio-economic transformation on their local working environment are considered, as well as distinctions made in accounts of different types of unemployment. In addition, one or both parents being unemployed proved to be an important factor in the background of both stereotype and sympathy, indicating individual distance or closeness to the phenomenon.

#### 8.1.2 Citizenship – state-citizen relations

The *abstract* relevance of state-citizen relations with regard to work and un/employment in capitalism and socialism was outlined in Chapter 2. In the context of the typology I now address the *practical* representation of this relation in the accounts given by the young Lithuanians. State-citizen relations are established between the state and the unemployed as well as the state and the individual. Both are evaluated in the perspective of the respondents. SAULIUS, for instance, describes state-citizen relations with regard to work as symmetrical. Both parties have responsibilities in what constitutes a citizenship relation; the possibility of either the state or its agents failing to meet expectations is also expressed. The typology considers these two levels. On the one hand, respondents' suggestions of a *citizen's 'duty'* to work as well as the *'duties' of the state* regarding work and the provision of benefits are considered. On the other hand, and complementary to the apparent failure of individuals to comply with citizenship expectations captured in the dimension of the image of unemployed people, *notions of dissatisfaction with state performance* are common. They are either directly associated with 'politicians' or state agents like 'parliamentarians' or 'the parliament' as a whole. Or, they are (sometimes implicitly) expressed in terms of an emphasis on the advantages of the situation under the Soviet Union.



### 8.1.3 Response - exit options

Going abroad to work, or having children in order to receive benefits instead of working, are two very different ways of responding to the shortcomings of the triangular relationship between the individual, the unemployed, and the state as identified by SAULIUS. This dimension is perhaps the least obvious of the three, and therefore needs a more extensive conceptual introduction. In general, it captures articulations of a different kind that lie beyond the triangle. In the sense of 'exit' options (Hirschman 1970) they represent possible responses to discontent or desperation with regard to available working and living conditions in contemporary Lithuania. Hirschman (1993), who applies his intriguing, literally 'tri-vial' heuristic to the mass migration of people from the late GDR to the west, distinguishes between 'exit', 'the act of simply leaving' (ibid.175), 'voice', 'the act of complaining or of organising to complain or to protest' (ibid.176), and 'loyalty', a somewhat neglected third category, perhaps because it has received the most criticism (Barry 1974, Dowding et al. 2000). In any case, loyalty is characterised by a 'special attachment' to a certain organisation or country, which 'holds exit at bay and activates voice' (Hirschman 1970: 77-78). The crucial feature of loyalty seems to be that it inhibits or delays exit through the expression of a 'positive commitment' to a collectivity (Barry 1974: 98; also Dowding et al. 2000: 477-478). The idea was used in this sense by Evans (1998) to study the relations between ethnic Estonians and Russians in their struggle for democratic consolidation in the post-communist Estonia of the 1990s. Adnanes (2004), on the other hand, studies the coping strategies of young Bulgarians after the end of communism, and considers 'passivity – suffering in silence, waiting for an improvement in the situation' (ibid. 800) as a second dimension of loyalty. In my use of Hirschman's trilogy both aspects of loyalty are relevant. Altogether, all three patterns discussed by Hirschman can, in my opinion, qualify as 'exit' in the sense of a withdrawal from the triangular relationship in certain circumstances. In any case, the response of exit reveals weaknesses in the triangle and partly undermines its basis; I will come back to this point in the discussion following the introduction of the typology.

Thus, the typology considers 'exit' in three ways. First, the legitimate *exit abroad* articulated in terms of plans or the chance to leave the country and knowing people abroad. Depending on the perspective, emigration can be a solution (for some) as well as a suggestion (to others); it can be an individual option or observed behaviour. Second, the option of *non-work* is mentioned. This refers to the refusal to work for a low salary and can be a form of protest or 'voice'. A third way of challenging the triangle is benefit abuse; this is a form of

*cheating the state* associated with the stereotypical image of unemployed people. As I will argue in the discussion, cheating the state, which is also relevant with regard to corrupt politicians, can be understood as a reference to the socialist features of the individual-state relationship.

The dimension of exit is different from the others – that is the image of the unemployed and citizenship relations – as it refers not only to what people think and say but also to what some of them plan to do, perhaps following in the footsteps of others. However, I was only able to collect empirical evidence on the actual *exit abroad*, in general a main form of visible response by young people in former communist countries (Adnanes 2004; Tarkhnishvili et al. 2005). The other two elements were not systematically observed. What is understood here as *non-work* is different from inactivity in employment statistics. *Cheating the state* is an investigational category rather than an operationalised one.

The scope of emigration estimated in recent studies is obviously linked to unfavourable working conditions. According to official estimations of unofficial emigration some 400.000 people, more than 10% of the population, have left Lithuania since 1990. Some 126.000 people left the country between 2001 and 2005; an estimated 70.000 of these emigrated without declaring their departure (Statistikos Departamentas 2006). It is estimated that 83% of these undeclared emigrants left the country for reasons of work; 37% of them had no occupation before emigrating; more than 90% were no older than 45; 33% emigrated to the United Kingdom; more than 80% have upper secondary education or more (Table 8.1).<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Source: Statistics Lithuania, [www.std.lt](http://www.std.lt), (document updated 19.10.2006), downloaded 17.11.2006. See Blanchflower et al. (2007) for a comparative perspective on UK immigration.

**Table 8.1 - Emigrants not declaring their departure, 2001-2005 (n=69.800)**

Age groups		Country of next residence		Reason of emigration	
	%		%		%
0-14	11,5	UK	32,5	work	83,1
15-24	26,2	Ireland	24,6	studies	3,0
25-45	55,9	Germany	12,2	other	1,0
45+	6,4	USA	7,0	not known	11,9
		Spain	5,7		
		Other	18,0		

Former occupation		Educational attainment	
	%		%
without occupation	37,2	higher or professional colleges	20,9
skilled workers	28,3	general upper secondary	63,8
intellectual employees	21,0	general lower secondary	9,7
elementary occupations	7,0	primary	1,0
service and trade employees	6,5	not known	4,6

Statistics Lithuania, www.std.lt, (document updated 19.10.2006), downloaded 17.11.2006

Changes in labour market regulations and a combination of socio-economic push- and pull-factors are considered crucial for this wave of emigration (Davulis 2006). Among the new EU member countries, Lithuania has the highest share of its labour force (3,4%) resident in another EU 15 country (European Commission 2006: chapter 5). A special Eurobarometer survey on geographical and labour market mobility conducted in 2005 indicates that almost 9% of Lithuanian respondents expected to move to another EU member state within the next five years (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2006: 23). Meanwhile, these massive emigration levels are starting to result in labour shortages and decreasing unemployment in Lithuania and in other new member states of the European Union (World Bank 2006). The unemployment rate peaked at 16,5% in the year 2001, dropping to 8,3% in 2005 (European Commission 2006).

## 8.2 Grouping of cases

The basis of the typology is an empirical classification and grouping of the individual cases in the sample. The full topical matrix in table 8.2 covers 23 issues organised into ten thematic clusters with regard to the three dimensions.

IMAGES OF THE UNEMPLOYED																			
	all	Stereotype			Sympathy			Exceptional unemployed											
		lazy-turbator	alcoholic	abuse benefits	pity	no jobs	benefits for survival	UE as victims	2 types of UE	UE parents)									
Agnes	f	20	m	LT	4	11													
Anna	f	20	m	PL	1	8													
Annales	m	15	m	LT	4	11													
Annales	f	17	f	LT	3	21													
Dizionario	m	17	m	RU	1	12													
Dizionario	m	17	f	LT	1	7													
Foto	m	18	m	LT	2	8													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	1	17													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	4	8													
Hopkins	f	17	m	LT	1	8													
Ismael	f	20	f	LT	1	11													
Ismael	f	15	f	LT	1	8													
Jan	m	18	m	PL	1	11													
Janice	m	19	m	LT	1	8													
Janice	m	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	f	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	m	18	m	LT	4	12													
Lea	f	18	m	RU	1	8													
Lea	f	18	f	LT	2	11													
Luis	f	17	f	LT	3	10													
Luis	f	18	f	LT	2	13													
Maria	m	17	m	LT	4	11													
Maria	m	22	m	MDX	1	10													
Maria	f	17	m	LT	2	12													
Maria	m	24	m	LT	1	1													
Marion	m	16	f	MDX	3	16													
Marion	m	17	m	RU	1	8													
Myra	m	17	m	RU	1	17													
Myra	m	18	f	LT	2	12													
XXX	m	16	f	LT	1	12													

STATISTICAL RELATIONS																			
	all	Duties of state and citizens					Disaffection with education												
		work duty citizen (interview)	work duty reception (interview)	state should provide work	state should provide benefits	discontent with politicians (interview)	discontent with labour exchange (interview)	advantages of UBER (interview)	advantages of UBER (questionnaire)										
Agnes	f	20	m	LT	4	11													
Anna	f	20	m	PL	1	8													
Annales	m	15	m	LT	4	11													
Annales	f	17	f	LT	3	21													
Dizionario	m	17	m	RU	1	12													
Dizionario	m	17	f	LT	1	7													
Foto	m	18	m	LT	2	8													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	1	17													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	4	8													
Hopkins	f	17	m	LT	1	8													
Ismael	f	20	f	LT	1	11													
Ismael	f	15	f	LT	1	8													
Jan	m	18	m	PL	1	11													
Janice	m	19	m	LT	1	8													
Janice	m	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	f	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	m	18	m	LT	4	12													
Lea	f	18	m	RU	1	8													
Lea	f	18	f	LT	2	11													
Luis	f	17	f	LT	3	10													
Luis	f	18	f	LT	2	13													
Maria	m	17	m	LT	4	11													
Maria	m	22	m	MDX	1	10													
Maria	f	17	m	LT	2	12													
Maria	m	24	m	LT	1	1													
Marion	m	16	f	MDX	3	16													
Marion	m	17	m	RU	1	8													
Myra	m	17	m	RU	1	17													
Myra	m	18	f	LT	2	12													
XXX	m	16	f	LT	1	12													

EXTENSIONS																			
	all	Getting stressed		Non-work		Cheating the system													
		plan to go abroad	people abroad	option of non-work	present / wages	finding children for benefits	underlie												
Agnes	f	20	m	LT	4	11													
Anna	f	20	m	PL	1	8													
Annales	m	15	m	LT	4	11													
Annales	f	17	f	LT	3	21													
Dizionario	m	17	m	RU	1	12													
Dizionario	m	17	f	LT	1	7													
Foto	m	18	m	LT	2	8													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	1	17													
Giuseppe	f	18	f	LT	4	8													
Hopkins	f	17	m	LT	1	8													
Ismael	f	20	f	LT	1	11													
Ismael	f	15	f	LT	1	8													
Jan	m	18	m	PL	1	11													
Janice	m	19	m	LT	1	8													
Janice	m	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	f	20	m	LT	4	12													
Karla	m	18	m	LT	4	12													
Lea	f	18	m	RU	1	8													
Lea	f	18	f	LT	2	11													
Luis	f	17	f	LT	3	10													
Luis	f	18	f	LT	2	13													
Maria	m	17	m	LT	4	11													
Maria	m	22	m	MDX	1	10													
Maria	f	17	m	LT	2	12													
Maria	m	24	m	LT	1	1													
Marion	m	16	f	MDX	3	16													
Marion	m	17	m	RU	1	8													
Myra	m	17	m	RU	1	17													
Myra	m	18	f	LT	2	12													
XXX	m	16	f	LT	1	12													

\* persons (unemployed or out of work (before retirement)) and in case of Agnes (in - household)

int - household interview

LT, PL, RU, MDX, 77 - abroad

16-24 age

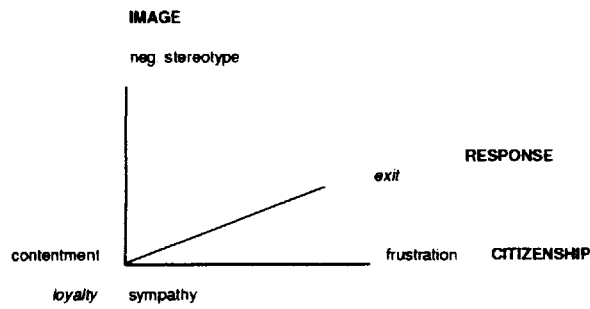
10/24 - place of residence (household registration)

The 'presence' of a topic, meaning that related issues were approved or observed during the interview or with regard to the case, is indicated with an 'X'. Obviously, the 'X' does not indicate the quality of the observation. The 'X' is missing where the issue was not observed, or where respondents indicated their disagreement. Table 8.2 also includes information about the respondents' gender, their age, ethnicity and place of residence, whether their transition was 'linear' at the moment of interview, and whether they have one or more unemployed parents.

### 8.3 A heuristic typology of perceived configurations in individual-state-unemployed relations

The internal homogeneity of each type results from the specific combination of and emphasis on the aspects of the three dimensions, which open up a three-dimensional space (Figure 8.2).

**Figure 8.2 – Three-dimensional space of the typology**



The axis representing the image of the unemployed ranges from sympathy to a negative stereotype; the citizenship axis ranges from contentment to frustration; the response axis ranges from loyalty to exit. It should be emphasised that the three dimensions of this typology are not entirely separable and, as indicated several times, partly overlap. The extremes of each axis are theoretical constructs – loyalty is not the exact opposite of exit, nor is sympathy the exact opposite of negative stereotyping (and has nothing to do with 'image' in the narrow sense). Thus, the resulting typology may in the final instance suffer from some of the weaknesses of typologies discussed by Bailey (1994: 33-34). However, these dimensions were not 'designed', but resulted from the analysis of the interviews. Instructive typologies could equally be constructed on the level of each of the three dimensions, but this would entail separating what seems to be interconnected, despite contradictory properties. The case of SAULIUS discussed in the previous chapter demonstrates this.

Table 8.3 summarises the five identified types. They are labelled with quotes from each of the illustrating cases; all labels refer to the first dimension, the image of unemployed people, and represent private expressions of (mis-)recognition of unemployed people.

**Table 8.3 – Overview of the five empirically grounded types**

	<b>Type I</b> <i>'There are more of those people who are not lazy but cannot find a job.'</i> (WIZARD)	<b>Type II</b> <i>'They cannot adapt, in Darwin's words.'</i> (DIZAINERIS)	<b>Type III</b> <i>'People don't even look for a job, some of them.'</i> (GABLIJA)	<b>Type IV</b> <i>'Oh look, he doesn't work, but he has money.'</i> (MUSTAFA)	<b>Type V</b> <i>'My parents are at home. There is no work. Unemployed.'</i> (MARIUS)
<b>Image of the unemployed</b>	- victims of unemployment and transformation - unemployment temporary aspect of transformation	- negative stereotype (strong)	- negative stereotype (strong) - pitiful exceptions - unemployment temporary aspect of transformation	- negative stereotype (moderate) - victims of unemployment and transformation	- victims of unemployment and transformation - negative stereotype (moderate)
<b>Citizenship</b>	- mutual responsibilities - active involvement	- mutual responsibilities - honest, hard work vs. chance (jobs, low benefits) - criticism of state and its agents	- corruption of mutual responsibilities by both parties - criticism of state and its agents	- disappointment and anger	- frustration - absent state
<b>Response</b>	- abroad scepticism - Lithuania as preferred place to live, study, and work	- abroad scepticism	- opportunistic and/or temporary emigration	- emigration as solution - 'underliving'	- resignation
<b>USSR vs. post-USSR</b>	- in favour of new system	- unenthusiastic acknowledgement of Soviet achievements	- emphasis on advantages of Soviet system	- acknowledgement of Soviet achievements - no regret about collapse of USSR	- USSR nostalgia
<b>Work</b>	- interest - contribution - citizenship	- self-realisation - self-expression - citizenship	- pleasure - citizenship	- money - independence	- survival
<b>Social background</b>	- well-off	- unproblematic	- unproblematic - unemployment in the (wider) family	- problematic - unemployment - illegal activities - (drug abuse) - (rural context)	- multiple disadvantage - unemployment - poverty - low education - (ethnicity problems) - (rural context)

### 8.3.1 Type I – 'There are more of those people who are not lazy but cannot find a job.'

This type represents the ideal situation where an unprejudiced attitude towards unemployment and the unemployed is found alongside a belief in the work responsibilities of both the individual and the state, as well as a commitment to one's country of origin as a place to live, study, and work.

Unemployment is considered to be a temporary phenomenon associated with the socio-economic transformation of the country. The unemployed are above all victims of this situation; their inadequate qualifications as well as the breakdown of local industries are identified as the main reasons for their difficulties in finding a job.

Working is an obvious and unquestioned aspect of life - on the one hand, it provides the means for sustaining a family; on the other, it contributes to the social fabric; altogether it

should involve interesting activities. Additional citizens' duties include involvement in the political life of society as well as participation in education as a kind of self-investment; the latter is the key to any kind of career and self-realisation.

Young people associated with this type postpone their entry into employment, but consider work experience, not necessarily for the sake of money, as crucial for the development of job-related priorities.

The state, on the other hand, is expected to assume its responsibility by providing jobs, where it can, or sufficiently high benefits or at least education where it cannot provide jobs.

Representatives of this type are self-confident, motivated, and at the same time sensitive to social injustices despite their rather comfortable social backgrounds, which allow them to live a carefree life and enjoy their youth to the full.

It is mostly due to their favourable situation in life that they do not consider going abroad to work: leaving the country temporarily is instead a matter of satisfying their curiosity. In general, young people associated with this type are sceptical towards other countries and do not understand the post-communist predilection for emigration.

Looking back into the Soviet past, representatives of this type recognise the advantages and disadvantages of the regime of full employment: nevertheless they are clearly in favour of the new system and confident that the situation will improve.

#### *Example - WIZARD*

WIZARD is a prototypical example of *Type I*. He is an 18-year-old student in his last year of secondary education that plans to go on to study architecture at university. He lives with his family in one of the bigger towns of Lithuania: the family is not affected by unemployment - both of his parents work and have completed higher education. He comes from a *'wealthy family'*, as the interviewer observes in her postscript. After what she was told in other interviews, the interviewer obviously feels the need to explain the respondent's unusual attitude, noting that it may be due to *'his parent's social status'* that *'he doesn't know people, who can't find a job, who are alcoholics, don't go to school, and so on.'*

In fact, WIZARD's opinion about unemployed people appears to be exceptionally unbiased. He says it is probably *'difficult to live'* without a job. He talks about the *'hard'* life unemployed people must have trying to *'earn a bit'* by *'picking mushrooms'* (29.28), a metaphor that he uses for the survival strategies of those without work, like *'collecting bottles'* in order to get the deposit back, which is also mentioned by some of the other respondents.

WIZARD thinks that the situation will improve *'in the future'* and that it will be *'getting easier a bit'* when companies expand their business, especially in the *'bigger'* cities like the one where he lives (29.29). Unemployment is clearly a result of the country's socio-economic transformation and *'there was more work earlier, because there were various factories, and I also think, there were vacancies. And now all these factories close or go bankrupt and there are no jobs, but there will be in the future'* (29.33). At the moment it is particularly difficult for *'older people'* because, according to him, those up to the age of 35 or 40 *'are most suitable'*. Furthermore, he says, *'education is necessary these days, of course'* (29.30). Education is more important than going abroad for a higher salary as early as possible, as many young people do then end up picking oranges in Spain (29.53). Although he does not consider this an option for his own future, going abroad could be one way for people to escape the problem of unemployment, as he learned from a friend of his father's (29.31).

When asked whether he thinks there are many unemployed people in Lithuania, he makes a rather precise estimation of *'nine per cent maybe'*, a remark which underlines his somewhat *'abstract'* idea of unemployment.<sup>211</sup> Although he considers unwillingness to work a possible reason for unemployment, on the whole he associates it with insufficient education or difficulty finding a job. In the related interview sequence (see below) he resists the interviewer's probe for stereotypes (by including the word *'lazy'* in her questions) twice. Instead, WIZARD repeats that the majority of unemployed people are not lazy but cannot find a job. Therefore it is legitimate that they receive unemployment benefits, because *'they have to live on something'*. Altogether the minimum wage should be increased, although this may only happen in the *'distant future'*.

Interviewer: Do you think there are many unemployed in Lithuania?

WIZARD: There are many, I think, how many, nine per cent maybe.

I: What do you think about them, about those people who do not work?

W: I don't know, some, it seems to me, do not want to get a job, but some are trying, but are not able to, maybe they did something wrong in the past, maybe they didn't study, for example (he is laughing), and they don't get a job now.

I: Do you know any people who do not work? Of older age, let's say...

W: Not really, maybe some friends of my parents, my father's friend went to England now, he said he found a job and was doing fine.

I: Do you think there are more of those who are lazy or those who are not lucky?

W: Maybe, I don't know, maybe those who are not lucky, because there are little vacancies now, and there are less of those who are lazy, but anyway.

I: You mentioned the unemployment benefit, do you think that people who do not work are given it?

W: It is good, why not?

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<sup>211</sup> In 2004, the year when the interview took place, the average unemployment rate was in fact 11,4% (European Commission 2006).



I: But if he is lazy and he gets a benefit?

W: But there are more of those people who are not lazy, but cannot find a job and then they get a benefit and they have to live on something. But that benefit is not very big.

I: What amount should it be?

W: Now, if it is for a family, then maybe a thousand (litas)<sup>212</sup> is enough.

I: For how many people? Four? How many members?

W: Well, maybe for four people it would be enough. Although it is little, but they would survive.

I: But then, if they get that money, they won't be willing to go to work. Well they don't do anything and get money.

W: Well but if they work, they get more. It is necessary to raise the minimum (salary) and to think.

I: Do you think it will be like this in Lithuania in the future?

W: It should be, but it is a distant future, but it should be so. (29.31-32)

WIZARD sees to education as a central part of his youth. However, he experiences some frustration over the fact that his parents do not, in his opinion, sufficiently recognise his learning efforts but keep urging him to study harder and follow the example of his sister, who was better at school. However, in principle he subscribes to this education agenda and in view of the fact that the state supports young people's studies he considers education a citizenship duty, maintaining that *'twelve years at school are (...) obligatory'* (29.47). He is not in a hurry to establish a family and thinks that *'one has to party first'* and *'maybe when one is thirty years old one might marry'* (29.36). WIZARD's attitude to work is pragmatic and responsible. Work should be interesting, pay for living and contribute to the country's prosperity (29.13, 45).

Apart from working and having family at some point, WIZARD thinks that not being involved in illegal activities that harm the state, like taking bribes or smuggling, are among the virtues of a *'good citizen'*. Furthermore, he approves the interviewer's suggestion that voting is also a citizenship duty - an attitude that is underlined by wearing a badge of the party he intended to vote for (he was a first time voter) in the elections that took place some days after the interview had been conducted (29.43).

### 8.3.2 Type II – 'They cannot adapt, in Darwin's words.'

The second empirically grounded type represents the opposite of the first along two dimensions. First, unemployment is considered to have its roots in people's defective personalities - their social environment rather than the external economic situation. Second, despite the acknowledgement of the importance of the state and its contributions, there is

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<sup>212</sup> 1.000 litas are approximately EUR 290.

frustration over the performance of the country's political elite. Leaving the country, however, is not a priority even if it is recognised as a popular response to dissatisfaction.<sup>213</sup>

According to this type the reasons for unemployment are mainly personal. Childhood and socialisation or 'the family' are introduced as explanations for what appears to result in a deficient character. In one variation, the incapability of dealing with 'new freedom' in general or 'early freedom' in the case of young people is suggested. Either way, the outcome is that unemployed people are lazy and reluctant to take jobs; they do not make any effort to find a job that would be easy to get if they wished it. Instead, they drink and live on benefits, money that is earned by others. They are also suspected of deliberately exploiting the system by having children for the sake of collecting additional benefits. The unemployed are a social category from which respondents of this type explicitly dissociate themselves.

'Good citizens', on the other hand, are motivated and active; they do honest, hard and fulfilling jobs throughout their life, pay taxes and contribute to the benefit of all. Education, experience, and determination are the qualities necessary for a successful life. The postponement of beginning a family remains unquestioned by both female and male respondents.

The state has the responsibility to provide benefits, especially for those who are committed and try hard. Abuse should be prevented by keeping benefits low. The provision of jobs is another option. Altogether, people need to be given a chance; where they fail despite their best efforts support should be targeted at the individual. Those who choose to opt out of a normal working life are free to do so but should not expect any help. Politicians, on the other hand, are heavily criticised for promising a lot but effectively contributing little to the improvement of the situation. The achievements of the Soviet system with regard to work, on the other hand, are acknowledged without enthusiasm.

Representatives of this group typically have an unproblematic social background. They are ambitious and consider themselves exceptional compared to their peers. Potentially problematic features of their own transitions are played down.

Despite their discontent with politics they do not intend to go abroad; they anticipate that those who leave to earn money will face considerable disappointment.

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<sup>213</sup> The combination of an entirely negative attitude towards both the unemployed and the state together with the determination to leave the country was not observed in this small sample.

*Example – DIZAINERIS*

DIZAINERIS, 17, dropped out of secondary education because of *'very bad health, very bad'* related to a *'terrible poisoning'* (5.3,4). However, he is aware of the absolute necessity of education and intends to finish secondary education and continue to the tertiary level. He likes art and he would like to study design at the art academy. His talent was supported by the orientation of the Russian school that he used to attend, and he participated successfully in graphics competitions, and once even received a letter of thanks from a former chairman of the parliament, as he says proudly.

His parents, *'elderly people'* (5.1) who had him in their second marriage when they were already about 40 and 50 years old, did not at first support his passion. He has now convinced them of his determination and progress however. His father is a retired chauffeur. His mother, who used to hold an office job in an institution of *'internal affairs'* in the Soviet Union, lost her position, worked as an accountant and a cleaning lady, and is now unemployed. Yet she *'will be a pensioner soon'* (5.9,11), as he says. DIZAINERIS does not explicitly relate his mother's unemployment to the fact that she does not speak Lithuanian; yet he does mention that she is sometimes told by people to *'go back to Russia'* (5.36). DIZAINERIS himself maintains that he has never experienced any kind of ethnically motivated *'pressure'* (5.36), because he speaks fluent Lithuanian.

He does not necessarily share his mother's nostalgia for the old system, but acknowledges that working conditions in particular used to be better. Altogether he is in favour of the freedom of expression that is now available and explains that some of the people that were used to the old system simply *'didn't manage to adapt to this present level'* – (...) *those ordinary people who thought that all life would be like that, things changed to the worse for them, I think, because everybody is complaining'* (5.12).

Unemployment is first and foremost a problem of individuals' inability to adapt to the rapid economic changes that he fully acknowledges and describes surprisingly well. The following two sequences illustrate this.

Interviewer: What does unemployment mean, when you don't have a job?

DIZAINERIS: Unemployment, well, that is, well, when you don't have a job, it means that either you missed something, most probably you were too lazy or you didn't want, well, I understand when sometimes people are not able to study, there are such cases, but then these people are good at something else, good musicians, for example, or vice versa. Well, I will repeat it, it depends only on a person's efforts. (...)

I: How do you react to such people who do not work and do not study?

D: I think, well, they do not respect themselves, I could say. You know, they cannot adapt, in Darwin's words, only the strongest survives. There is such a theory, well it is valid for people also, I think it

happens so that those weaker ones do such jobs, well, or maybe not necessarily, because it also depends on the fate that is destined for a person. I think it depends on his efforts, but if he doesn't want to work, to put any effort, then it turns out this way.... but of course, parents also have a big influence, undoubtedly. (...) (5.22-23)

I: What do you think, are there a lot of the unemployed in Lithuania?

D: A lot. Not only the unemployed. There is a lot of everything in Lithuania (he is laughing). To say it generally. No, there's a lot of everything. There's a lot of unemployment and drunkenness and addiction to drugs. I don't know the statistics, I haven't taken any interest in that, thanks God. I don't need it. I want to distance from all that. Well, but to speak in general, compared to some... well, though they say that it is good now. I also noticed that the economic level of Lithuania is growing but... but... I heard somewhere that we are in the first place of all those countries in which economy grows fastest, we nearly take the first place in the world or something like that, well, but it rises, it does. But ordinary people do not feel that, they don't. Maybe those from the middle class do. I won't say that we live very poor, but, well... we have a three-room flat, but... but my mum got it in the soviet period. She got it when she was working at some institution, well, in a word, the flat and that's it, the furniture is also from those times. (...) (5.33)

The poverty that accompanies transformation will encourage many people to leave the country as soon as possible for the European Union – *'It will become a nightmare here and people will start leaving, all the roads will be free, people will be able to go whenever they want'* (5.24). However, as the history of Lithuanians emigrating to the United States before the Second World War shows, they will want to come back (5.24).

*'Experience and education'* (5.26) are essential to get a job and those, who need to survive without often live off the benefits they receive for having children – *'(...) Well, but look at these people, they are most often some drunkards or those on the edge of degradation'* (5.27). In principle, benefits and state support are good for people like him who are in trouble through no fault of their own. The level of benefits should in any case be kept low in order to avoid encouraging abuse. Furthermore, *'people themselves should be taken into consideration'* because benefits as such do not always help. In this context DIZAINERIS points to a *'big shortage of psychologists in general'*; these experts would be able to make these people *'aware of their own worth'* (5.28). On the other hand, *'the authorities also play a big role'* in this context. *'Politicians' promises are a dirty job,'* he was once told by one of his teachers; they forget their promises as soon as elections are over (5.29).

DIZAINERIS leaves no room for doubt in his belief that work is one of the duties of a *'good citizen'*. But it is also more than that. It also means *'self-respect'* and respect to the nation. In return, *'the duties of the state are to give jobs to its citizens so that they were satisfied with their lives'*. This applies in particular to young people, who work for a different state than that served by older people like his father, who nevertheless *'worked all his life for the public benefit'*. People like him deserve respect and *'earned their right to rest'* (5.42-47).

Altogether DIZAINERIS's account, like all the others associated with *Type II*, is not without ambiguities. For *Type III*, described in the following, this contradictory feature is paramount.

### 8.3.3 Type III – 'People don't even look for a job, some of them.'

The peculiarity of the third type lies in the fact that it embraces many features of both the 'externalising' first type and the 'internalising' second type without (cognitively) resolving the tension in either of the two directions. The economic transformation, which caused the lack of jobs *and* the scarce efforts of unemployed people to search for jobs are two parallel lines of argumentation. Sympathy for people rejecting low paid jobs or exploitative working conditions is the third aspect. Discontent with the state is here more directly linked to neglected responsibilities on unemployment. Going abroad is recognised as a legitimate option.

Unemployment is, on the one hand, part of a cluster of problems associated with a country in transition like Lithuania. People lose their jobs because of company bankruptcies; they do not get jobs because they are too old, ill-qualified, or both. On the other hand, the general image of unemployed people follows the negative stereotype that characterised the viewpoint of *Type II*. Yet references to 'real' unemployment as experienced by people from the respondents' close environment are in stark contrast to this. Withdrawing from work that does not pay by quitting or by leaving the country altogether is recognised as a legitimate path. Other push- and pull-factors of emigration are related to escaping low social security, enjoying life (perhaps despite being a single mother), bridging the time between graduation from school and being admitted to the preferred track of higher education, or simply earning money in a short time and (perhaps) returning to start over.

Work should be a pleasure and is clearly identified as an element of citizenship expectations towards both citizen and the state. Yet both parties play their part in corrupting this relation – some people fail or refuse to work, and the state and its agents are criticised for being unable to guarantee decent salaries or basic social security. In this respect the advantages of the Soviet system are emphasised. Nevertheless, the respondents associated with this type subscribe to the work-centred citizenship pact and express their commitment to it by striving for a good education, qualifications, and continuity. Generally, education (further or higher education) has priority over family formation.

Once again, the social backgrounds of the respondents attributed to this type are generally untroubled; however, the (wider) family may be affected by unemployment.

Alongside the work-related emigration of family members or acquaintances, this contributes to the somewhat extended knowledge horizon of representatives of this type with regard to work and unemployment.

*Example – GABIJA*

SAULIUS, the protagonist of the previous chapter, would be an example of this third type. GABIJA is another. She is 19 years old and is a first year student of business management in a college in Vilnius. She was not admitted to study business at university, but was finally accepted at one of the business colleges. She agreed in order to be able to go to the capital; originally she is from one of the bigger cities in Lithuania. Her mother is a retired engineer; her father owns a company and is still working. She has two siblings; both are more than ten years older than her. Her sister has a university degree in science but is now self-employed in a service job that she always wanted to do. GABIJA's brother, who only completed polytechnical education, left Lithuania some years ago with his then girlfriend to work in Spain; in the meantime they married there and now have two children. He left *'because he didn't have a job in Lithuania, well, he didn't find a really well-paid job and went there with friends'* (8.6). By doing construction work and getting to know a lot of people he managed to set up his own business and *'lives very well'* (8.6).

Although GABIJA's attitude towards leaving Lithuania is ambiguous she considers it an option. Apart from the experience of living in a foreign country, other good reasons to leave include the increasing inflation of education in the labour market, higher salaries and the altogether more generous benefits that allow some freedom, especially for women, which would be hard to get in Lithuania. She refers to a cousin who left for the UK when she was pregnant and in this way *'escaped'* marriage and, perhaps, poverty. After a period of living on *'very, very, very good'* benefits she established herself, *'found a job, (...) bought her own house (...) and already met a husband there'* (8.49). GABIJA concludes:

(...) I think that the majority of people, including my brother, say that they would like to come back if living conditions in Lithuania were the same as there. They would really come back. Because as it is difficult there, in a way it would be the same here but just that jobs are well-paid there, it is easier to survive there than here. Just because of that (8.49).

GABIJA's attitude towards unemployment and the unemployed is not one-dimensional. On the surface, she describes them as *'lazy'* and reluctant to accept certain jobs – *'Some people, well, they don't want, as I mentioned, to go to work and they don't work'* (8.34). On second thought, however, she identifies the dilemma of many people in this situation. Apart from alcohol and laziness, the real composition of the cocktail of unemployment also contains exploitation and low pay.

Interviewer: And so you said that there are a lot of unemployed people, why do you think that there are a lot of them?

GABIJA: Because some people...although there are a lot of, there are really a lot of work places, if you want to get a job, it is possible to get a job. But people don't want to go to work for a minimum (salary) twelve hours a day, (to work) over time. In general, they don't want a difficult job and some people maybe because of their laziness. 'I'd better sit at home without work, than I would work hard for five hundred (litas),' and something like that.... And a lot people think like that, and I think that there are a lot of unemployed just because of that, and more. So people maybe don't even look for a job, some of them, because if you look, I think, it is really possible to find a job and I don't know...

I: And what do you think about people who don't go to work, as you said, well, that they are lazy to work...

G: I do not have a good opinion about them because... Let's say, well, it depends on the job, as far as I've heard. Let's say, in shops, when you have to work for a minimum (salary), and people are not considered people there, and all of them are like animals, and they have to do a very hard physical job. In that case I understand it perfectly. Because this is exploitation of people. But people who don't go to work, let's say, who have nothing they go and beg, 'Give me money.' Or they are drunkards. I don't justify them. Because they could go to work and, at least for that minimum (salary), at least straighten up their lives minimally. So these are two, two (different) things. (8.24-25)

In fact, there obviously are criteria for finding a job. Some are external, like age, and related to the new market regime; they cannot possibly be overcome by individuals. GABIJA thinks that it is more difficult for older people to find a job despite their experience and illustrates this with the example of a woman in her 50s who cannot find a job after she became unemployed because of her former employer's bankruptcy. Social decline and substitute work are unavoidable; and come together with the devaluation of the individual and her skills.

(...) She worked as an accountant and that company went bankrupt and now she is fifty five and that's it. And nobody gives her a job because of age. (...) And it is impossible to find a job, she totally, well, she goes to the shops and everywhere. Although people talk about experience, an accountant, here, they need with experience and everything. There is no way she could find a job. And here she worked in that company for so many years and now she goes to people, cleans rooms to earn money. In the summer time she goes to gardens, weeds gardens, takes care of everything, and so on, because it is impossible to find a job. And it was very difficult for her psychologically. It was very difficult for her because she worked all the time, she earned almost, well, she really used to get good money. And one day, well, she, well, was fired just like that, because everything went bankrupt and that is it. And it was very, very difficult, and for her, and her family, and really, really... (...) (8.30).

GABIJA is convinced that providing those who want with work could improve the situation. The advantage of unemployment benefits is that people would go to the labour exchange and be actively involved looking for a job, which would literally keep them alive – '(...) *they might go to work at least for a minimum (salary), but still, they will go, they will work and will hold on to their lives*' (8.26). She also discusses some of the advantages of the old model with regard to some people's reluctance to work, claiming that '*everything was stricter*' under the Soviet regime and that there was '*more order*'. People had their duties, and were not '*so free*'; they could not thus refuse to work and '*ruin their lives*' (8.56). Now, the 'state' is not doing a good job and '*politicians*' are identified as the people responsible for this. They constitute an idle ruling class that is perceived as more affluent and ignorant of the

problems of common people. They even fail to provide support where it is most needed, i.e. when unemployment involves children. In the meantime the negotiation of pervasive issues of social justice is left to alternative but more credible arenas. Support comes in form of a by-product of the new voyeurism celebrated in the sideshows of capitalism with indicative names like *'I am looking for a job'*, or *'Generation of money'*, where public attention eventually helps single unemployed people to find jobs.

Interviewer: Aha. All right. So let's come back then to the unemployed people. We started, and I want to ask what do you think, how does society assess the unemployed? What does it think in general?

GABIJA: About unemployed... Let's say, in our politics, so these politicians, some of them totally don't give a damn about these people, those unemployed, those who don't have (anything) for their children. Well, they don't have money at all to let their children go to school, to feed them. And if it will be the same in the future, then it certainly will be very bad. But I think, there certain (TV) shows, well, like *'I am looking for a job'*. There also was a show *'Generation of money'* or something like that. And they help people to find a job. This is good, that they somewhat help people. I think. But in general today unemployed they are not really, they are not paid much attention, that they would be supported, that somebody would really really think (of them). So it is certainly not like that and all (people) have formed not too good an attitude to those unemployed. And this is not very good, I think. (GABIJA 8.33).

#### 8.3.4 Type IV – 'Oh, look, he doesn't work, but he has money.'

This type is represented by young people with one foot outside the triangle but, at the same time, one foot 'within', conforming to the stereotype in terms of appearance, behaviour, background, priorities, experiences, and even self-perception. Conventional features of unemployed people are reiterated together with external, economic reasons for unemployment. Anger and disappointment with regard to the state are strong and undermine citizenship expectations. Those identifying with this type have, typically, already crossed the boundaries of (work) legality and have a strong leaning towards forms of exit.

The negative stereotype of the unemployed is expressed without any subtext of exaggeration and stands alongside other, partly experienced, reasons for unemployment like the lack of jobs, devaluation of qualifications or the rejection of exploitative work that does not pay.

The importance of work is determined by money and independence rather than by an implicit citizenship contract. The obligation to work mainly refers to oneself (and dependents), be it in terms of status maintenance, drug addiction, or imagined family responsibilities. Work means a general source of income rather than formalised employment, and tends to go beyond legally recognised citizenship contributions. Going abroad is another strongly considered response to discontent, and in some cases has already been tried.

Trust in the usefulness of public employment service is shattered in this type, and the level of discontent with the state high. The latter's role as a supportive party is altogether



questioned. Despite the advantages lost in terms of work provision, the collapse of the Soviet model is not lamented but criticised for its continuing negative effect on society in terms of culture and the power of those who profited from its breakdown.

The representatives of *Type IV* are primarily male and generally 'more experienced' than the other respondents; this is partly reflected in terms of age. Their social background is typically problematic. Unemployment in the family, drug abuse, illegal activities, or personal loss places these young people at a disadvantage, which makes long-term plans almost impossible. Education, although recognised to be important, was interrupted or is inaccessible. Establishing a family and other life course decisions are postponed; earning a living is the priority.

#### *Example - MUSTAFA*

MUSTAFA is 22 years old and currently works as a craftsman for the minimum wage in Vilnius. Originally he is from a village and trained as a forester and woodcutter. However, after the breakdown of communism this profession, like so many others, was useless – *'When I graduated we were already, the third, the third generation of foresters and there was a hundred of us'* (23.26). When he was a teenager he became involved in illegal trade, an issue he tries to avoid during the interview, before another member of his family offered to join him on the job. MUSTAFA's father has had very different jobs in the course of the transformation, including *'veterinarian'* and *'tinsmith'*. His mother has been unemployed ever since she decided to give up her job in order to take care of his sister's child.

An additional problem that he needs to solve is that he does not have a single main language. At school, he was educated in Russian, and he experienced difficulties because his Lithuanian was very poor. He tells, for example, of how the teachers' attempt to push him through education despite his poor language skills was discovered by the supervising authority. The chances of consolidating his language skills are not very high:

Interviewer: What is your nationality then?

MUSTAFA: Hmm... I don't know how to say. International or so.

I: So what nationality do you think you are?

M: I don't know. For example, I did not write any nationality in my passport.

I: There isn't any?

M: No, because, for example, one of my grandfathers is Polish, the other Byelorussian. One grandmother is Russian, the other - Ukrainian. So who am I?

I: I see. Ok then, who do you consider yourself to be? A Lithuanian, a Russian, a Pole?

M: I don't know, I finished a Russian school. I know Lithuanian.

I: And your parents?

M: My parents speak Russian. I talk in Lithuanian with my father. With one sister I speak in Russian, with the other in Lithuanian (23.44).

For MUSTAFA work is indispensable and has two main qualities. On the one hand, work only really pays in its illegal form. On the other hand, legal work, a job, which can serve as a cover for other activities, has the advantage of creating '*responsibility*': one has to establish and follow a certain routine; it provides regular income that needs to be administered responsibly and is essential for a responsible life including family (23.9). He is very critical of those who neglect their family (23.35).

Any money earned has two different qualities. This is explained when he is asked whether he thinks the provision of jobs or benefits would be better for unemployed people.

Interviewer: And do you think they should be given jobs but not unemployment benefits?

MUSTAFA: Job is better. Well, what's the use of the benefit? They sit: 'Oh, there's nothing to be done.' They received a benefit - they drank it away and here they sit again. They do not have that responsibility, they think only about today. So today: 'Here, I worked somewhere, I earned 10 Litas, ayh, I have to drink it away.' And when you start working, then it is absolutely different. For example, when I work here, when I started earning this money, it makes me laugh. I see how much money I get and it already changes my attitude to the money that I earn normally. For example, with this money, well, I don't know, the last time I bought something with my salary money - I bought a CD on my salary money. And everything else, you could say, the salary is for the flat, to pay debts and that's it. For example, all my clothes, all the accessories, everything that I need, for example, to look well, to go out somewhere, to a bar or someone's birthday party, all these things are bought not on my salary. Well, anyway, I earn money, but I don't want to tell you how. I go home, I make a few calls, I find out - someone needs this, the other one needs that, so I bring these people together more or less and then there's some per cent for me. So you could say I dress on this per cent, and... I started this when I was seventeen. There (are) moments when [...] and with my ordinary salary, those some hundred Litas, so...

I: So why do you work then?

M: What?

I: So why do you work here then?

M: I need to, I cannot *not* work. If I stop working, automatically, you could say, they will see: 'Oh, look, he doesn't work, but he has money. Where does he get that money from, how does he support himself?' (23.29)

Work motivates people to achieve more, and allows them to establish a normal life. Not working or being deprived of work can trigger a vicious circle of discouragement that might be passed on to the next generation.

(...) Because somehow, well it is an obligation for a person to strive for something in life and not to stay at home, for example, without job thinking: 'Oh, I do not have a job, I do not have money.' And when you work, you somehow want to achieve much more. As for example, in his old age any person wants to live in a good flat and to have some little house in a suburb and to finish his life normally so that he could relax normally and say: 'I achieved everything what I could in my life. I supported my family as good as possible. I brought up my children the best way I could.' And everyone wants to bring up his children the best possible way. In order to bring them up, for example, you have to show your children that you work and that you are doing your best, because, for example, non-working parents, children themselves when they (see) their parents (are) not working (they) perceive all this thing somehow differently... Here, my father doesn't work. 'Father, why don't you work?' 'Because I don't want to work, there is no work.' They grow up and also sit at home thinking - 'Here, father doesn't work, maybe I also don't have to?' The same shit. (23.17)

Getting a job is very difficult, especially for '*ordinary*' people '*without any acquaintances*'; and getting and keeping a job you want is unlikely. Instead, '*You will have the one, which you will find*' (23.10,11). The public employment service can do little to ease the

situation, *'in fact you go to the labour exchange only to register'* (23.43). Access to education is also limited to people with money. The state and the politicians are perceived as ignorant of everyday problems; they are corrupt and evade the issue of unemployment; they offer little more than promises or appeasement by generously evening out unemployment.

(...) Really, this is ridiculous, so what can you say about such a government? Such government ate everything up. You could say they care only for themselves. They look: 'Is it good for me?' 'Yes.' And you will live on somehow. They care little for a single person. They care for Lithuania in general. 'Ah, here they work, here they don't. Well, if we mix. Fine, it's not a big unemployment' (23.41).

At least the problem of unemployment was solved during the Soviet era. Yet *'the soviets'* are responsible for the misery in the Baltic and, to an even greater extent, in the other former republics which are in an even worse situation than Lithuania (23.41). MUSTAFA anticipates the country's recovery, but what it needs is a renewal of people and culture. Those who lived under the old regime, including himself (at the age of 22!), need to be completely replaced by a new generation.

(...) This is Lithuania. I don't know, someone said that in order for Lithuania to reach something and live well you must wait until all people who lived under soviets will die off. So when I die, maybe my grandchildren will see better times and will live a really normal life. (...) (23.41)

With the support of others including his grandfather, who remain in Lithuania only because of their age and family responsibilities, MUSTAFA plans to leave the country to work abroad. He feels that he is unduly underpaid in his current job, which requires qualifications, and is determined to leave. Reflecting upon what he might be doing in 5 years he says: *'Surely, I will escape Lithuania. If there's a possibility, I (would) escape Lithuania immediately. I know that Lithuania will join the European Union and will reach its level in thirty years only'* (23.37).

#### 8.3.5 Type V – 'My parents are at home. There is no work. Unemployed.'

In the fifth type, unemployment is mainly explained by referring to external factors, and the lack of jobs that affects people living in rural areas in particular. However, prejudices towards the unemployed still form part of the argument, as well as references to their being involved in other money-earning activities. Going abroad is not an option. In view of the difficult situations of young people associated with this type, relations with the state are characterised by frustration rather than anger.

This type perceives unemployment as an omnipresent problem of the post-communist transformation with overwhelming everyday relevance, especially in rural areas. In this respect life was certainly easier and better in the Soviet Union. Although unemployment is clearly not considered to be a matter of choice, it is associated with negative individual features among the unemployed, which follow the general stereotype in a moderate way. Yet

being out of employment is also considered a part of what could be called 'survival work', such as farming, with the only alternative a job far away from the place of residence.

The importance of work is determined by poverty and is above a means of survival. The citizenship dimension of work has little significance because the state's responsibility is considered absent. Work is not provided where essential. The existence of state unemployment benefits is either denied or simply unheard of. However, the articulation of discontent takes the form of resignation rather than accusation. Mainly because of the immediacy of their problematic situation and their commitment to the survival of their household, going abroad is not considered.

Representatives of this type have the most disadvantaged social backgrounds; despite their youth, they clearly are among the losers of the transformation. Poverty, unemployment and uneducated parents as well as additional difficulties resulting from ethnicity and language problems leave them in despair and dependence. Their dropping out of education is typically associated with the necessity to support their families. Their only option for gaining more qualifications is through the labour exchange and short-term training courses offered for people of at least 18 years. Postponing entry into the labour market is irrelevant; postponing family formation is a matter of circumstance. Other factors contributing to their disadvantages are non-Lithuanian ethnic origin and residence in rural areas.

#### *Example – MARIUS*

MARIUS is a 17-year-old school dropout who lives in a village with his parents. He has two sisters; both are married, one has four children, two twins. His material misery is obvious and recorded by the interviewer in the postscript with the following words: *The respondent was almost a skinhead. He looked like a needy person. His clothes looked quite poor: napless jacket and jeans, cast-off shoes.*

Both of his parents are about 50 years old, former farm-labourers, and unemployed.

Well...and my parents...My parents are at home...There is no work. Unemployed (22.10)

There were...such collective farms, I don't know... So they used to work then, and now, when all those started...those communities (i.e. cooperatives of farmers established during post-communism; H.R.), so they haven't had jobs since then. They tried but... either too old or too many years (22.43).

Only a few weeks after having started a school-based vocational course to be a woodworker, MARIUS became a truant. Although he regrets this and is convinced of the importance of education, he never tried to start over. Instead he *'stayed at home'*, as he says, because *'there is lots of work'*. He helps his parents with their gardens and a few animals, and collects firewood in the winter (22.17). The only nearby workplaces he can think of are some

lumber mills, but either there are no vacancies or he is *'too young'*, he has been told. He would take any job to earn money – *'There is no difference for me what job to do. I do any job that is necessary to be done'* (22.22). Asked by the interviewer whether his dropping out of school and eagerness to work had anything to do with his parents' situation, MARIUS points to their difficult financial condition and emphasises the importance of not being a burden to them.

(...) It is difficult for them, well, there is money sometimes, there is no money some other times. So I have to (find a job; H.R.) anyway. They won't support me for ever. (2) I have to earn money myself (22.43).

His family is not the only one in the village that suffers from unemployment. All of them *'live hard'* and with little money. They struggle for day-to-day survival, because *'one needs food anyway, or to pay for water, electricity, or clothes, so...well, now everywhere money is necessary'* (22.47).

Interviewer: I see, and now, you said that your parents are unemployed, aren't they. Are there many people without jobs in your environment?

MARIUS: There are many.

I: Many? And what do they do? Also household works at home or...?

M: Some at home. Some do farming...something like this (4), I don't know how to put it. Well, there are no jobs. So some live... some do not have anything to eat, so they borrow money from other people... They live hard (5). Those who get pensions, they also do not live well, they hardly survive. Where no one has a job, well, there is nothing... even to buy bread, they have to borrow. They live on the nod, you borrow money or you buy things on credit at the shop (22.37).

MARIUS thinks that unemployment benefits are a good thing but he has the impression that there are no such benefits for *'us villagers'* (22.42). Some of the unemployed are *'lazybones'* who *'want everything for free'*, as he says, but the first thing that comes to his mind is that they probably simply *'do farming'* or are *'busy with their gardens or something else'* (22.50). He does not mention alcoholism or benefit abuse by having children. The state should care more for the people, and altogether the situation was much better when Lithuania still was a Soviet republic. It is true that work was difficult but on the other hand *'nothing cost as much as it does now; for example, bread or something else, everything was cheaper earlier'* (22.44). And everybody had work, as he notes with some resignation:

Well how...earlier they would give jobs, they would give a place to live, so that you could live. Well, you work, you earn some money and you get it, I don't know, they would pay people somehow. (4) You earn and you live. Earlier there was no lack of anything, and now [...]. Ayyyh... (22.44).

According to MARIUS the people's general attitude towards poor and unemployed people living in rural areas is unfair and obviously painful for a young man without any chance of escaping his situation. In the following sequence, which includes the longest monologue of his entire interview, he illustrates this common prejudice and its everyday consequences through his own sufferings from misrecognition, injustice and discrimination at

school. The perception of a polarisation of society along the lines of the haves and have-nots is not unique to this interview.

Interviewer: And now, look, have you... well, let's say, the unemployed, yeah, how do other people think about them? When a person does not have a job - what is the other people's attitude to them? What do you think? How have you faced it? What have you observed?

MARIUS: A person in the country, how can I put it, doesn't have... Well how can I say, well, a person does not have anything to eat or something like that. So that's it. So at once, how can I say, those who are better off think at once, that one is a complete peasant.

I: Kind of outcasts? Can it be put this way?

M: Well... At our school there would be this, one of the teachers... an ex teacher. She has got several shops, so she lives well. And, well, for example, her son and I, we were classmates. There was this teacher of history at school, we were answering (the teacher's questions) and the other one says, well, this son of the teacher says: 'I don't know the lesson,' he says, 'I hope I am not asked'. And I knew everything almost by heart then, it wasn't much, a paragraph on history. Then the teacher asked him, no, she asked me first. I recited everything almost by heart. She said: 'Sit down, you get five' (i.e. 10 is the best; H.R.). Then the other one, without knowing anything, said what he had heard from me and she gave him ten. So, the assessment is done, how can I put it, according to people, those who (2) well...who, how can I put it, are better off or something like that ... And the one who, well, already is inferior, is from an inferior family, so that one is at once different. That's how it is considered... (3)

I: One gets such a negative, such a... So this is your very own experience, the way you have experienced it... (2) Does it often happen, let's say, either to you or your parents, or other friends... There are such things? They happen?

M: Of course. How can I put it? Regularly. If now (2) in the country (4), if a person is better-off, so he is like a sort of a boss. And the one who is poorer, he is a nil, according to them... (2) (...) (22.40).

#### **8.4 Discussion**

The findings represented in this typology point in two directions. On the one hand, they tentatively indicate links between a young person's status and experiences and their particular way of interpreting the relations within the triangle of (non-) solidarity. In this sense, it is a 'typology of the stereotyper'. One aspect that is particularly striking is the fact that in some cases stereotypical images of the unemployed are maintained even by those whose families are affected by the phenomenon. I will come back to this point in the concluding remarks. On the other hand, the findings provide an integrated representation of the issue of post-communist unemployment within the proposed framework and its main dimensions. In this sense, it is a typology of the currently available triangular configurations in the perspective of young citizens. In the following discussion, illustrated with additional selected quotations, I will 'deconstruct' the types and discuss the categories by suggesting an alternative reading of the three main dimensions - i.e. the image of the unemployed, the perceived role of the state, and the relevance of the option of leaving the triangle. In this way, it is possible to review and differentiate some of the conclusions of the previous Chapter 7, which were based on the discussion of one case only.

#### 8.4.1 The unemployed – between stereotype and exception

The representations of unemployed people fall roughly into two categories; often, both are proposed at the same time. (a) The general stereotype is devastating and tenacious even where unemployment affects the wider family. (b) The alternative category is heterogeneous and consists of 'exceptions'.

(a) According to the general stereotype unemployed people are 'asocial' and lazy and prefer unemployment and other state benefits, and alcohol, to working at all, or to making any effort to get one of the many jobs seen to be available. Even if young people are aware of some of the rather unpleasant features of the world of work in contemporary Lithuania, they generally insist on the necessity that people participate in employment. Non-participation is directly associated with a deficient character acquired through unfavourable (family) socialisation experiences; even the argument that it is innate is mentioned. Women are additionally suspected of having children in order to receive state benefits and sometimes even of disposing of them afterwards.

(b) Despite the unambiguity of many statements, the negative and stereotypical image is not all-consuming. There is another dimension, which could be termed self-limitation or reflection in their allegations, indicating that there is still space for a negotiation of 'varieties of images of unemployment'. This more moderate tone generally applies to the second, more heterogeneous category of unemployed people. The young people's accounts are full of examples of this second category, mostly located within their closer environment: for example, an unemployed mother, or other relatives, or neighbours etc. Altogether these examples qualify as authentic exceptions to the stereotype; they deserve sympathy and well as pity.

The two images of the unemployed, the general and the concrete, are largely incompatible, a phenomenon that is a common feature in established unemployment economies (for Germany see Uske 2000). On one side there is the stereotypical and anachronistic idle alcoholic living on state benefits, or begging for money; or the young mother in the village having one child after another in order to receive maternity benefits. These figures are certainly part of post-communist society, but tend to recall the social outcasts that people out of work were during communism.<sup>214</sup> This image is part of the post-communist variation of the 'ideology of social parasitism' that Sennett (1998: 140) describes

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<sup>214</sup> For some Russian examples of 'post-soviet parasites' with no desire to work see Ashwin et al. (2006: 119-122).

as one of the pathological features of the social bond in capitalism.<sup>215</sup> On the other side, 'real' victims of the (labour) market are considered exceptions from both the exaggerated image and the ideology of individual responsibility. The five types represent various combinations of these two contradictory images. For instance, *Type III*, represented by GABJA (as well as SAULIUS - see Chapter 7), embraces polarised accounts of both dimensions; *Type II*, represented by DIZAINERIS, reiterates all the prejudices of individual insufficiency; *Type I*, represented by WIZARD, emphasises (external) societal transformation.

The following section reconstructs the duties of the state towards the unemployed identified by young people and suggests that, despite the tendency to withdraw from many areas, the catalogue of responsibilities that the state should fulfil is still differentiated.

#### 8.4.2 The state – troubled and potentially irresponsible

A citizen's 'duty' to work is little contested in the interviews. Working and paying taxes makes the individual '*part of this collective activity, of this huge anthill*' (XXX, 30.34), as one of the respondents puts it. Yet there are also isolated remarks suggesting that the individual might actually benefit more than the state. On the other hand, and in line with survey research into post-communist views on the role of the state (Örkény/Székelyi 2000; Roller 1994), the young people's accounts emphasise the state's responsibility in the context of societal transformation. The state is (a) not released from its responsibilities with regard to the collective and the individual experience of unemployment and hardship; (b) where the level of state involvement is criticised, the new regime's performance, as compared to the socialist system, is questioned together with its democratic efficiency and decency.

(a) The state's duty to provide for its citizens - at least on a basic level - is not contested despite isolated bitter remarks indicating that some young respondents do not expect or 'need' anything from the state. The provision of basic 'social guarantees' is one of the key tasks of the state; these include: sufficient post-employment pensions for older people who deserve it, free education for young people, and work for those who are willing but cannot find it. The state appears to be failing its citizens with regard to all of these basic requirements. Pensions are inadequate in light of what people contributed during socialism; access to education has become difficult, especially for people without money or the 'right' contacts. With regard to

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<sup>215</sup> Sennett's cautious observation with regard to the functioning of such stereotypes applies here as well: 'The attack on the welfare state (...) treats those who are dependent on the state with the suspicion that they are social parasites, rather than truly helpless. The destruction of welfare nets and entitlements is in turn justified as freeing the political economy to behave more flexibly, as if the parasites were dragging down the more dynamic members of society' (Sennett 1998, 139).



work provision, public labour exchange services are criticised for being inefficient, while private employment agencies are criticised for being expensive and for profiting from unemployment without actually offering jobs.

Providing those who wish it with work is considered a win-win scenario, as the improvement of living conditions would have positive feed-back effects. The advantage of unemployment benefits is that people would be forced to return to the labour exchange and would, supposedly, be actively involved in searching for a job. Finally, work or unemployment benefits have the positive effect of literally keeping some people alive and giving them a chance to live in dignity. It is something '*to hold on to*', as one of the respondents puts it:

I think that it is...that is, I think of it as a positive thing, that a person is supported like this. Because if, for example, he doesn't get a job anywhere and if he even didn't receive anything then what... I don't know, simply to kill oneself, this is what happens when there is nothing to hold on to, a person doesn't have anything in life. Where from? Let's say, if one wouldn't have money, nothing, no food, anything, one lives on a garbage dump, one can say. I think that it could even be increased (...) (DEIDA, 4.48).

However, as there are two categories of unemployed people, there should be two types of response by the state. Consistent with the distinctions made by Lithuanian unemployment bureaucracy between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' unemployed people (Juska/Pozzuto 2004; see above Chapter 7), young people agree that there are differences in entitlement to support. The only thing that prevents those unemployed people who abuse alcohol and benefits from being totally marginalised is the fact that they usually have families with children, who deserve to be supported.

(b) Although these young people lived only their very first years during the Soviet regime, they still relate some of the perceived shortcomings of the present regime to features of the previous system. The loss of employment guarantees, social security, a modest but acceptable living standard for all people, and, more generally, 'order' are repeatedly lamented. This by no means implies that they would welcome a return to the old system; however, they understand people who see the former regime through rose-tinted glasses.

What seems even more important is the fact that they directly blame 'politicians' or members of parliament for being corrupt and ignorant of the problems of the common people, including the unemployed, as well as for failing to represent their interests and needs. While the usual democratic fora for the debate and solution of social justice issues apparently lose their significance, the media seem to take the lead in providing a space for urgent discussions. Reference to TV-shows featuring unemployed people and even finding solutions to their problems is common. The issue at stake also extends to wider questions of citizenship. State

involvement has no sentimental features, it is a responsibility that requires individuals' commitment if it is to exceed the most basic provisions. There is no doubt that citizens are expected to work as well as, for instance, to participate in elections. The former seems obvious and has an egoistical dimension; the latter is problematic as the outcome of voting seems discouraging. Expectations of the state include relief from basic insecurities, the clearing of the '*mist*', as XXX (30.36) calls it.

Only a few respondents see the state's poor performance as a temporary problem related to transformation for which nobody can be blamed. The overwhelming reaction to questions related to the actual contributions of the state and its agents to the well-being of common people is negative. These deep suspicions towards the democratic legitimacy of the government are not isolated expressions of dissatisfaction. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that discontent is a widespread feature of the post-communist transformation more than 15 years after it began. For instance, a recent policy survey of former communist states, covering countries from Albania to Uzbekistan and with a sample of 29.000 respondents, had difficulty finding a positive angle on the fact that there is 'strong distrust of the main political institutions (the government, parliament and political parties)' (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007: 9-10). Some 60% of the respondents in Lithuania distrust the government; about 70% distrust the parliament; and about 75% distrust political parties; close to 70% do not think that there is less corruption now than in 1989 (ibid. 59). The five types introduced in this chapter represent different levels of disappointment with the way the state is seen as neglecting its responsibilities. Their support or rejection of the old system varies accordingly. The perceived insufficiencies of the new social model are expressed through criticism, anger, and frustration. The final section below discusses an additional set of responses summarised under the label of 'exit' that are more consequential.

#### 8.4.3 Beyond the triangle – exit options

Unemployed peoples' status and the perceived role of the state are sources of dissatisfaction, yet discomfort is not only expressed orally. Another form of response that is considered in the typology is actually leaving the triangle. From the interviews, three such modes can be distinguished and labelled according to Hirschman's (1993) heuristic of exit, voice and loyalty. Only the first mode refers to exit in the narrow sense. However, I argue that all three represent ways of questioning the triangle and are, thus, modes of 'exiting' its framework of (non-)solidarity and citizenship. Each mode reveals certain weaknesses of the

triangular configuration and partly undermines its foundation. The argumentation is substantiated with selected additional examples.

(a) Leaving the country is the most obvious form of exit. *'In the soviet period one could work only here, in our country and only for the good of our country'* (KIRA, 18.32), as one of the respondents says, referring to the closed character of the Soviet triangle. The recent option of emigration implies a 'shift' and substitution of the triangle, replacing the 'state' and the 'other' (i.e. the unemployed) and establishing another triangle in a completely new configuration and context. The main reasons for this choice are associated with an attempt to increase life chances and quality: getting a job and escaping idleness and low social security, enjoying life (perhaps despite being a single mother), or simply earning money in a short time and returning to start over.<sup>216</sup> By leaving the country the individuals escape from an unsupportive state, and, in the case that they remain unemployed, avoid both insufficient welfare and the very stigma of unemployment. The promises of the transformation are finally fulfilled abroad.<sup>217</sup>

The idea of substituting the triangle is, for instance, expressed by XXX:

(...) Those, who go to work abroad, so I fully support them, I mean, because, we should, I mean, if we pay taxes to our state but it doesn't even give us any guarantees that we deserve. And I, for example, I really think that I deserve social (insurance) as well as, you know, all these (benefits) for studies and everything. I mean, that it is actually better to leave to work abroad, though legally, and you would pay taxes there for the other state but you would also earn that money that, you know, that you deserve and that you certainly are able to earn (XXX, 30.29).<sup>218</sup>

(b) The second form of leaving the triangle is less obvious. Exit through refusing to work for a minimal salary or in unfavourable conditions is different from being unemployed, desperate, idle and drunk. The latter is part of the stereotype of the unemployed and can be seen as a pathological form of 'loyalty' in Hirschman's sense, that is, as passive 'suffering in

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<sup>216</sup> Tisenkopfs (1995: 10-11) discusses the emigration of young Latvians as an exit option from a life as 'street boys'. However, he does not explicitly apply Hirschman's trilogy. Forms of regional mobility among young people are relevant where training possibilities are offered in the context of a dual VET-system, for instance in eastern Germany (Steiner 2004ab). In terms of publicly funded training positions the role of the state is also important with regard to exit decisions.

<sup>217</sup> These hopes of improving one's situation do not necessarily come true and are risk being thwarted by the co-evolution of post-communist forms of freedom and new modes of coercion and exploitation abroad. A recent investigation by the British Broadcasting Corporation into the reality of labour migration to the UK by an undercover Lithuanian journalist who pretended to be an unskilled worker without language skills, reports about the channels through which Lithuanian workers join the 'immigrant underclass'. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6593469.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6593827.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6593321.stm>; last accessed 21.07.2007.

<sup>218</sup> Arguments for *not* leaving the country which were at times put forward together with perceived shortcomings are not discussed here. The analysis of the interplay between (anti)push and (anti)pull factors of emigration would go beyond the scope of this chapter. In any case, the arguments range from missing opportunities to patriotism and variations of chauvinism.

silence' (Adnanes 2004: 796).<sup>219</sup> The mode of exit that I refer to here is not an 'antagonist of voice', but its companion. On the occasion of the end of the German Democratic Republic, Hirschman (1993) revisited his conceptual pair of exit and voice – loyalty as third option had been laid aside by then – and found that, like partners in an unequal couple, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can actually reinforce each other. In the late GDR, Hirschman discovered a 'spectacular case of collaboration of exit and voice' (ibid. 177). The point is that exit as a newly won right 'changes the human agents involved'. In the GDR people started exploring their new range of choices and some, realising they were not alone, promoted staying in the country without accepting the system.

On the basis of my data I would tentatively argue that a similar collaboration of exit and voice is observable with regard to unemployment in Lithuania. However, with wages as the central source of dissatisfaction, two antagonistic groups may evolve – employees protesting against low minimum wages versus employers protesting against a minimum wage they still consider being too high in view of the unemployment problem. Unemployment constitutes subjective values of labour. This observation is captured in one of DEIDA's accounts:

DEIDA: (...) I was told that in Vilnius people do not work for five hundred (litas),<sup>220</sup> because it is too low for a month. I am not sure it is like that, but I was told.

Interviewer: Why do you think it is more difficult in X (small town)?

DEIDA: Because here unemployment is very high, and people are simply exploited. They really pay less than they would pay in Vilnius. For example, my father works, he said that if he worked in Vilnius, he would get considerably more money, at least one thousand litas<sup>221</sup> more for sure. Employees simply protested. (Employers) say: 'This is X (small town) and everything is said with this. If you worked somewhere else, maybe you would be able to get it.' Because if you say something, you will be fired, and there is a huge line of people waiting to take your place. And people work in order to have a job (DEIDA, 4.42).

XXX makes a similar observation. On two occasions during the interview he refers to a 'girl' featured in a TV show declaring that she refuses to work at a supermarket chain for a minimum salary. At first, she is introduced as a person who does not understand that things have changed and that they need to be ready to make concessions – *'it stands for the Lithuanian point of view somehow'*, XXX (30.22) concludes. The second time, the very same 'girl' appears at the end of a long passage where he contemplates pensions and wages in Lithuania and abroad. This time he finds that her protest is legitimate.

(...) So, that salaries are so low here, it is quite a big problem here. And it has to do with a lot of things here. I mean, why do people not want to go to work? Because maybe they really say, as that girl who said that, 'I don't want to work for those three hundred litas.'<sup>222</sup> Of course, she exaggerates a bit, but in

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<sup>219</sup> Indeed, this may in any case have been the 'tranquilliser function' of alcohol in socialism, as addiction probably involves the highest level of commitment *and* makes expressions of voice unlikely.

<sup>220</sup> About 150 Euros.

<sup>221</sup> About 300 Euros

<sup>222</sup> About 90 Euros.

principle she is right. And if she earned six hundred litas,<sup>223</sup> it would not be much of a relief in her life. I mean, life will not become much better compared to that benefit or something (XXX 30.28).

Non-work as protest and voice is more a potential category than of real relevance in the current post-communist context. In all five types work is an important and unquestioned element of normal life, yet its connotations vary and the approval of the citizenship dimension of work as a contribution and a means of social integration depends on the perceived role of the state. In addition, non-work is not an option because it comes so close to the stereotype of the unemployed. Altogether, expressions of discontent with low wages and exploitation at work still seem to be a '*private* activity'. In order to become effective and visible this activity needs to develop 'into a broad movement of *public* protest', as Hirschman (1993: 198) writes about the articulation of the people's anger in the late GDR.<sup>224</sup>

(c) The third way of undermining the triangle is the least obvious but most intriguing with regard to follow-up research. It consists of the conversion of the forms of free-riding the system which were common under socialism. This point refers to the observation made by Juska/Pozzuto (2004; see Chapter 7) that 'formally unemployed' people continue to enjoy a high social status where they have informal sources of income and remain registered at the labour exchange only in order to receive benefits. In a society where forms of cheating the state, ranging from corruption among politicians to benefits abuse among the socially disadvantaged, are common ways of reproducing socialist features of the individual-state relationship, these 'formally unemployed' people find ways of combining the advantages of the two worlds. On the one hand, as far as their high levels of informal activity are concerned, they enjoy the recognition attached to the new achievement ideology. This exhibition of activity, on the other hand, allows them to take advantage of the remnants of a culture where people 'were even admired for their capacities to wangle the state' (ibid. 13). Above all, both strategies produce an income.

In my point of view, these strategies represent post-communist variations of 'underlife' in Goffman's sense (1990), or 'individual algorithms of activity' readjusting the gap between the system and the people's needs in the sense of Marody (1988: 104), as discussed at the beginning of Chapter 5.<sup>225</sup> Socialist patterns of 'working the system' have obviously survived the transformation and are articulated in forms of benefit abuse already associated with the stereotypical image of the unemployed. The reason for which I classify these forms as ways

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<sup>223</sup> About 180 Euros.

<sup>224</sup> Cleaveland's (2005) study of female welfare recipients maintaining their dignity through 'small acts of contestations and resistance' including the refusal to do certain jobs is indicative of the cross-cultural relevance of this dimension of exit from a local triangle.

<sup>225</sup> For an overview of popular forms of 'second economy' in communist societies see Los (1987).

of transcending the current triangle is that they constitute a reference and commitment to habitual individual-state relations that have survived their official expiry date.<sup>226</sup> In other words, as a challenge to the validity of the current triangle pointing in the opposite direction to the first pattern of exit, cheating the state constitutes a somewhat bizarre form of 'loyalty', where socialist patterns of individual-state relations are ritualistically reproduced. To be precise, cheating the state is a form of loyalty to the past and the lost system together with related patterns of behaviour.

The availability of informal sources of income, including criminal activities, is an especially relevant feature of *Type IV*. Instead, issues including the benefit abuse by inactive unemployed people, the 'production' of children for benefits, the necessity of bribes for education or employment, and the corruptness of political agents are criticised by young people across the classification. The practice of utilising and exploiting state structures for organising and optimising one's work and income situation is only explicitly indicated in a few interview passages, as illustrated below. The first example is a knowledgeable account of how to utilise the new institutions of labour management for searching for a job '*by yourself*'. The second example concerns the potentially unfavourable consequences of informal work, of being '*a sort of unemployed*' person, and includes a critical reflection on another triangular configuration that changed with the post-communist transformation, i.e. the triangle of employment consisting of the individual, the state, and the employer.

The jobcentre doesn't offer anything. You mostly look for a job by yourself and then... if you want, you can agree with the employer that he doesn't register with the jobcentre, because those from the jobcentre also look for a job (for you). And, for example, one of my friends has a job and she is also (registered) at the jobcentre, but what is not registered at the jobcentre is that she is working. So, she said, that if the jobcentre would offer her a better job, so she would go there and leave the one that she has now. So it is like this...you have to look for a job by yourself (NATALIJA, 24.13).

(...) All these benefits - there are a lot... well, how to say it, there is not only one person that abuses it. He has an unregistered job and additionally gets the unemployment allowance. So... he harms himself, I mean, financially he harms himself, because his pension and everything else depends on his years of work. (...) So OK, but look, if you take a registered job, you... OK, let's say, the employer, if you are not registered then one does not have to pay taxes for you. But think about it, your social, SODRA (Lithuanian social insurance; H.R.)... Let's say, what guarantees do you have? None. (No) benefits in this job, no one will pay your medical costs, because you are not registered. 'You are not our employee.' The manager can say the same: 'But he doesn't work for us.' (...) And they are the ones to loose. It is not a problem of the state. No. This is, let's say, not the problem (of the state) that they have decided so. The problem of the state is that it looses, it looses money. It does not receive taxes from the employee, and additionally it pays when he works somewhere in addition (unregistered). So, the budget looses and the person looses at the same time. (...) As far as I know, there have been cases that ... Let's say, an accident. An employee gets killed and his family then gets some kind of support from that company and the state. Now, you seem to be unemployed but you have worked there, so you will get nothing from this company.

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<sup>226</sup> By no means does this imply that such phenomena cannot be observed in contexts without a socialist past. Yet it should be possible to identify differences with regard to the origin and temporal direction of such activities as being oriented either towards the past as a 'because-motive', or towards the future as an 'in-order-to-motive'. For this distinction in the orientation of action see Chapter 10.

And if you work (formally) in this company you have insurance and you get the safest conditions while you work. And, God forbid, if some accident happens, so the company, nobody else will have to pay. Thus, it should make an effort... The employer, the person himself, and the state have to understand that. (...) (INETA, 11.39).

Altogether, the differences between the three exit options can be rephrased within a citizenship framework. *Leaving the country* to work abroad is an answer to welfare-induced discontent: it means using the new right of free movement, a right that socialist citizens had long awaited and that was extended further with Lithuania's accession to the European Union. Thus, going abroad may still entail an implicit statement of the superiority of 'the West'. *Refusing to work* for a minimum salary or refusing to work at all is the expression of another new citizenship right. Although it may just as easily be an expression of protest against exploitation at work as an indication of incapability to cope with post-communist complexity or a kind of paralysis in view of the discrepancy between the minimum wage and living costs. Finally, *'underliving'* the new system is the prolonging of lost informal citizenship 'rights' associated with 'the past'. It is a strange form of loyalty to the old system ultimately indicating a form of 'split-citizenship'. All three forms of exit question the norm of an employment-centred life course according to western standards, at least within the current post-communist triangular configuration. They do not, however, question the necessity to work as such.

## 8.5 Conclusion

The juxtaposition of stereotypical and supportive images of the unemployed, of internal and external explanations, and of theoretical and practical sources of knowledge is common to many respondents (see Table 8.2), and reflected in all the types of the classification. Nevertheless, it is most pronounced in *Type III*. In essence, it indicates the confrontation of novel criteria for achievement with a reality of mostly modest and sometimes downright miserable, but improving, living conditions. This point, which refers generally to the problem of 'contradictory consciousness' (Cheal 1979) is not conceptually innocent. Following the knowledge sociology outlined by Schutz (1967) and Schutz/Luckmann (1973) this inconsistency is also not surprising. In the sphere of daily life, knowledge is generally incoherent, partially unclear and characterised by contradictions.<sup>227</sup> With regard to the setting up of a post-socialist social world in general, as well as with regard to the establishment of social relations with the contemporary figure of the unemployed, this inconsistency points to the prevalence of inadequate 'typification schemata', typical modes of (mis-)recognition. In (perhaps overly) simple terms, one could say that the experiences of an early post-communist

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<sup>227</sup> See in particular Schütz's essay about the knowledge problem of the figure of the stranger (Schutz 1964a); also Chapter 10.

young person like SAULIUS cannot (yet) change the stock of knowledge available through transmission and socialisation. Furthermore, the figure of the unemployed is, in his case, characterised by such a high 'degree of anonymity' (i.e. remoteness from direct experience) that there is little chance that his social relation with a more or less anonymous contemporary in a 'they-orientation' (i.e. to the unemployed as an 'unknown' figure) be converted into a more intimate one with a 'fellow-man' in a 'thou-orientation' (i.e. to the unemployed as 'one of us', a common or at least functional part of the market society) (see Schutz/Luckmann 1973: chapter 2, B, 5).<sup>228</sup>

Yet can we realistically expect this conversion of perspectives to come about? Can we expect the status of unemployment and the image of the unemployed in (post-communist) capitalism to take the form of an 'appropriate' representation in the sense of 'a necessary and de-individualised aspect of the labour market' (Reiter/Craig 2005: 38)? It seems we cannot, at least according to what the literature on social justice and system justification attitudes suggests. Whilst it is true that the acceptance of inequalities in general is still lower in the post-communist East than in the West, individualistic explanations are increasingly absorbed (Kreidl 2000). Stephenson (2000: 98), comparing public beliefs in causes of wealth and poverty in Russia and Estonia, concludes that the 'great amount of individualistic blame' heaped on the poor can probably be explained 'by persisting Soviet era beliefs and the relatively recent recognition and conceptualization of poverty'. This indicates the prevalence of the phenomenon of 'split-consciousness', which maintains that structural and individual explanations of social problems are not exclusive nor coherent. According to Kreidl (2000), in post-communism these two explanations are complemented by a third one emphasising fatalistic aspects. More recent studies, falling either explicitly or implicitly into the tradition of political or social-psychological research into justice pioneered by scholars like Lane (1959, 1962) and Lerner (1980, 2003), confirm this general trend. It is common to believe that one gets what one deserves, and that the status quo of a given system, whatever its features, is worth preserving (e.g. Jost/Hunyady 2002, 2005). Obviously, this is a simplified interpretation. But in essence it appears to be true for young people in both the East and the West (Lowe et al. 1988; Dalbert/Sallay 2004), and even for low-status indigenous children in

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<sup>228</sup> On frustrated expectations for changes in stereotypes through the 'influence of personal contacts', Schutz/Luckmann (1973: 85) point to the inertia of knowledge and typifying schemata of meaning that are usually taken for granted and unproblematic: 'My experiences of contemporaries do indeed change my stock of knowledge of the social world, and the typifications underlying a they-relation can be modified. But this happens only to a negligibly small extent, as long as the sphere of interest, which determined the original use of the type, remains unchanged.'



a country as poor as Bolivia (Henry/Saul 2006). These beliefs are either ideological and illusionary, or part of a coping system.<sup>229</sup>

The present study supports these findings. The accounts of respondents with disadvantaged backgrounds in particular confirm the apparent universal need for identifying and rejecting a certain social group that 'deserves' to be marginalised, even if the criteria for doing so reflect features of one's own situation.<sup>230</sup> Yet on the basis of my findings, I want to add two points. First, the social construction of what is often labelled the 'underclass' (e.g. Wilson 2006) seems to draw, in the post-communist context, heavily on categories from the past system. It builds on a group that used to be marginalised and incorporates a strong and anachronistic stereotype from the very beginning. Second, in view of the findings, I do not share the opinion that dissatisfaction with the current stratification system 'does not necessarily lead to an increase in potential for political action', as Kreidl (2000: 173) maintains. This assumption is blind to more subtle forms of 'political action' that existed in and survived beyond the communist system. The three modes of exit, of undermining the triangle of (non-)solidarity, are examples of this. Admittedly, the degree of organisation of related activities and behaviour is low, and does not take the form of open protest or movements. Yet emigration as a form of protest is not at all irrelevant in scope. Nevertheless, it is an empirical challenge to grasp these forms of political action.

Finally, some remarks upon the triangle. The typology introduced in this chapter suggests that private articulations of misrecognition towards the unemployed are not independent of public articulations. The exact associations within the triangular configurations cannot of course be identified in a qualitative-explorative study. Yet the idea of 'configuration analysis' could be further elaborated. Following Elias/Scotson's (1965) study of 'we'/they' relations in a local community of 'established' and 'new' working class settlers in the English midlands during the 1950s and early 1960s, one could argue that the establishment of insider/outsider relations in a society needs the third party of 'the state', even where it appears to be invisible. (Non-)solidarity is always 'embedded';<sup>231</sup> and, as Struck (2003) suggests, private and public forms of (non-)solidarity appear bound together in a process of co-evolution.

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<sup>229</sup> The categories of pride, dignity, and distinction that are able to advance the argument in a more sociological direction, should also be mentioned (e.g. Lamont 2000, Svallfors 2006).

<sup>230</sup> At 24 years of age, RIMAS, the oldest of the respondents, remarks: '*Essentially, it is the herd instinct to gobble the weakest. That's normal, that's nature.*' (RIMAS, 25.18)

<sup>231</sup> This is a reference to Block's (2003) suggestion of the 'concept of the always embedded market economy' maintaining that state action can *never* be disregarded in the shaping of economies.

Thus, a socialisation approach which explicitly considers the performance of 'the state' and its agents (not just their representation in the media) could be adopted. Although Elias's notion of 'figuration' has been criticised for its lack of explanatory power (Layder 1986: 380), it provides an intriguing descriptive and analytic tool for the study of 'networks of unequal power holders' (ibid.). Its strength seems to lie precisely in its emphasis on non-intentionality in the study of largely unplanned processes (Bogner 1986).<sup>232</sup> The evolving shape of the triangle is one such figuration that, perhaps unintentionally, produces different kinds of employment-mediated citizenship and solidarity, as well as related attitudes on the life course. In this way, 'the state' and its representatives are included on the list of socialising agents at the same level as the more conventional instances of family, peers, school etc. (Hurrelmann/Ulich 1991).

The findings of the present study indicate that the meanings attached to work and un/employment by these young people directly depend on their perception of the state's performance on the issue of unemployment and related problems. Obviously, their social backgrounds mediate this perception. Correspondingly, the consolidation of the norm of the life course as an institutional programme organised around formal employment depends on how the state fulfils its duties within the triangular configuration. In other words, and more in the sense of a hypothesis for follow-up research, it seems that in order for *sociation through employment* to become effective in post-communism, *socialisation for employment* requires a positive reference to an active and visible state commitment to employment.

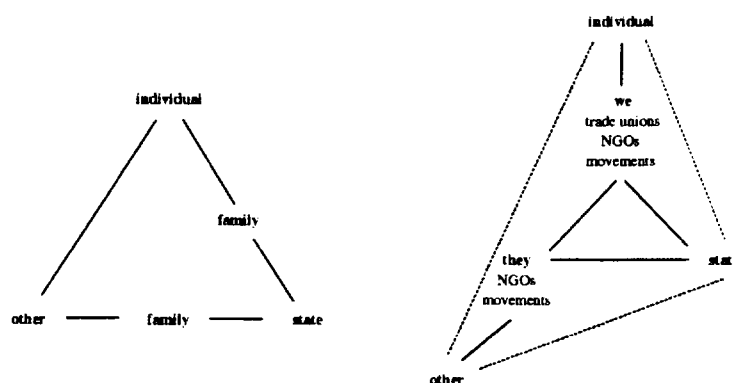
At this point, the simple triangle that served as a metaphor for the analyses and representations of the last two chapters can be gotten rid of. Other, more extended configurations are possible: solidarity, or citizenship, is not a matter for these three parties only. The primarily national configurations shaping social dialogue in the old and new member states of the European Union are joined by those of additional private and public institutions like the family, or interest groups like trade unions, NGOs and movements. Their statuses would be qualitatively different. The family, itself an extraordinarily exclusive institution, whose importance as a 'haven of stability' (Diewald/Lüdicke 2006: 212) increased during the storms of the transformation, could be conceptually integrated into the individual-state relationship. It is an entity that usually directly mediates individual-state interaction and citizenship depending on the public support it receives.

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<sup>232</sup> Interestingly, Alheit (2005: 305-307) applies a similar figurational perspective in order to compare 'mentalities of modernisation' in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The situation is different when individuals outside a 'natural association' transcend their private status as well as their doubts related to difference, when they 'go public' and cluster into collectives or form exclusive unions - in other words, when the 'individual' and the 'other' in the triangle become 'we' and 'they', both vis-à-vis the state. These constitute additional relationships with the state, relationships of representation as opposition and/or cooperation. The additional parties organise, communicate and mediate interests, and can even have a substitutive character. In any case they introduce additional channels of negotiation. Two possible variations of such relations are represented in Figure 8.3.

**Figure 8.3 – Examples of extended configurations of (non-)solidarity**



Some of the prerequisites for channelling common interests in a supportive social environment seem to be available in post-communist contexts. There is discontent, there is the shared experience of living and suffering through the socio-economic transformation, and there is the so-called 'socialist legacy' and the traces it leaves in peoples' characters: they seem to be highly sensitive to injustice. The question is, how could this be turned into a potential for a development that does not follow the trend of 'social integration without solidarity', associated by Brunkhorst (2002: 115) with functional systems like the market economy? How could 'common experience' and a high level of attention for what happens to 'the other', as well as to democratic politics in general (as this is novel too!), be turned into positive societal development? Proposing any answers to such questions would go beyond the scope and purpose of the present study, but I believe that it would be worthwhile to reflect on its findings while bearing them in mind.



## 9 Gender-work relations in the perspective of young women<sup>233</sup>

'Ich sammle seit einiger Zeit Material zum Problem des Lebensaufbaus und finde, daß bei den verheirateten berufstätigen Frauen sich hier vielfach ganz außerordentliche Schwierigkeiten auf tun. Mir scheint der Zeitpunkt für eine generelle Erörterung dieser Frage noch nicht gekommen und ich möchte abschließend nur meiner persönlichen Überzeugung Ausdruck geben, daß wo die innere Notwendigkeit zum Beruf besteht, auch alle besprochenen Schwierigkeiten die Frau nicht von der Berufstätigkeit zurückschrecken dürfen, da die spezifische Berufseinstellung der Frau spezifische neue Werte in der Welt verwirklichen wird.' (Charlotte Bühler 1931: 205-206)

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of the second great transformation of gender relations in 20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania. The first followed the Soviet occupation at the beginning of the 1940s. Independent Lithuania's catholic-conservative model was shattered by the imposition of the gender ideology and legislation of the early Soviet period, including its idea of women as 'breadwinners by default' (Kiblitckaya 2000a: 61) and the introduction of the socialist model of (formal) gender equality with all its shortcomings (Tay 1972, Buckley 1988, Ashwin 2000).<sup>234</sup> The second transformation started in the beginning of the 1990s and once again challenges the status of women in society, although this time it is embedded in processes of marketisation and democratisation. Both transformations represent ruptures within the evolution and consolidation of gender relations, and both involve idiosyncrasies related to their specific version of a 'revolution in the relationship between public and private spheres' (Wallace/Fine 1996: 239). The ongoing second re-negotiation of gender relations may allow Lithuania to overcome the features of the Soviet version of gender discrimination and replace it with a more egalitarian model. Yet it also involves the risk of a recollection and idealisation of the more distant past, i.e. before the Soviet occupation, as well as the relegation of what happened in between, together with the requirements of life in the liberalised economy of today.

In a nutshell, this is the crossroads at which the Lithuanian society stood at the beginning of the 1990s. In this chapter I take a look at what followed and in what direction gendered relations with regard to work and employment are developing at the level of perceived options and priorities among the young women in the sample. In a first step I briefly review the gender relations of Soviet society on the basis of a distinction between

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<sup>233</sup> A first version of this chapter was presented at the workshop 'Between work and welfare. Redefining boundaries of being in or out of work in Europe', 12/13 May 2006, European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico di Fiesole. I want to thank the participants for comments and criticism. Special thanks also to Metka Kuhar for commenting on this chapter.

<sup>234</sup> For an account of the 'unfixing' of the established gender order through Stalinism in Hungary as well as for related general secondary literature see Goven (2002). Some of the impact of the 'worker-mother' ideology and its effects in Lithuania is captured in an article by Marcinkeviciene/Praspaliauskiene (2003).

'gender regime' and 'gender order'. These are concepts available from the literature in order to conceptualise gender issues. I use them here as shortcuts across the vast field of (sometimes only slightly) different concepts. The distinction is useful for analytic purposes and for organising the argument; obviously they go hand in hand.<sup>235</sup> Following Pascall/Lewis (2004: 373) I understand '*gender regime*' generally as 'the key policy logics of welfare states in relation to gender'. The concept refers to the way in which differences in the public status of women are established by (welfare) policies. In the discussion here I restrict myself to the distinction of five categories addressing women as paid workers, wives/partners, (lone) mothers, providers of care/health/education, and as participants in public life. '*Gender order*', on the other hand, is defined by Connell (1987) as 'the historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of masculinity and femininity in a given society' (ibid. 98-99).<sup>236</sup> Referring to the 'current state of play in (...) macro-politics' (ibid. 139), gender order is the broader of the two notions; it has a stronger 'horizontal' orientation and its elements are appropriated and reproduced in political as well as private contexts. However, both gender order and regime are equally relevant to action and praxis.<sup>237</sup>

In a second step I provide a preliminary assessment of the Lithuanian gender order and regime. In line with research into post-Soviet Russia I tentatively argue that the liberation from compulsory employment did not change the fact that women's realities continue to be organised around the double burden of family/household work and employment. On the surface, variations of the dual earner model prevail in current practical arrangements as a response to the difficult economic situation of families. In which way gender relations will evolve from here will depend on how economic developments are reflected in public support and private arrangements.

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<sup>235</sup> For an example of arguing simultaneously along both of these lines, although not explicit, see Haney (1999).

<sup>236</sup> I follow Ashwin (2002: Fn2) here.

<sup>237</sup> The struggle for a definition of the building blocks for theorising gender is ongoing and offers many alternative definitions of 'gender order' and 'gender regime'. In the way I use them here, the two concepts refer to different levels of complexity of theorising gender, as the useful clarification in Walby (2004: 7-11) indicates. For instance, Connell (1987, 2002) relates 'gender regime' to institutions ('structural inventory of a particular institution') and defines it as a subset of the 'gender order', which would be the 'structural inventory of an entire society' (Connell 1987: 99). Both are interlinked: 'The gender regimes of institutions usually correspond to the overall gender order, but may depart from it' (Connell 2002: 54). An example of following this suggestion can be found in Fodor's (2003: 7) comparison of women and work in Austria and Hungary. Instead, I decided to use the terms in a more general sense. I do this in order to facilitate the organisation of descriptive evidence for Lithuania and to connect this part to the discussion of emerging forms of gender regime and gender order in Central and Eastern Europe (Pascall/Manning 2000; Pascall/Lewis 2004; Pascall/Kwak 2005; Ashwin 2000a, 2002). For yet another example accommodating these concepts within a framework of 'gender arrangements' see Pfau-Effinger (1998, 2004).

The third part challenges this outline of the post-Soviet Lithuanian gender regime and order by taking a look at gender-work arrangements from the perspective of young women. This part introduces a classification of seven patterns of *imagined* gender-work relations, each illustrated with one example. This classification complements the general picture with a snapshot of possible directions in which individual young people as well as society may develop. The patterns are organised into an assumed progression from female independence to female dependence. The extremes of the continuum, exit and sponsorship, are usually not considered in models of gender-work relations, probably because the link to the dimension of work is not obvious. The three dimensions in the background of the classification are the configuration of work and motherhood, the configuration of work and partnership, and the configuration of work and livelihood. The emphasis on the perspective of women in this chapter should partly compensate for the over-representation of male examples in the previous chapter. In addition, and as mentioned previously, the explicit urgency of the issue especially in the interviews with female respondents seems to justify its separate treatment, despite the fact that the study was not originally designed for this purpose.

### ***9.1 Soviet gender order and regime***

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Soviet version of social citizenship put the right and obligation to work at the core of the 'socialist social contract' (Adam 1991). This was one of the major determinants of the Soviet relationship between the individual and the state. The state was the only official employer and the vast majority of the citizens were 'worker-citizens' (Offe 1996: 235), in the sense of employed workers or farmers. The family responsibilities assigned to women in addition to their work established their role as 'worker-mothers' in the frame of the 'Soviet gender order' (Ashwin 2002). The 'famous double burden of Soviet women – the obligation to work both inside and outside the home as a matter of course' (Christian 1985: 94) began in the period of the second Five Year Plan of 1933, when the reserve labour of women was mobilised through both encouragement and financial pressure. Since then the ideological specification of the re/productive 'function' of women in Soviet ideology has seen different stages. The gender division of labour was never challenged; the multiple roles of women as workers/breadwinners, mothers, and responsible for households were never questioned; the gender practice of equality theoretically enshrined in law was never established. On the contrary, despite the occasional praise of women in public statements or speeches, there seems to have been little appreciation of women beyond their capacity to have children and raise them (Buckley 1988; Sacks 1988; Ashwin 2000,

2002). The status of men, on the other hand, was defined first and foremost by their (public) role at work and their (private) role as primary breadwinner in a dual earner context. Both roles emphasised masculine features and resulted, among men, in a distancing from any domestic agenda and the family as such (Ashwin/Lytkina 2004).

This gender order was accompanied by a gender regime that practically facilitated women's labour alongside the household/family burden. It can be summarised according to five categories addressing women as paid workers, wives/partners, (lone) mothers, providers of care/health/education, and as participants in public life.<sup>238</sup> First, female labour participation was considered to promote emancipation. It was legally supported by equal pay and opportunities as well as measures to deal with work-related gender discrimination. Second, much of the emancipatory potential of female employment was lost through other mechanisms undermining women's autonomy in relationships formally granted by liberal abortion and divorce legislation (after Stalin). Access to housing was limited, female earnings were in practice lower than male earnings, and interdependence in partnerships was reinforced by general poverty. Domestic inequalities and violence remained unchallenged by any forms of organised protest. Third, working and/or lone mothers were supported by financial transfers and child-care institutions. Family allowances, kindergartens and other pre-school facilities enabled mothers to fulfil their work duties. In the USSR targeted social assistance provided additional support for lone parents. Fourth, health care and education was free during the Soviet era. In this respect, the relationship of dependence was taken out of the family and transferred to the level of the workplace and the state. Fifth, the officially equal public position of women under communism was not reflected in reality. With regard to the allocation of power the Communist Party was essentially a male club, and grass roots activities were generally suppressed or frustrated as their claims were anticipated and neutralised by lip-service to gender equality policies.

The Soviet gender regime had crucial features in common with those usually attributed to the Scandinavian dual earner model with high female labour force participation and relatively low gender pay gaps. Yet the much lower living standards, the disadvantaged status of women in family and partnerships and the altogether 'anti-liberal, over-centralised, statist character of all politics' (Ferge 1997: 163) thwart this comparison. The communist ideal of gender equality with its potential to improve the position of women ultimately failed in

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<sup>238</sup> These categories are suggested in the overview article by Pascall/Manning (2000).



practice due to the conflicting nature of the universal duty to work, pro-birth ideologies and policies, and traditional female roles reproduced by the gender order.

## ***9.2 The gender order and regime in post-Soviet Lithuania***

The transformations of the new EU member countries are not consolidated, and therefore an assessment of their development towards certain welfare, life course, or definite forms of gender regime and order would be premature. Possible outcomes have clusters of European variations as a reference (Korpi 2000; Walby 2004; von Wahl 2005), but enlargement itself may still considerably affect the available landscape of social policies (Sykes 2005). Nevertheless, first discussions on possible directions are already being complemented by more systematic comparisons, suggesting the possible distinction of a 'Central and Eastern European welfare regime' (e.g. Deacon 2000; Ferge 2001; Cerami 2005), as well as additional gender regimes (e.g. Pascall/Lewis 2004; Pascall/Kwak 2005). This is not the place for a comprehensive or detailed review of the Lithuanian social security system and its implications for gender relationships. Yet a cursory glance at the gender regime and order emerging in Lithuania indicates that, as in other post-communist countries, the shortcomings of socialist gender relations have not been overcome in the course of their re-arrangement. In fact, the 'Lithuanian model' seems to represent a rather unfortunate combination of conflicting dimensions, as Kabasinskaite/Bak (2006: 255) conclude from their analysis of children's policies:

'Lithuania still shows traits of the former Soviet regime, which is now moulded with extreme liberal market orientation and a conservative ideology regarding women in the family.'

### **9.2.1 The post-Soviet Lithuanian gender regime**

The following summary of the Lithuanian gender regime covers the current features of the five categories introduced above for the Soviet context – i.e. women as paid workers, wives/partners, (lone) mothers, providers of care/health/education, and as participants in public life. For a comparative summary see Table 9.1.<sup>239</sup> Again, the indicators are overlapping.

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<sup>239</sup> Other indicators could be added but cannot be included here for reasons of space. For instance, indicators reflecting disadvantages in education and career or social mobility in general (e.g. Juceviciene 1998) need to be neglected; for an overview of employment and unemployment among young women in Lithuania see Chapter 6. The more recent discussion of differences in gender inequalities in certain skills regimes, which complements the knowledge from comparing welfare regimes, also needs to be extended to the new post-communist varieties of capitalism (Charles 2005, Estevez-Abe 2005). Lithuania could be an ideal case where a virtually complete absence of apprenticeships together with development towards further general education, both in principle favouring women, meets rudiments of the communist 'concept of real men's work', i.e. physically demanding work in heavy industry (Kiblitckaya 2000). A comparative account of the first decade of 'women in transition' covering some additional indicators is provided in UNICEF (1999); see also Paci (2002) and, more generally,

**Table 9.1 – Gender regime key features: Soviet Union, Lithuania**

women as...	Soviet Union	Lithuania
...paid workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- compulsory and legally supported labour participation</li> <li>- state-provided employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- economically indicated labour participation</li> <li>- increasing dependence on labour market</li> <li>- higher poverty risk, decreasing gender pay gap</li> </ul>
...wives/partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- liberal abortion and divorce legislation</li> <li>- restricted housing coupled with marriage</li> <li>- domestic inequalities and violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increasing divorce rate, decreasing marriage rate, postponement of family formation</li> <li>- housing transition hardly state supported and less dependent on marriage</li> <li>- domestic inequalities and violence</li> </ul>
... (lone) mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sufficient childcare and pre-school facilities</li> <li>- financial support for lone mothers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no financial support for lone mothers</li> <li>- low level of support</li> </ul>
...providers of care, health, education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- free health care and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- compulsory insurance, free basic health care, care cost sharing, free basic education</li> </ul>
...participants in public life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- underrepresented in leading positions</li> <li>- no women's organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increasing representation in leading positions</li> <li>- increasing number of women's organisations</li> </ul>

*First, women as paid workers.* According to the overall female employment rate (15 to 64 years) the gender gap in employment in Lithuania is among the lowest of the new EU-member states. The female employment rate in Lithuania remained stable from 1998 to 2005, and steadily below the male rate (Table 9.2). This underlines the persistence of the dual earner model. With regard to politics there is no political support for the male breadwinner model, as Aidukaite (2006), who compares the reforms of family policies in the Baltic countries, maintains. Yet the share of part-time workers is higher among women and they suffer higher drops in employment during the first decade of transition (UNICEF 1999). The strong decrease of employment and activity rates among the youth population, on the other hand, indicate that employment behaviour is changing significantly, with young women taking the lead in staying out of employment. Unemployment is high among both men and women, but has significantly decreased in recent years. Among young people the unemployment rate is about twice as high as in the adult population. It reached its peak of 31% (male: 34,4%; female 26,3%) in 2001. The unemployment rate of young women remained lower than that of males for years, and the trend was only reversed in 2003. This may suggest that before 2003 young women in the labour market had fewer problems finding a job.<sup>240</sup>

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OECD (2003). A more detailed overview of current social protection is available on the webpage of the European Commission's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC): [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/employment\\_social/social\\_protection/missoc\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/employment_social/social_protection/missoc_en.htm)

<sup>240</sup> For a broader account of women and employment in Lithuanian and transition countries in general see also Kanopiene (1998), Pollert (2005).

**Table 9.2 – Gender indicators for Lithuania, part 1**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<i>Employment (1000)</i>									<i>Unemployment (harmonised, 1000)</i>							
total	1460,1	1438,0	1369,6	1328,9	1378,9	1408,3	1413,1	1454,0	222,6	234,7	276,6	273,0	219,5	203,6	184,1	133,0
male	747,4	720,7	674,8	652,9	692,4	708,9	720,4	139,7	130,3	131,8	158,5	155,9	117,4	105,2	90,5	67,1
female	712,8	717,3	694,9	676,0	686,5	699,3	692,7	714,3	95,9	102,9	118,1	117,1	102,1	98,4	93,7	65,9
<i>Employment rate (15-64)</i>									<i>Unemployment rate (harmonised) 25+</i>							
total	62,3	61,7	59,1	57,5	59,9	61,1	61,2	62,6	11,4	12,0	14,6	14,9	12,5	11,1	10,3	7,6
male	66,2	64,3	60,5	58,9	62,7	64,0	64,7	66,1	11,9	12,8	16,6	16,6	13,1	11,5	9,7	7,4
female	58,6	59,4	57,7	56,2	57,2	58,4	57,8	59,4	11,0	11,1	12,6	13,2	11,9	10,8	11,0	7,8
<i>Youth employment rate (15-24)</i>									<i>Youth unemployment rate (harmonised) &lt; 25</i>							
total	33,1	31,1	25,9	22,7	23,8	22,5	20,3	21,2	25,5	26,4	30,6	30,9	22,5	25,1	22,7	15,7
male	37,4	33,8	28,9	24,6	27,1	26,3	24,0	24,8	30,1	29,5	32,3	34,4	22,6	22,9	22,5	16,0
female	28,6	28,2	22,8	20,9	20,5	18,5	16,5	17,4	18,4	22,4	28,3	26,3	22,2	28,1	22,9	15,3
<i>Activity rate (15-64)</i>									<i>Part-time workers (%)</i>							
total	72,1	72,2	70,8	69,7	69,6	69,9	69,1	68,4			10,2	9,9	10,8	9,6	8,4	7,1
male	78,2	76,6	74,5	73,7	73,6	73,5	72,8	72,1			9,2	8,4	9,4	7,4	6,5	5,1
female	66,5	68,2	67,3	66,0	65,8	66,5	65,6	64,9			11,1	11,4	12,3	11,8	10,5	9,1
<i>Youth activity rate (15-24)</i>									<i>Gender pay gap</i>							
total	43,2	42,2	36,9	33,1	30,9	30,0	26,2	25,1	22	16	16	16	16	17	16	
male	50,9	47,4	42,2	38,3	35,2	34,1	30,9	29,5								
female	35,5	36,9	31,5	27,8	26,6	25,8	21,4	20,5								

Source: EUROSTAT, labour market data, <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int>, 8.05.2006 and 21.06.2006

*Second, women as wives/partners.* The gender pay gap has decreased to the level of the European average of 16% (not including forms of informal employment that may have a considerable gender bias). Together with the reduction in the number of marriages and an increasing divorce rate, this suggests the increasing autonomy of women in Lithuania. Yet it goes hand in hand with associated indicators pointing to the postponement of family formation, which could in turn be attributed to poverty risks as well as unresolved tensions between motherhood and employment (Table 9.3). Access to housing is neither restricted nor supported by the state, which makes the housing transition altogether more difficult but less dependent on marriage. From 1989 to 2003 the number of marriages decreased by more than 50%. The divorce rate, on the other hand, climbed to 70% in 2001 and remained on a high level. Age at first marriage increased among both men and women, and so did the age of women at first birth, especially during more recent years. The birth rate has steadily declined since 1989, especially among women in their 20s.

**Table 9.3 – Gender indicators for Lithuania, part 2**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Marriages (in 1.000s)</i>														
34,6	36,3	34,2	30,1	23,7	23,3	22,2	20,4	18,8	18,5	17,9	16,9	15,8	16,2	17,0
<i>General divorce rate (per 100 marriages)</i>														
35,5	35,1	44,5	46,4	58,6	47,4	46,1	55,4	60,5	63,6	63,7	64,4	69,9	65,5	62,4
<i>Average age of women at first marriage (in years)</i>														
22,5	22,4	22,2	22,1	22,2	22,3	22,4	22,6	22,8	22,9	23,3	23,7	24,0	24,3	24,8
<i>Average age of men at first marriage (in years)</i>														
-	24,2	24,0	23,8	24,0	24,2	24,3	24,5	24,6	24,8	25,3	25,7	26,1	26,4	27,2
<i>Average age of mothers at first birth (in years)</i>														
23,4	23,3	23,2	23,1	23,2	23,0	23,2	23,2	23,4	23,6	23,8	23,9	24,2	24,3	25,3
<i>Age-specific live birth rate, age 15-19 (live births per 1.000)</i>														
36,6	41,2	47,0	48,9	43,5	41,7	40,9	37,9	33,6	30,1	26,6	24,6	21,0	20,6	20,5
<i>Age-specific live birth rate, age 20-24 (live births per 1.000)</i>														
165,8	167,1	166,3	161,7	139,4	126,1	120,2	113,7	109,0	105,0	104,2	96,1	85,0	79,5	76,0
<i>Age-specific live birth rate, age 25-29 (live births per 1.000)</i>														
111,6	112,6	108,0	105,2	95,8	87,0	87,8	85,1	86,7	87,1	88,6	84,6	83,3	79,9	85,1
<i>Age-specific live birth rate, age 30-34 (live births per 1.000)</i>														
55,4	57,2	55,0	52,3	45,2	40,3	41,2	41,4	42,7	46,0	47,7	47,6	45,1	44,8	46,4
<i>Age-specific live birth rate, age 35+ (live births per 1.000)</i>														
9,5	9,7	9,1	9,3	8,7	7,1	7,4	7,5	7,9	8,4	8,5	8,4	8,1	7,3	7,9
<i>Abortion rate (abortions per 100 live births)</i>														
-	72,8	75,3	74,2	71,6	75,9	71,2	60,0	56,8	51,8	47,6	43,4	41,6	37,6	37,6
<i>Pre-primary enrolments (net rates. % of population aged 3-6) (Data for 1989-1993: gross enrolments)</i>														
59,5	56,8	48,1	40,4	31,3	33,2	36,0	39,2	43,1	46,7	50,2	49,7	50,9	53,0	53,9

Source: UNICEF. TRANSMONEE data. <http://www.unicef-iodc.org/resources/transmonee.html>: 8.5.2006

*Third, women as (lone) mothers.* Special allowances for single parents were abolished in Lithuania in 1995. Paid maternity leave was introduced in 1996 and currently fully compensates earnings for a period of 126 days before and after the birth. Afterwards the caring (not working) parent is compensated at a lower level for a maximum of three years. Universal childcare allowances were initially paid until the child's third birthday; from July 2004 they were paid until the seventh birthday in families with no more than two children, or until the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (or the 24<sup>th</sup> if the child studies) in families with three or more children. Pregnancy benefits are available for students. The level of Lithuanian family support falls below that of the other two Baltic republics, with which it shares the same starting conditions. The Lithuanian reform is described as demonstrating a high degree of continuity in social policy development and as following the German rather than the Scandinavian model (Aidukaite 2004). Family support is therefore more targeted than universalistic - a policy choice that is justified by experts by the fact that universalistic support would simply be 'too expensive for a relatively poor country', as Aidukaite (2006: 10) notes. In the overall assessment the Lithuanian 'ideology for the family support has been more neo-liberal than universalistic' (ibid. 20); this fact underlines the increasing dependence of women on the labour market as well as, possibly, on their partners and their (extended) families.<sup>241</sup> It is difficult to say how the status of women within the family and vis-à-vis their partners has

<sup>241</sup> For a brief review of the development of family policy and related attitudes in the early years of independence see Stankuniene (1995).

changed, but violence - especially alcohol-related - seems to remain an urgent problem (UNICEF 1999; Reingardiene 2002) (and below).<sup>242</sup>

*Fourth, women as providers of care, health and education.* Healthcare is comprehensive and based on compulsory insurance. In practice, basic health care is free of charge except for some services, like abortion, which is not covered unless there is a medical need. (Long-term) Care is provided by state institutions with financial participation from the beneficiary and/or the family. The main form of social support in kind provided by the education system (and day care institutions) is the provision of free meals to children from low-income families. Education is free in public secondary and vocational schools as well as in vocational colleges; access to free higher education is competitive. The level of pre-primary enrolment is recovering from its minimum of 31% in 1993 (Table 9.3). The availability of pre-school education has decreased significantly, and has also been criticised for being insufficient from the perspective of children's rights as suggested in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed by Lithuania in 1992 (Kabasinskaite/Bak 2006, UNICEF 1999, OECD 2002);

*Fifth, women as participants in public life.* The representation of women in the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) increased from 10% in 1990 to 22% in 2004; the share of women in the former Supreme Soviet was 36%. In the mid-1990s a 33% quota was introduced for parties' election lists. In practice, however, this share is kept as small as possible as women are not considered to attract voters. A conservative-patriarchal attitude promises greater political success, as Taljunaite (2005a: 113) maintains: 'A common perception is that parties that have a bigger representation of women are 'weaker' at the polls – 'the more women, the weaker (the) party''. But this is not just a formal problem. The low popularity of gender equality issues is also reflected in post-socialist party programmes in other post-communist societies (Binder 2003). The opportunity to politically organise without repression is increasingly used by women, and in 2004 more than 60 women's organisations were active in Lithuania. The general attitude towards women's political participation is, however, reserved and associated with a simplified and rejected perception of feminism (Sloat 2005). Finally, the political and policy commitment to the recent phenomenon of gender

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<sup>242</sup> The regulations for maternity leave as well as for other types of social insurance, including the minimum wage, are changing as this thesis is written. For instance, the possibility of paternity leave was introduced on 1 July 2006 and parental benefits increased from 1 January 2007. It is planned that from 1 July 2007 leave will only be paid until the child is six months old (instead of one year); the monthly minimum salary was increased to 600 litas (circa EUR 170) on 1 July 2006.

mainstreaming agenda is low (Taljunaite 2005b).<sup>243</sup> This last dimension in particular anticipates some of what is discussed in the following under the heading of 'gender order' underlining the overlapping area of the analytically distinguished categories of gender order and regime.

### 9.2.2 The post-Soviet Lithuanian gender order

The difficult status of women under new circumstances is a common phenomenon among the new EU member countries with a socialist past. Research into the Russian version of the post-Soviet gender order suggests that the major improvement lies in the fact that the persistent pattern of the female double burden now accommodates a moment of choice for women. Apart from this, Soviet gender roles, norms of masculinity/femininity, and the division of domestic labour are reproduced by both men and women. This goes hand in hand with the tendency for problems, where they are perceived at all, to be explained at the level of the individual. The female domain is equally public (employment) and private (domestic work, family), which puts less pressure on female performance in the public realm. Post-Soviet men, however, do not have this second option of 'going private', and their status is more vulnerable to damage when 'public' performance becomes more difficult with high unemployment risks (Ashwin 2002, 2006a; Ashwin/Lytkina 2004).<sup>244</sup>

'Russian men have been dying earlier, drinking more, and committing suicide in greater numbers since the end of the Soviet period,' as Ashwin/Lytkina (2004: 190) emphasise in order to provide a heuristic for the troubled nature of post-Soviet masculinity. This is also true for Lithuanian men (Table 9.4).

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<sup>243</sup> For the status of legal gender equality in Lithuania see Mackeviciute (2005); Pavilioniene (1998) discusses the rocky path to the first Lithuanian women's studies and organisations.

<sup>244</sup> Two studies on Hungary and Poland illustrate that the problem of 'men's ill-performance' under the new conditions of post-communism are often tackled by husbands and wives within a common agenda. Fodor (2006) describes how couples cope with what she calls the 'gender shame' of poverty and joblessness. A second example is provided by an analysis of power relations within disadvantaged families. It suggests that 'downwardly mobile men' can maintain their dominance through certain discursive strategies with the support of their wives even if the latter have actually taken over economic responsibilities (Jastrzebska-Szklarska 2002).

**Table 9.4 – Gender indicators for Lithuania, part 3**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Female life expectancy at birth (in years)</i>														
76.3	76.3	75.9	76.0	75.0	74.9	75.1	75.9	76.6	76.7	77.0	77.5	77.6	77.6	78.6
<i>Male life expectancy at birth (in years)</i>														
66.9	66.4	65.2	64.9	63.2	62.6	63.3	64.6	65.5	66.0	66.4	66.8	66.0	66.2	66.5
<i>Mortality rate for females aged 5-14 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
32.8	30.6	34.8	29.5	29.5	32.2	29.0	24.6	22.4	29.0	25.1	19.9	13.6	20.2	18.4
<i>Mortality rate for males aged 5-14 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
54.4	51.0	58.8	59.9	53.1	51.1	42.3	39.0	40.5	34.7	40.4	32.8	39.1	33.3	24.8
<i>Mortality rate for females aged 15-19 (deaths per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
67.1	54.8	60.9	49.9	53.9	55.3	52.0	52.5	34.0	49.0	54.5	44.1	39.9	40.5	46.9
<i>Mortality rate for males aged 15-19 (deaths per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
147.3	128.4	165.6	136.6	160.7	161.8	145.0	142.6	117.0	111.8	130.9	130.5	152.1	130.1	114.6
<i>Mortality rate for females aged 20-24 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
58.4	42.2	57.5	55.1	64.2	68.6	57.0	59.4	66.2	65.6	57.5	54.0	67.8	44.9	39.0
<i>Mortality rate for males aged 20-24 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
214.1	203.5	272.0	255.6	291.4	289.8	259.8	292.9	296.4	255.1	255.1	252.8	254.7	246.2	229.9
<i>Mortality rate for females aged 25-39 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
107.8	101.9	103.5	103.0	117.7	130.7	131.4	120.7	113.8	104.5	109.8	101.1	107.3	103.6	100.0
<i>Mortality rate for males aged 25-39 (per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
358.7	364.8	432.3	419.4	491.8	550.7	501.8	442.6	416.7	406.1	400.4	382.9	412.9	393.4	391.8
<i>Suicide rate for females aged 15-19 (deaths per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
5.9	4.4	11.3	6.9	4.7	11.9	6.4	6.5	4.9	9.6	11.9	15.5	4.5	8.8	5.9
<i>Suicide rate for males aged 15-19 (deaths per 100,000 relevant population)</i>														
18.8	14.3	24.2	21.8	24.5	27.9	32.7	30.6	37.7	23.3	35.8	27.6	36.4	38.4	29.0

Source: UNICEF. TRANSMONEE data. <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/resources/transmonee.html>; 8.5.2006

1982	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>Standardized Death Rate, poisonings, total, female</i>															
6.1	6.6	5.0	4.8	3.5	3.4	4.5	5.4	6.4	7.5	11.1	9.9	8.4	6.0	5.7	5.5
<i>Standardized Death Rate, poisonings, total, male</i>															
26.3	25.2	18.7	17.3	17.7	16.7	21.8	22.6	23.5	31.9	43.5	43.6	36.3	29.9	26.7	21.5

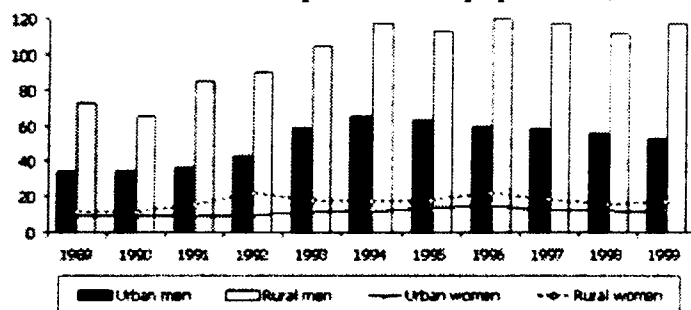
Source: UNECE. Demographic Database of the Population Activities Unit. <http://w3.unece.org/stat/pau.asp>; 8.5.2006

In Lithuania male life expectancy at birth is about 12 years below that of women; it dropped below 63 years in 1994 and has not yet recovered beyond the 1989 level. Mortality rates for male children, youths and young adults are much higher than for women; they peaked in the first half of the 1990s. Death by 'poisonings', a good indicator of alcohol abuse, is much higher among men. Finally, the number of suicides, especially male suicides, increased considerably during the 1990s. This may either be associated with the socio-economic changes after 1989 as compared to those before (Värnik et al. 2000; also Tooding et al. 2004), or may be culturally explained by referring to the impact of the repeated occupation of Lithuania on possible coping patterns – i.e. 'passive attitudes and self-destructive coping styles (e.g. binge-drinking, suicidal behaviour)' (Gailiene 2004: 393).<sup>245</sup> Place of residence,

<sup>245</sup> In view of the much stronger impact of the societal transformation on men in terms of suicide, the latter, culturalist explanation would imply that men were more affected by the 'the long lasting effects of the Soviet/Nazi/Soviet occupations of the 1940s and the 50 years under the communist regime, on the ability of

however, seems to be an additional risk factor; the suicide figures for rural men remained about twice as high as those for urban men and did not decrease proportionally towards the end of the 1990s (Figure 9.1).

**Figure 9.1 – Suicide trends per 100.000 population, Lithuania 1989-1999**



Source: Statistical yearbook of Lithuania 2000, CD-rom

Some of the trouble among men may indeed have its roots in the impact of the societal transformation on Lithuania's post-Soviet family model. Juozeliuniene/Kanopiene (1995) note that the early 1990s, when society and people were struggling to find their places, were characterised by an idealised perception of the pre-war situation. A 'nostalgic evaluation and idealisation of pre-war family life' was part of the idea of a Lithuania that would return 'to its own history', to the point where Soviet occupation interrupted the 'natural' development of society. The destructive influence of the totalitarian state on family life and the inherent 'natural bonds of responsibility' (ibid. 157) was rejected. Equally, female employment, a mass phenomenon imposed as a part of the communist programme of modernisation, was problematised and 'treated as the main source of conflicts between generations and a cause of the aggressive behaviour of the young generation' (ibid. 156). In addition, the 'influence of the Catholic Church' contributed to 'strict rules for relationships between spouses and between parents and children and prevents the emergence of cohabitation, or children born out of wedlock' (ibid. 156). The male role was re-evaluated in the course of the deconstruction of state influence and state-sponsored family welfare, when the emphasis shifted towards the 'individuals' ability to become responsible for their own family's welfare' (ibid. 159).<sup>246</sup> Yet the image of the 'traditional Lithuanian family' before the Soviet occupation was little more than a 'myth', as Purvaneckiene (1998) notes, referring to a survey that asked one thousand Lithuanians born before 1934 whether their mothers worked when they were younger than 14.

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individuals and groups to manage psychosocial stress and environmental changes' (Gailiene 2004: 393). This is difficult to imagine.

<sup>246</sup> For the problematic role of the Catholic Church in the definition of the post-communist status of women in Lithuania see Gineitiene (1998). For the role of churches as agents in structures of gender inequality in general see Korpi (2000: especially 149-150).



She finds that 44 percent of women had worked outside the home despite having young children: women working on their own farms are not even included here.

Nevertheless, as early as 1990 the tool of consulting the public for approval of conservative family policies by means of surveys was used: the results were unambiguous and in favour of men earning more.

According to a public opinion survey conducted in 1990, the support for higher men's wages – high enough to provide maintenance for their families – was the most popular response (this answer was chosen by 65.0 percent of respondents: 69.0 of them by men, and 62.0 by women). An increase of allowances for families with children was unpopular and was suggested only by 8.0 or 9.0 percent of the respondents (Juozeliuniene/Kanopiene 1995: 159).

Family policy consisted first of all in introducing financial measures and little was done to flexibilise employment, reorganise childcare, or expand social services. Housing became increasingly problematic and poverty was common. The 'equality' apparently achieved between men and women under socialism, as indicated by high levels of economic activity among women, was among the 'despised 'achievements' of the entire socialist period' (ibid. 162). As a consequence, women were not released from their roles as homemakers, yet had to continue to contribute to the household income for economic reasons.<sup>247</sup> This acknowledgement of the requirements of everyday life was not achieved by anticipating the consequences of economic liberalisation. Instead, only '(t)he reality of life has helped to rid society of an idealisation of the family unit which portrays the model of man-provider and woman-housewife,' as Purvaneckiene (1999: 123) maintains.<sup>248</sup>

In the meantime gender stereotypes did not change much in Lithuania, as findings from a 2002 survey indicate. The female/male division of labour was still in place and was only very slowly challenged by more progressive attitudes on, for instance, paternity leave. The main obstacles to men taking on child care responsibilities remain insufficient financial compensation and the 'traditional 'natural' gender order' (Reingardiene 2005: 35). As in post-Soviet Russia, gender stereotypes are reproduced by both men and women. For instance, Reingardiene (2002) discusses the process of the 'retraditionalisation' of the family through the 'idealisation and isolation of the post-Soviet 'private''. On the basis of findings from a 2000 survey on the social context of abuse against women in Lithuanian families, she illustrates the possible impact of the post-Soviet reconceptualisation of private and public spheres. Domestic violence, often triggered by alcoholism has, she concludes, become an exclusively private

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<sup>247</sup> For a comment on the early years of the new Lithuanian 'family ideology' and its 'restoration of the traditional Christian family' in a feminist perspective see Zvinkliene (1995).

<sup>248</sup> For a descriptive account of a context where the 'reality of life' was not sufficient to prevent gender relations from falling back into traditional patterns in terms of political ideology and everyday practice see, for instance, Zhurzhenko (2001) and Predborska (2005).

matter to be resolved within the family. Strangely, it seems, this phenomenon still meets with ambivalent reactions even among women. Many have learned to live with the by-products of the public status aspect of male drinking. One last and drastic example of male domination in gender relations, which is not an exclusively Lithuanian or post-communist problem, is the explosion of the sex industry following the collapse of socialism. This is an extreme form of male exploitation of women's disadvantages in coping with the negative consequences of the post-communist transformation in general, and the loss of employment opportunities in particular (e.g. Stuklus 1999, Kligman/Limoncelli 2005).

Altogether, the form that gender-work relations have so far taken in post-Soviet Lithuania hardly provides unambiguous criteria for orientation. The strongest argument on the level of the gender regime keeping women in employment is mere economic necessity, which replaces the former duty to work. The 'incentive' of chances for more autonomy for women is certainly relevant, but is relativised by the state's withdrawal from family support for lone parents in particular. Autonomy in the private sphere comes at the expense of increased female labour market dependence. Besides, apart from (female members of) the extended family there are few alternatives for childcare where a mother works. It seems safe to claim that the postponement of family formation and the declining birth rate are among the direct outcomes of these uncertainties in family management.

The challenge for young people to find a place in society on the basis of expectations without firm foundations is inherently complex. It is also complicated by the fact that the moment of *choice* between paid work and domestic work is a new feature of negotiating gender-work relations in post-communism. The availability of an additional option entails the risk of failing to choose the lesser evil. For instance, as LaFont (1998: 14) reports on her guest lecture on Western feminism in Kaunas, Lithuania in the first half of the 1990s: her students express confusion about the quality of liberation from being at work versus being at home, but they do regard the possibility of staying home as liberating as such: in this way they were at least not exposed to discrimination in a second sphere. The current Lithuanian context contains interpretations favouring either option; young women especially have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages involved. Rephrased in the terminology of the concept of recognition in the background of this study, this point addresses the question of establishing boundaries of appreciation around certain activities as well as the people involved. An expression of priority for a specific 'place' within the transforming map of possible gender-work arrangements as well as within a future family and beside a partner is implied.

### *9.3 Towards an inductive classification of imagined gender-work arrangements among young women*

Typologies and patterns of relations between gender, work, family and care are numerous. According to Haas (2005), introducing a recent integration of a variety of classifications, only those approaches that do not rely on theoretical comparison can be distinguished on the basis of their emphasis on either structural or cultural criteria, a distinction that is similar to the one between gender regime and gender order (see above). Structural criteria first consider 'the integration of women (with or without children) into the labour market as well as the provision of benefits and assistance to parents'. Cultural criteria, on the other hand, 'include also social attitudes and values about family life and the gendered division of labour' (ibid. 488). Haas (ibid.) criticises available classifications for relying mostly on secondary quantitative data sets and suggests the use of primary data as well as the introduction of 'practices' as a third key dimension. With regard to practices, answers need to be found to the question of 'how men and women divide work within a partnership' (ibid. 492). With regard to the validity of cultural norms and attitudes the author asks for qualitative research in order to find out 'what people really believe' (ibid. 494).

Against this background it is the purpose of the remainder of this chapter to introduce an inductive-empirical classification of gender-work arrangements in Lithuania on the basis of interviews with young women. The above questions concerning practices and culture, both of which address the issue of gender order rather than regime, are relevant, yet the resulting classification distinguishes itself from others in one crucial point. It is *not* a taxonomy of *actual* gender-work relations and practices among adults, but of *imagined* options and choices of arrangements among young people in the sense of an imagined gendered adulthood (Gordon et al. 2005). It is an outline of those options perceived as being available in a pre-motherhood perspective for later negotiations on arranging the second part of the life course, with family and employment at its core. More precisely, the classification considers the respondents' own projections as well as concrete examples of patterns in the making described in the course of the interviews. Previously established patterns, especially of parents, where the *transition* to gender-work relations is no longer visible, are not considered despite the fact that some could in fact be reconstructed on the basis of the material. This is because the introduction of yet another perspective would simply overburden the chapter, and may be examined in a separate paper. Some of what is 'realised' in the Lithuanian context, especially in terms of policies and culture, is illustrated in the above description of the country's gender order and regime.

A few qualifications regarding the scope of the classification need to be made. First, as already mentioned above, the study was not designed for an analysis of young people's perspectives on gender-work relations. Yet the interviews prompted a more systematic treatment of the material in this respect. Thus, the classification is a direct outcome of an explorative study, which originally did little more than 'consider' gender in the selection. Second, the inductive nature of the classification leaves blank spots with regard to some relevant criteria. For instance, issues of domestic and care work do not have the practical relevance here that they have in assessments of *established* household arrangements. Third, and related, the present classification cannot cover the same range of possible dimensions for each single pattern: the interview material was simply not collected in a sufficiently systematic way. Therefore, the number of dimensions for the comparison is reduced to the minimum of three – i.e. the configurations of (a) work and motherhood, (b) work and partnership, and (c) work and livelihood. The three dimensions are introduced below in the context of the first pattern. As the transformation of gender relations in Lithuania is not consolidated, the patterns summarized in Table 9.5 outline the space available for negotiation and planning in the perspective of young women.

**Table 9.5 – Patterns of female gender-work relations**

	Configuration of ... ... work and motherhood	... work and partnership	... work and livelihood
<b>Pattern I - Exit to independence</b> 'She decided that she does not need that.' (GABIJA)	- combination of motherhood and work abroad	- independence - postponement of partnership	- income from benefits and work - (responsibility towards parents)
<b>Pattern II - Independence</b> 'A woman can stand for herself, like a man for himself.' (INETA)	- work and postponement of motherhood	- independence	- income from work - responsibility towards parents
<b>Pattern III - Independence and mutual support</b> 'I am ready to maintain my husband.' (ISI)	- postponement of motherhood and combination with work	- independence - mutual support	- income from work and partner - responsibility towards parents
<b>Pattern IV - Between independence and dependence</b> 'I would be against that, if my husband says: 'You don't work.' No matter how much money I would have, anyway I would like to work.' (LIALIA)	- postponement of motherhood and combination with work	- work as 'independence insurance' - unquestioned	- income from work and partner
<b>Pattern V - Responsibility and survival</b> 'In my opinion, work would be in the first place and family in the second.' (JURGA)	- work and postponement of motherhood	- unquestioned - unspecified	- survival and income from work and partner - responsibility towards parents
<b>Pattern VI - Reconciliation</b> 'Well, it depends on the job. If this job is.... for example, there are night shifts. Then it may be possible.' (KAROLINA)	- postponement of motherhood and combination with work	- joint project - dependence	- income from work, partner, and benefits
<b>Pattern VII - Sponsorship</b> 'He, for example, would pay everything for my higher education. The point is that he wants me to build up my life. But there are also some conditions.' (NATALIJA)	- work secondary - high priority of motherhood	- work secondary - dependence	- income from partner (sponsor)

### 9.3.1 Pattern I – Exit to independence

'She decided that she does not need that.' (GABIJA)

In the first pattern, a moment of female independence is dramatically exemplified in the shifting of the triangle through exit, a key dimension of the heuristic typology presented in the previous chapter. The example was briefly mentioned there in the description of the case of GABIJA. Returning to this case should underline the link between the chapters. In its stylised quality, this first pattern, which draws on only a few lines of interview text, allows me to introduce the three dimensions along which all the patterns of the classification are described.

At the end of an interview sequence dealing with the issue of going abroad and her brother's experiences in Spain, GABIJA contemplates the situation in Lithuania and finally illustrates the motivation for emigration and a possible return with the example of her female cousin, who left for the UK when she was pregnant leaving behind both her marriage and low social security. The sequence, which was unfortunately interrupted when the tape had to be changed, represents a pattern of voluntary and successful escape from a situation that does not seem to provide any satisfactory options. Whether this case is fictional or not is of secondary

importance. The fact that it provides '*a very good example*', as GABJA says, is what makes it relevant to this classification.

Interviewer: So you think if living conditions in Lithuania get better, a lot of people would come back?

GABJA: Yeah. I think so. Well, still, well, there is some cousin of mine ... She is also a very good example. She got pregnant and, well, she was kind of getting ready to get married and then she decided that she doesn't need that... And pregnant she left to England. She went there, and her son was born there. And only on (benefit) ... Just the benefit she would get was ... Very, very, very good were these benefits. Well, they pay for (the fact that) there is a child and that she is a single - so to speak - mother. And there were very high and very profitable benefits. She got a job, she bought her own house, she bought cars, she lives there... (turning the cassette) ... She sends tickets to her parents, both to come and to return. And the son is already five years old. And she certainly fought her way (through) there already. And she already met a husband there. But she anyway plans to come back to Lithuania in the future because it is her home here; everything is here, just because of that. And I think that, well, the majority of people, including my brother himself, say that if living conditions in Lithuania were the same as there, they would certainly come back. Because also, also there it is difficult. And partially it would be the same here. Just that jobs are well-paid there, it is easier to support yourself there than here. Just because of that. (8.49)

In a literally 'decisive moment' of high density this pregnant woman breaks out of her otherwise pre-determined future and leaves her home and future husband. Instead, she establishes herself under circumstances supporting female independence, first as a single mother, then as an employee, then as a resident and consumer, then as a generous host, and finally as a wife. The independence she achieved is realised through exit in the sense of a shifting of the triangle: the individual (woman) establishes a relation with a different state, but without completely giving up her relation to the state in the original triangle. There is still a chance that she will come back once the situation in Lithuania improves, but for the time being it is simply '*easier to support yourself there than here*'.

It is very likely that this pattern is a common response among women to poor opportunities at home, and it deserves a place in a classification of post-communist patterns of gender-work relations despite the fact that the aspect of work is rather implicit.<sup>249</sup> The information provided (almost completely) covers the three dimensions used to develop the classification of gender-work relations. First, work and motherhood are combined, most probably after paid maternity leave (*configuration of work and motherhood*). Neither the postponement of motherhood (i.e. abortion) nor marriage is a response to the pregnancy. Second, initial independence and single motherhood later develop into a marriage relationship, perhaps combining motherhood and work (*configuration of work and partnership*). From the available interview sequence however this configuration is not

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<sup>249</sup> Another relevant form of 'exit' that is not represented in the data involves sexual exploitation abroad. Needless to say, these cases would require a label other than 'exit to independence'. However, one of the female respondents did talk about her traumatising experiences of having been forced into prostitution in Lithuania; she even uses the label of 'working': '*Well, when I said that I had been kidnapped. So I wanted to say that he had kidnapped me, he had locked me up and (2) sold me (3). Do you understand? Well, so, I had to work. All the time, while I was absent.*' (2.14)

distinct, and the temporal order of statuses in particular remains vague. Third, the provision for the child (and the mother) is guaranteed by benefits and work (*configuration of work and livelihood*). The role of the 'husband' is undefined here, and so is the actual organisation of childcare.

### 9.3.2 Pattern II – Independence

'A woman can stand for herself, like a man for himself.' (INETA)

The *Pattern of Independence* is different from the first primarily because the environment is perceived to facilitate female independence rather than hamper it, and because there is no immediate pressure to find a response to forthcoming motherhood. Here, striving for independence radiates to the private sphere and goes hand in hand with a high level of professional ambition and the postponement of motherhood, or even the consideration of alternatives to standard models of family and partnership.

INETA is a 20-year-old student in her second year at a private business college. She is the only child of a marriage that broke up when she was one year old. She only got in touch with her father, who has another family, after 16 years. Her mother, who had to struggle to take care of INETA, has been through three divorces in all and is now employed by a large company, in which INETA's grandfather, her mother's father, holds a leading position, having been a founding member a few decades ago. INETA's studies and living expenses are taken care of by him and she studies business and management passionately under his supervision. On a regular basis her grandfather receives progress reports from the college and calculates her financial support according to her success. He is her role-model with regard to her professional future and she is even considering taking over his business.

Work is crucial for INETA. This is not only attested to by the fact that she scores high on the indicators of both work importance and accomplishment through work (see Appendix 4). She repeatedly emphasises it and expresses her eagerness to prove herself and apply what she has learned in her field of business and management in the world of work. She also regrets that her grandfather will not allow her to start working now – *'My grandfather doesn't allow me to work. He said: 'All life is work', he said, - 'now live for your pleasure'. I am on holiday now, so to say, I am in education. (...) I myself want to work very, very much, but I am not allowed. I have to ask for permission'* (11.19). Her idea of life is that everybody has to find a 'niche', a certain business in her case, and then work her way up from there.

And that, in a sense, first, well, let's say I have earned for myself, - well, what? - a home - I have already, a car - I have, now it is only about having a good man [laughing]. Not necessarily the one (I have), but to have a good man ... Let's say, to live for myself, to see a bit more of the world, and finally some kind of

pleasure for myself. I have a job, I maintain myself ... Simply to be independent from anything. I don't want to be maintained by the state. Or, anyway, finally I don't know how life might develop, but I have such an aim. And finally children. Well, it is the last-case scenario [laughing], because now I certainly don't need them. My friend's child is more than enough. Simply, well, moving forward; I move myself forward, because I am able to. I am able and I am going to try. (11.10)

She is committed neither to her current boyfriend, with whom she has a 'competitive partnership' (11.8), but who is not the 'good man' she wants; nor does she articulate any immediate desire for a child, emphasising that contact with a friend's child is sufficient for now. Altogether INETA perceives the liberalisation of gender patterns as part of the transformation package, which includes easier access to consumption as well as education. That a woman can be independent just like a man is her conclusion. The sequence below is part of her answer to the question about a typical life story.

We lived through (two) very interesting periods. One when the Russians were here, and then the way it is now. The way we lived back then was very restricted, when we all had to stand in queues with food vouchers ... And the way it is now, now you can go to the supermarket, so you just go and buy. And education has changed: you certainly are able to acquire competences. And family values, clearly, have changed that... Earlier it would be: 'Oh God, a single woman with a child, oh Jesus.' And now: 'I raise the child alone. He is mine, and leave me alone. Why would I need that husband?' Because values are different; a woman can stand for herself, like a man for himself. (11.32)

However, INETA does not exclude having children in the future, as she finally indicates when talking about the 'career' that she would like to have. In fact, she regularly visits a children's home and is considering adopting her 'own' child at some point. In the corresponding interview sequence her ambitions and life experiences merge into a final vision of being a kind of 'super-breadwinner', taking over and continuing with the responsibility that her grandfather demonstrates now, whilst also caring for him, her mother and any children she might have. In any case, all this is in the future and she will live for herself first, as she has been told to.

Interviewer: OK, and the last question would be about your career. What career would you like to have? What would you want to be, what would you like to achieve? What should your career look like?

INETA: Oh, a kind of lady with a briefcase [laughing]. Well how? Founding my personal company, then joint stock company, and finally stock company. To have my own, as I have said, business. To maintain myself ... To continue with education, I, certainly, am not stopping here. I will not limit myself to this. Clearly, I am not going neither into politics or somewhere else (of that kind). But I will try to achieve, I will perfect myself. I will guarantee a good future for my children. Their education also ... Maybe support them ... Like my grandfather supports me, I will support them. And of course, that my mother could have an easy old age, I will support her. Because... I guess that when my mother will be old, my grandfather will no longer be with us. And like he helped me, I want to help others, because... Right, I didn't mention that for three years I had been visiting kids in an orphan's home in X (city). I had some darlings there. So the boy is 6 years old. I have visited him since he was two weeks old. And ... That this would not happen. And maybe in future I will adopt a child, because I know how hard it is for them to live there without a father and mother.

Interviewer: And you just visit them or there is a sort of sponsor, or...?

INETA: No. I just would visit them. And there is one boy who, I always congratulate him on his birthday. I visit him always, if I have time. He already can remember me and... I go there four, five times a year and they wait for me already. And I even once received a phone call: 'Here the director wants to talk to you.' [laughing] And my little boy speaks, [...]. I tell you, if I will have such a possibility I will adopt a child for sure. I will have my own (child) and I will adopt. Because it is very painful to see ... But first I



must construct all that (roof above my head) and then I... First, to live for myself, and then we'll see...  
[...](11.43-44)

### 9.3.3 Pattern III – Independence and mutual support

'I am determined to maintain my husband.' (ISI)

This third pattern represents the relationship of a self-confident, independent woman, able to earn her own living, with her carefully selected partner, who subscribes to a partnership of mutual support. Independence comes at the price of postponing motherhood until one is established financially. Imagined childcare arrangements facilitate the combination of work and motherhood, and provide both partners with enough space for professional performance. The two sources of income allow some self-realisation at work.

ISI is a 16-year-old student at an art school and the only child of a couple of university graduates who both work. For her too work is very important according to the questionnaire; yet she is less ambitious in terms of achievement through work (see Appendix 4). She would prefer to postpone work as long as possible, but in any case *'you have to start working when children are born'* (12.16). ISI generally thinks that it is easier for a man to find a job than for a woman, because *'there is no such job for girls, which couldn't be done by a guy'* (12.28).

ISI is not yet sure what kind of relationship she would like in the future, but she already has two alternative *'plans'*. Either she will *'live alone'*, receiving *'some kind of attention'* from her partner, but without commitment. Or she will find somebody with whom she could have a *'good family'*. She would like to have children and expects caring for her parents when they are old to be a part of her future. However, having a family requires a person to be established, to have *'a good life'* and a financial base. This may be postponed until 33, the *'age of Jesus'*, as she says. Staying out of work is not an option.

ISI insists that both partners should be able to maintain themselves. If needed, support should be provided mutually. It is important that the mother stays with the child at first, but childcare should generally be organised in a way that allows both parents to continue with their jobs. In this respect she takes her parents' solution of organising childcare with the neighbours as an example. ISI is convinced that in the end *'everything is reconcilable'*.

Interviewer: And then I want to ask how do you imagine your life? Future?

ISI: There are these two plans of mine (laughing) that either I live alone and I will do whatever I want, whatever comes to my mind - I will leave, if I like, I will come back, if I like. And perhaps I will have, well, in a sense, such a life companion ... If I should live alone, so I would like some kind of attention. But that it wouldn't be some commitment for life of any kind or some kind of stable relationship or something like that ... Well, so it would be a kind of life for yourself, well, for myself and for things such as, you do whatever you want, you go wherever you want, such sort of completely free (life). Or maybe (alternatively) I would just want, if there was someone, so to have a good family. Afterwards, comes this work, and all the other things for myself ... But I don't know, because it depends on how everything will

develop later. But in any case, I would like to have kids. I didn't want some time ago, but I begin wanting it now.

I: So you keep living and (things) keep changing...

ISI: Well, yeah. Maybe, I don't know, but I think, well, that I have this, that to raise a child well or, for example, the other, to look after parents when they are old, so that they could enjoy, parents.

I: And so when should you have family?

ISI: Well, when you already feel that you want it (laughing), so then you can.

I: And maybe you want it now?

ISI: No, now I don't want it yet...well, I, probably, I think, that family comes only after there is already some source of money and when the good life comes, well, gradually. So, in terms of age, so (3) well, perhaps (when you are) some thirty three years (old)... (laughing)

I: Wow!

ISI: The age of Jesus ... Well, because everything now accelerates, you feel like a squirrel, you have to do this, that, and so (it goes)... Well, it seems to me, work is important in life. For example, now I was reflecting about myself, about family, family, well, work is also important for me. Well, what would I be without any kind of activity? Well, because I am the kind of a person, that I need action. And what concerns family, so, the later, the better.

I: So all right, about that family ... What do you think: are both man and woman supposed to work in a family? Or should the man maintain the family?

ISI: I maybe... I think that each of them should maintain himself or herself and (only) then they should look how they are managing. I mean, well, a man, in any case, I consider a man, he is supposed to be manly, that, well, he has to respect a woman and buy and give presents, show attention to her, but also ... well, I mean, support her. But I think that a woman has to make an effort herself. I mean, well, I think, that each of them has to work and then they should think somehow about that money, in whatever way someone (is managing) and whatever anyone of them needs. For example, if the woman's job is like, that she works as, let's say, I don't know what, and she needs ... graphic artist, for example, and she has high expenditures on all sorts of paint or something else. So the money of the man should go to the woman, and she will see how and what (to do with it). Well, for example, I am determined to maintain my husband. If he is ... God forbid it is like that, but it seems to me, if my husband was some kind of an actor or rather a lightweight; and I would be a very serious psychologist with spectacles, then I could maintain him. (laughing) Well, for me it is not like ... This one has to (work), and the other one also has to. And, for God's sake, a woman doesn't work anything and only brings up the kids or something like that...

I: And is it possible then for a woman to work and bring up kids at the same time?

ISI: (...) So I think that a woman after giving birth, well, she really has to be with a child, because it is important for the child to see the mother for some time. But, for example, when I was growing up, there were my neighbours, they had a daughter of my age and my parents, well, they were about the same age and we were about the same age. So her parents, somehow it turned out that they would work in the morning, and mine in the evening, or maybe vice versa. I don't know how. But it would be like that, that I used to spend half of the day at her place, and she used to spend half of the day at my place with my parents. So, this attention, I always had it. Well, it wasn't so that I would sit in the kindergarten or at my grandmother's until the evening that I would have nothing to do. But to work right after that, well, it is not good. You have to be with the child. But I think that everything is reconcilable and maybe it is even better, maybe a child turns out to be not so spoilt then and not a kind of, I mean, maybe a child can take care of himself to some degree. (12.39-42).

#### 9.3.4 Pattern IV – Between independence and dependence

'I would be against that, if my husband says: 'You don't work.' No matter how much money I would have, anyway I would like to work.' (LIALIA)

In *Pattern IV* the moment of struggling against dependence is most pronounced, and the final outcome seems unfixed. The emphasis on women's participation in work goes hand in hand with the perception of strong gender stereotypes concerning the role of women as well as the distribution of power within partnerships. This unquestioned opinion on family and marriage is accompanied by a notion of work as a parallel and alternative world of recognition

and security. Accordingly, the relationship with the imagined male partner is ambiguous. Material security is important with regard to family formation as well as the choice of the partner.

LIALIA is a 19-year-old management student in her first year at the university of her hometown. Unlike many of her friends and former classmates, she was not admitted to study management at a university in Vilnius, which would have been her first choice. She lives in her parents' flat, shares a room with her younger brother, and is particularly attached to her mother who seems to have a strong influence on many of her decisions. Both of her parents have special secondary education and work. LIALIA has some work experience as a dance teacher and a *'go-go dancer'* as the interviewer notes, but she does this mostly for pleasure without associating her professional future with dancing.

According to the questionnaire and the interview, work, rather than achievement through work, is very important for her (see Appendix 4). It is also important in the context of what she would consider a *'normal life'*. Both partners should have jobs and earn enough to maintain the family without problems. A life without work, on the other hand, would be an *'empty life'* and vulnerable, the main reason for this being a lack of money. LIALIA considers work *'obligatory'*. Female employment participation is important for two reasons: on one hand, it is a form of self-realisation and of participation in public life. On the other, it can function as a kind of insurance against becoming a victim when a relationship characterised by female dependence breaks down. Therefore, she would insist on working herself even without financial pressure, and would defend this position vis-à-vis the kind of *'husband'* she has in mind.

Interviewer: So then let's talk about what is ... Have you ever heard the term 'normal life'? Well, normal life ... Let's say, what is a normal life in your opinion? What should life be like so that you could call it normal?

LIALIA: Normal life? I can list, at least in my opinion, I would like, considering my life as normal, to have a husband; to have children, to have a job; to have a place to live, to have education, a good (one), to graduate from somewhere, to have a car. And, of course, also the husband should have a job and that you ... you could make ends meet really, that you wouldn't have to think that, 'Well, two weeks to go till the (next) salary. How am I supposed to survive?' And that you shouldn't think, 'How should I take my child to education, because God, oh God, how much money will I need?' This is a normal life, in my opinion. I would like, well, this normal...

I: And if there is no work, so would it be possible to live? Would it be a normal life?

L: I think that ...Of course, it would be possible to live. Well, what else could you do? You won't go and hang yourself; you have to live somehow. Anyway, man, man is such a creature that anyway keeps moving and somehow anyway makes it. But it wouldn't be a normal life already. Perhaps I would call it sort of ... a bit of an empty life. There, well, there is nothing special in it, because, because ... In fact, if you wouldn't, well, have a job, at once, I would say, your health will deteriorate, you will be in foul mood and it will happen so that a depression will develop. And you will get divorced from your husband, and everything will be over.

I: Oh, so pessimistically... There is no work - there isn't anything...

L: Yeah, yeah. In fact it is like that. Well, many ... now many families, so why do they quarrel, why do they divorce? Because there is no money. Now for people, in my opinion, the main thing is money. Money is everything. Although they shouldn't be thinking like that...

I: And you also think that money is everything?

L: Well, I don't think so far that it is like that. I don't want to think like that yet. Although sometimes ideas like this cross my mind.

R: And let's say, when you were listing points, you started (by saying) that, well, a husband, kids, and work, well, family ... Do you think that a woman, who has a family, must work, has to work?

L: Yeah. I, for example, can't imagine how a woman can not work. I would get crazy, if I had to sit at home with a child. I think that a woman has to, well, realise herself somehow. One can say so, to realise herself somehow, and not to live at her husband's expense. And if it suddenly ever happens in life that you get divorced, so what will you do then? It will turn out that you never ever worked in your life ... The husband will find a younger one (laughing), and what will you think then?

I: And maybe an older one?

L: Well, maybe an older one ... What will you do then? No, I, for example, I am totally against, I would be against that if my husband says: 'You don't work.' No matter how much money I would have, anyway I would like to work, because, because, well, I don't know, work for a person, well, in my opinion, is obligatory. Anyway you have to realise yourself somehow, to do something, and not to sit on some side of your husband as some kind of toy. (19.40-42)

LIALIA is aware of the fact that *'the children will suffer a bit'* were she to become a *'big careerist'*, but in principle everything is possible as long as one is determined and works hard (19.44). Marriage and family are two different things. While she can imagine marrying early, maybe even at her age (19 years), one should have children only *'when you have a flat, when you earn a living, you work.'* 26 years would be a good age. One may perhaps be regarded as an *'old mother'* then, but it generally seems to be *'in vogue'* to have children later these days. There is nothing to be done if it happens before, but having established oneself beforehand makes it much easier (19.46). If her plan of postponing motherhood does not work out, because she changes her mind, falls in love, or meets a *'rich guy'* who may even create a job for her, she would have a minimal programme of *'at least'* finishing her education.

(...) Well, now, now you can't decide when it would happen. You can only think, maybe dream about it. I don't know, well, now I think that I will not have (a baby) until I'm twenty five. This is my opinion at the moment. Maybe next year my opinion is going to change. (laughing) Maybe something completely different ... Maybe, well, maybe, maybe you'll meet, oh God, a beloved person and you won't be able to ... And maybe you'll meet a rich guy, who will maintain you completely, he'll make a work place for you, you'll work there ... Well, you can invent whatever, and especially a young person, when all life looks, oh God, God, so beautiful. I, I don't think about starting a family very young. At least I have to finish education. That is a necessity. (19.46)

LIALIA acknowledges the uncertain status of women in current Lithuanian society. She thinks that it is easier for boys to live there, because a woman is *'more passive'*, women are not equally involved in *'businesses'*, and altogether they are *'a bit more modest'* (19.47). Even at the highest levels women are simply not perceived as equal to men. This attitude is obviously still carried into classrooms by professionals, where young women are informed about the difficulties they will most likely encounter due to their gender. LIALIA tells of how

she was confronted with these strong gender stereotypes during '*career lessons*' organised by a vocational training centre.

Interviewer: (...) A girl also can achieve a lot.

LIALIA: Well, she can but it is more difficult for a girl. It is much more difficult, because in fact the approach of all those, well, top officials to a woman is very rarely ... 'A woman and can be intelligent? How can that be?'

I: So you think that it is men's...

L: Yeah. (Although) now, well, how? Although now ... At some point during career lessons (someone) came from the Vocational Training, kind of, centre, there is some kind of (centre). Mm. A woman came and she told us that, 'For you girls it will be very difficult to achieve something in life, because generally a woman is considered, and also if she has achieved something, so a woman is hardly recognised, a man more easily. (...)' (19.47)

### 9.3.5 Pattern V – Responsibility and survival

'In my opinion, work would be in the first place and family in the second.' (JURGA)

*Pattern V* is characterised by the economic necessity to work, to establish oneself, and to take responsibility for oneself as well as dependents including parents. Family formation is subordinated to the priority of finding a job, which is difficult enough for a woman and must not be put at risk. There is no doubt about having a family at some point, as well as a husband who works and earns money, but there is no concrete idea of a relationship or a certain kind of partner. Childcare where a mother works is delegated to public institutions.

A 'broken home' is an appropriate term to describe the family background of JURGA, a 20-year-old student at a special vocational training centre for young people with '*developmental disorders and physical disabilities*', according to the school's self-description. JURGA '*is the poorest*' of the young women interviewed in this place, as the interviewer notes in the postscript: and she is the interviewee best fitted to a school with such a profile. Her mother, who lives with grandmother, is disabled as a result of suffering physical abuse by her father some 15 years ago – '*he got angry and hurt her, well, he damaged her nerves*' (15.7). Nevertheless, unlike some of her siblings, JURGA, the eldest daughter, stayed with her father and still visits him on weekends when everybody leaves the school dormitory. Her father is '*unemployed*' and '*only works on farms*' but '*he can do anything*' (15.5); he is not even looking for a job. He cannot leave the small town he lives in because he is the only one to take care of their house there.

Work is very important for JURGA. She scores high on the indicators of both work importance and accomplishment through work (see Appendix 4); and she emphasises these factors again and again in her interview – '*You have to work and, so how will you make a living? You have to make your future, you have to buy a flat where you could live because you can't live with parents all the time*' (15.15). On the other hand, she insists that she needs to get

out of the village in order to be more than a simple '*country woman*' who is only able to work for farmers and do some weeding. '*I am sick of the village*', she repeats: she would prefer to live in town where it would be easier to find a job and where she might be recognised in her profession as a '*cook*' (15.34).

Having a family early implies a high risk of losing one's job if it is not carefully planned. Too many people are waiting for that job. Thus, it is first necessary to establish oneself in a company; it is only after a while that a woman can consider having children. Despite the fact that it is more difficult for women to get a job (15.44), JURGA says that for her work has priority over family. It is important to take responsibility for oneself and for others, including one's parents, in order to '*give them back what they gave you since childhood*' (15.41). JURGA rejects the idea of depending on and living off the income of a husband, it would be '*embarrassing*', and she also dissociates herself from other women who appear to live off the child benefits they receive from the state.

Interviewer: And when should one start with a family? Once you started working, once you made a career, or before that?

JURGA: Once you have achieved ... Once you are on a higher level in your career, once you have achieved something. But if it is before you started working, so you would lose the job. You somehow have to get going in your job, so that you already would have your place in that company. And then you can plan, start a family. Because if it is too early, so it makes it more difficult, because you will not have a job, you will not have money to support (the family). And once you have a job, you already know what to do, how to support, how to live.

I: So you think that when there is family, then you loose your work, you loose your job?

J: Yes, because there are other people who take your place. Because they will not keep your workplace until you have brought up a child or organized your family. Because, already before one starts working, one has to think when to do it and when not.

I: And what is more important for a woman, I'm asking you as a woman, is it family or job?

J: (3) Generally, I would think that perhaps job. Because, perhaps family is also important but, well, in my opinion, work would be in the first place and family in the second. You have to have a job, so that you have something to live from, to maintain someone, to maintain yourself, or your parents. And later, when you have achieved some kind of career you can plan a family.

I: Is it easy for a girl to work and have family at the same time? Is it possible to work and take care of a family?

J: In my opinion, maybe it would be difficult to combine (those things) ... It depends, though, on what kind of goal this girl has set for herself. And if these girls give up easily, so they don't care about this job. And if she is stronger, if she has some kind of aim, so it would be more important to her to have a job than, well, a family. And others, so they think: 'Oh, why do I need this job?' They think, 'I'd better bring up a child. Anyway I will get paid for the child.' In general, it has to be so that not only the state gives her money, but she has to earn money herself, she has to provide.

I: So you think that a woman should work.

J: Yes.

I: Not only a man should earn a living but also a woman.

J: Not only a man. Yeah, also a woman should (earn). Because, how would you feel if the husband (alone) works and earns money? In a way it is embarrassing. Anyway you have to do something yourself. (15.42-43)

However, JURGA plans to have children, and despite her intention to wait, she states that she may be *'bringing up kids'* in five years time. Yet she doubts that this will happen (15.53). In ten years, however, she will be *'bringing up kids for sure'* after having worked in a company for a while. She thinks that a woman should stay at home until her child is four to five years old. Afterwards she can rely on (public) childcare organisations in order to resume working. The role of the male partner in this arrangement is not discussed.

#### 9.3.6 Pattern VI – Reconciliation

'Well, it depends on the job. If this job is..., for example, there are night shifts. Then it may be possible.'  
(KAROLINA)

*Pattern VI* defines the ideal family as a joint project characterised by a certain degree of domination by the male partner and, in the perspective of the woman, the reconciliation of work and family. Marriage establishes commitments and delegates much of the responsibility and decision-making power to the male partner, who is expected to perform accordingly. Family formation is postponed until the required material and housing conditions are available. This is achieved through saving and additional work efforts, especially by the female partner. Childcare is organised informally and inside the family. The state is expected to support mothers financially when they are out of work.

KAROLINA is 20 years old and attends the same special vocational training centre as JURGA. Yet KAROLINA claims that she actually only pretended to fulfil the profile of the school in order to complete her education. At the moment she lives with her boyfriend in a one-room flat; he attends the same school. Afterwards they plan to work together in catering. Her dropping out of compulsory education is obviously linked to her parents' divorce and the fact that she had to move with her mother. She does not get along with her stepfather, her mother's second husband, who works on a nearby farm while her mother takes care of his farm and the two younger children from her second marriage. KAROLINA presents her father as a negative example of an alcoholic who has been unemployed for the last ten years and who *'lives on money that he gets for the children'* (16.12) he has had with his new wife. She once quarrelled with him when he tried to talk her into taking care of his children after she dropped out of education.

For KAROLINA work is important according to both the questionnaire and the interview (see Appendix 4). She thinks that generally it is impossible to survive without work, on state benefits alone – *'If you don't have a job, you won't be able to live on that'* (16.22). However, there are women who live on child benefit, as she observes in her village – *'It happens in our village, some women make children only to get money, they don't even know*

*who is the father'* (16.23). KAROLINA complains about bad public support for mothers and maintains that a woman needs to stay at home with the baby and the man has to support the family. Apart from that she has a pretty clear idea of how to informally organise childcare by involving friends as babysitters.

Interviewer: Do you think that working conditions in the labour market. let's say at work. should be different for men and women?

KAROLINA: Yes. If a woman has a baby, she should stay at home. Let the man take care of everything. The man has to support the family.

I: When should a woman work? Let's say she has a baby, how long will she raise it? All her life?

K: No, until three years mostly. As far as I know, according to the law, but I think that she could raise the child until it is one year old and then, there are those babysitters. She could find one among her acquaintances, for example, a friend who doesn't have a job. She could let her take care of the child, pay her a bit. Maybe the friend will take less money, they both agree, so it's good for both. The friend has a job and the woman can go to work. But in general I think one should raise a child until he is six months or a year old. I don't know, you can't leave a baby of two months. Even your mum... what if something happens and you are at work, you'll worry... Let's say it finds a knife in a kitchen. It cuts itself or something else happens.

I: Is it easier for a young woman or a young man to get employed?

K: For both, I think. You only need to be able to speak and to have a wish, if you want, you will find a job. If you don't want, you won't find it. (16.28-30)

The fact that both men and women can find jobs if they wish implies that no-one has an excuse not to earn money. A *'jobless husband in the family'* while *'his wife works'* (16.32) is as unacceptable as a woman who leaves all the financial responsibilities to the man. In any case, the husband's support is indispensable.

I: You were speaking about family. Do you think the man has to support the family?

K: Yes.

I: What does a woman have to do then?

K: A woman as well, but if they have a child, then it is the man's task to support both, the woman and the child. Well, and when the child grows up a bit, the woman can also work. Why should the man work alone? Everything's on the man's shoulders. The child is hers as well, so she also has to support it... (16.35).

In addition, and especially if the woman does not work, state support should be given directly to the child or paid in vouchers; this would help to solve the problem of benefit abuse, which was not a problem *'in Russian times'* when everybody had work and the wages were better (16.37-39).

KAROLINA's future plans include finding a *'good job'*, eventually continuing her studies, and in any case establishing herself together with a *'good husband'* - and only then starting a family (16.48). Making this possible requires the commitment of both partners and defines the family as a joint project, enabling and constraining at the same time, especially with regard to the dependence of the woman on the husband's decisions.

K: (...) If I have a child and have nothing to offer, if I don't have a place to live, why should I have this child then? It will grow and tell me: 'Mum, why do we live in this way? Renting one flat, then renting another one.' Somehow one must do one's best to save money. Maybe my boyfriend also, my boyfriend



will also do his best. To think of something together, well, it is possible. Everything is possible if you have a wish.

I: How do you imagine, what your future will be like in five years?

K: I will still be working, I will have finished courses then, I don't know, I will be old already...

I: Twenty five years and you will be old?

K: Not the same as I am now. I don't know, I should be, no, I won't be married yet, too young to marry when I'm twenty five. Well, maybe when I'm twenty eight... somehow like this, not too soon. Like there are others, my friends who marry when they are nineteen. Too soon. I don't know, you still have to relax, to go out, you want to go out somewhere. But if you are married, then it's the end. You are tied up with one person and you have to stay with this one person. One must be ready for a family life.

I: So do you think that everything collapses when you get married?

K: Well, no, it doesn't collapse, but it is not the way you think it should be. You get married and it is not the same anymore. For example, you may have plans, but you can't fulfil them because your husband will object, and that's it. (16.49-50)

In order to solve the practical problem of both parents working one needs to find a job that provides 'night shifts' – *'Well, it depends on the job. If this job is..., for example, there are night shifts. Then it may be possible. (...) In case the husband works in a day shift, he can come back home and stay with the child'* (16.44). KAROLINA considers her mother's sister an ideal in this respect and introduces her as an example of what her future should resemble. She and her husband were not in a hurry to start a family, they found jobs first, saved money by reducing their expenditures to a minimum, and manage to 'reconcile' work and family. They have even bought a house.

I: I also wanted to ask you, if there is a person among people you know, who you could follow as an example, a kind of ideal. 'I want to be like him, I want to live like him, because he lives well.' Do you have such a person among your relatives?

K: There is. From my mum's side, my mum's sister. I know she is the only one I respect. (...) They don't drink except during holidays once in a while. They have two girls, they both have jobs, they reconcile. Sometimes she has a night shift and he has a day shift, or vice versa, ... Well, I don't know, they are always together, if I come, they coordinate, they manage to coordinate this time. Well, I don't know. And their children have plenty of everything... well, I consider them to be an ideal family. Somehow I would like to have such a..., they didn't hurry to have children. First they found jobs. By the way, she didn't finish studies either, only eight grades. But she looked for a job and got one at X (company) that produces furniture. She's been working there for twelve years. Well, she started working, saving money. At first they rented a flat, they found one where they had to pay for running costs only. There was no rent. They saved money. He also earned well, she earned a bit, well, there was a period when they had to starve a bit anyway, they wouldn't eat better food, but kept saving money. And now they bought a house... (16.53)

### 9.3.7 Pattern VII – Sponsorship

'He, for example, would pay everything for my higher education. The point is that he wants me to build up my life. But there are also some conditions.' (NATALIJA)

Like the first pattern of *Exit to independence*, the '*Sponsorship*' pattern at the other end of the continuum has a weak empirical reference in the data. Only one case, that of NATALIJA which is discussed more extensively in Chapter 10, provides some indication of what could be considered a relationship of dependence on a 'sponsor'. However, this issue is unexplored and does not stand out even in the context of this interview. Furthermore, there is

no direct reference to the sexual connotations that such a relationship might involve.<sup>250</sup> Nevertheless, I use this label in order to emphasise the openness of the classification in this direction.

In short, *Pattern VII* refers to a relationship of dependence with an economically well-off (older) man, who provides the woman with economic as well as, perhaps, moral and emotional support. For the woman, motherhood has priority over employment, which, in view of the perceived difficulties for women to find work, is hardly considered a solution. Money is the most important asset in a context of poverty where basics like education and providing for children are difficult to organise.

NATALIJA, 17, lives in a regional capital of Lithuania. She lives in a small house with her parents, her grandmother and her 19-year-old brother, who is a college student and with whom she shares a room. After having completed ten years of compulsory education, NATALIJA changed school, but in the eleventh grade she was dismissed for not attending classes and is now registered at the labour exchange. Apart from truancy, her mother's sickness her family's poverty contributed to what she considers an interrupted education which she intends to resume. Before her mother got sick, NATALIJA witnessed how both of her parents lost their jobs in the small town dependent on tourism, and how the family slipped into poverty. When '*mother came back from the hospital*' NATALIJA '*had to look after her*' (24.42), while her brother, whose career obviously had priority in this situation, continued studying.

For NATALIJA work is firstly a means of earning money; it may be anything from doing some jobs for a neighbour, or weeding, or picking berries and mushrooms. She maintains that she has worked since she was 12 years old, and if she wanted something – she is obviously referring to things requiring small amounts of money – she always found a way of earning it (24.15). A job is important when there is a family and when the needs of children have to be met. Recalling her own experiences growing up in poverty, and referring to some unemployed mothers in her neighbourhood, she repeatedly emphasises the facilitating role of money.

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<sup>250</sup> Nazpary (2001), an ethnographer studying post-Soviet life in Kazakhstan tells of how he was about to get involved in a sponsorship relationship himself, finding out only afterwards about its significance as a common 'sexualised strategy' of women. 'Sponsorship is a form of widely practised reciprocity between a man (the sponsor) and a woman in which sex is exchanged with money and other things. (...) To become a sponsor is the privilege of men who have benefited economically from the post-Soviet social change' (Nazpary 2001: 97). For an account of coping strategies of post-Soviet youth in Kazakhstan including sponsorship relations see Rigi (2003).

Apart from continuing her education there is only one thing she really wishes to achieve in life, having a family and children. It is her '*biggest dream to build a house and to have a happy family*' (24.35). The fact that she did not experience that in her own childhood, and that she was actually an unwanted child, as her mother once revealed (24.33), increases the significance of this goal, which seems to have some problematic potential.

Interviewer: (...) I would like to talk about your future a bit. What do you plan. what do you expect?

NATALIJA: What, in general...(3) I want to have a family. I want that... I want to have a baby, I don't know, I want to have two kids. This is what I want. I don't know... Hmm and I also want, well, I don't know, that my children didn't lack anything, that they lived differently than I do, that there weren't such things that they come and ask and don't get what they want, I don't know...And there, for example, you see other mothers walking with kids of four years old already, 'Mum, buy me this, buy me that.' The mother says: 'No, I won't.' I'm afraid of this. If I have a child and I am not able to buy something, so that would be a tragedy for me. I can't imagine myself what I would do in such a case. So, now when my friend has a child, he'll be my godson. So I don't know, you come, you take him on your hands and think: 'When will I have such a baby?' But now, mainly, what I think of doing, for example (2). I decided that I'm going to study from September. That is for sure. I haven't decided yet if I'll finish twelve grades or I'll go to some professional school, so I'm still considering this. And then I'll see. If I continue at school to finish twelve grades, I'll see where to apply for further studies. At first, I'll see at what I am better, just like that. And if I go to a professional school, so, I decided... to study to become such a dressmaker. Because, I read already at school, when I was there, a couple of weeks ago...I found something about this dressmaker's profession. Well, in a word, what do I know... If the jobcentre sends you to study this, it takes three and a half months. So I think, then it's maybe better to go to a professional school, I would spend a year there and, well... what, then this dressmaker. If there's something, in the worst case, I could finish twelve grades at a night school. I would see, where else I would be able to apply. Well, later it will be... time will show. I don't plan too much, I don't expect too much from this life. (2)

I: Let's say, if you tried to imagine the time in 5, 10, and 20 years, let's say, what would you like, what would your life be like then?

N: In five years, so I...if we speak about...in general, I don't think about the future a lot, now... what I... I decide to finish some studies, to acquire a profession, to find a job. Then, I'll think of something. But in general there are such dreams like to have a family, and everything, well, fine...well, I don't know...a baby, at least one. Of course, the first will be a son. I want a boy very much, and I don't know, and I'll try that my child doesn't lack anything. I have, I don't know... a dream, so... I want a house... we have X's (name) land, so I want a house there. My grandma will leave it for me when I'm 18. So I want to build a house there, on the bank of the X (name of a river). This is my dream, I said, I will do everything, if I have no means, absolutely everything. So this is my biggest dream, to build a house and to have a happy family, and I don't know, these are the main two main wishes that I have.

I: What do you think, what do you need to achieve all this?

N: A decision and a strong desire. (4)

I: How do you imagine a typical life story of a person?

N: (2) I don't know, here (2), how..ehh... (5). A person's, for example, as I recall, we sit and talk with my (female) friends: 'What's the aim of living?' Anyway, you are born, for example, a girl gives birth to a child, an offspring, and then she dies, and that's it. (...) I say that if there's no, for example, if I hardly keep my head over water, then... I don't need children. Because anyway one day...it will hurt to see that a kid wants something and doesn't get that... and those tears... I can't watch small kids, especially small ones, cry. (4). (24.34-36)

None of NATALIJA's family, whether immediate or extended, and including her parents, can provide her with the financial and emotional support she needs. Without going into detail, and without being asked to be specific, NATALIJA indicates that she has both outside the family context. She has a small circle of friends she can trust; moreover she receives apparently substantive support from the '*husband*' of her '*best friend*', who already

has a baby. *'He is about 20 years older, but they love each other'* as she says. And, *'he helps me as well.'* Due to his age he treats her like *'his daughter'* when she approaches him; in fact, he has a daughter two years older than NATALJA. Sometimes she would even call him *'dad'* (24.32). NATALJA's ambitions to continue her education, and maybe even to go to university, are in stark conflict with her family's financial situation. Again, there is a *'friend'*, a man that is *'a bit older'*, possibly the same person mentioned before, who seems to be ready to support her, although not unconditionally. The two *separate* interview sequences on which the sponsorship idea is based are displayed below. The first sequence starts completely unexpectedly after an account of NATALJA observing her family drifting into poverty. The interviewer included a related comment in the transcript.

(...) But now, for example, if there's a birthday or some holiday, or Christmas, or Easter, it is important that they congratulated me in the circle of the family and that I congratulated them. And I don't even need those gifts. For example, there was my dad's birthday, I didn't have anything, so I made a postcard, I made Christmas postcards for everybody...For example, for my family... in my family everyone was satisfied with it from me. My friends were also satisfied with it. I don't know... somehow there was an attitude, we celebrated somewhere, there was some present, so... [In this place she started to talk about a different topic - Interviewer]. I started communicating more, well, when my best girlfriend somehow started, well, found that husband of hers, and everything there, (then) I communicated with him less somehow. Afterwards she ... *Well*, I became friends with her husband as well. So, I recall ... *Well*, he is older, (he is) about 20 years older, but they love each other and, well... He, for example, as he is older, for example, he helps me as well. So that's it. You come to them, for example, you had a conflict with your brother or there's something else, so God forbid. If he sees me crying, I'm like his daughter... *Well*, he has a daughter, his daughter is two years older than me, she is nineteen, so he treats me like a kind of friend, and kind of his daughter. So, I remember, there were conflicts at my home somehow, and I would hardly be at home ... So a couple of times, I called him *'dad'* [she is laughing]. But, I don't know, (2) then in general... (5). (24.32)

The second sequence is an equally unexpected part of NATALJA's answer to the interviewer's question of whether she perceives herself as unemployed.

Interviewer: I see, now I would like to know if you perceive yourself as an unemployed?

NATALJA: If I had worked before, if I had a workbook so I would really be an unemployed. But now I'm not considered to be unemployed, but...somehow (3) That jobcentre...well how, ok, I went there for some certificate. I won't sign out now anyway, when...I'm not considered to be unemployed, but it would be good to have a job. In general...I'm considered to be... (3) well.. (4) How can I explain? (2) I neither study nor work, that is, well, like I'm on holiday. For example, you do almost everything what you want, of course, you cannot afford yourself a lot, with your friends or, I don't know, I could, for example, go to X (city) for the whole week on Wednesday, but I had to...well, do something at home.. My mother, we have to do our best to leave less work for my mother, so I need to do things at home, then I had to go to the jobcentre to sign, so I didn't go. But I could have gone simply to visit my friend. He, I don't know, he would do anything only that I come, that I mingle with different people a bit ... *Well*, he's a bit older. And I don't know... He wants, for example, to help also me (and) everything (2). For example, I would complete 12 [grades - Interviewer]. What concerns my parents it is very hard that I would afford higher education. He, for example, would pay everything for my higher education. The point is that he wants me to build up my life. But there are also some conditions: *'Don't you dare... to do that,'* or something more. And while otherwise my parents wouldn't have allowed me to go to X (city) for a whole week ... And if incidentally I would bump into one of my aunts or my cousin... (2), then immediately there would be a phone call to my home, *'How come Natalija is in X (city)? What is she doing here?'* *Well*, and there would be conflicts again (2) (...) (24.39-40).

#### 9.4 Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an outline of imagined gender-work relations in the perspective of young Lithuanian women against the background of a transforming gender order and regime. The findings are organised into a classification that consists of seven patterns of imagined gender-work relations, distinguished on the basis of the relationship of work to the three aspects of motherhood, partnership, and livelihood. Additional criteria of variable significance for single patterns could not be considered for the comparison, because data was not systematically collected for the purpose of a comparative analysis of gender-work relations.

The most remarkable feature, which all but the two 'extreme' patterns (i.e. *Patterns I* and *VII*) hold in common, is probably the intention to postpone motherhood in order to work. Despite the fact that becoming a mother is undoubtedly part of what these young women would consider a 'normal life', most intend to delay it, some beyond their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, many at least until their mid-20s. Thus, the *intended* age of motherhood is considerably higher than the statistical average of about 24 years (see Chapter 6.2.3.). In general, although family and work struggle for first place on the list of most important biographical elements, work has priority over family formation in terms of timing. In other words, within these young women's transitions to adulthood work comes before, and is instrumental for, family. For some, education and the wish to enjoy life for longer delay both employment and motherhood. Priorities like these are reflected in the sharp decline in the birth rate after 1990 (see above Table 9.3). The arguments against early motherhood can be attributed to all three dimensions of the classification. They include references to self-realisation through work, financial independence from a future partner, as well as worries about the impossibility of maintaining a family and providing for aging parents without work. I will come back to this point of care responsibilities in the final argument of this chapter.

With regard to *Pattern I*, '*Exit to independence*', non-postponement is the motivation for the sudden emigration. The consequences expected in the local context of being a mother and a wife, some of which were reviewed in the second part of this chapter, are rejected. The setting is substituted with another context that holds considerable and multiple advantages. I discussed the possible implications of this form of exit in Chapter 8. With regard to *Pattern VII*, '*Sponsorship*', at the other end of the continuum, the desire for motherhood is embedded in an idealised image of family life and security provided by the male partner, who may be older and wealthy. In the frame of the specific case of NATALLJA, this desire also constitutes

an important aspect of a very difficult motivational situation. I will come back to this case in more detail in Chapter 10. These two patterns indicate the directions in which solutions may develop, provided that young women find it difficult to locate themselves within the more conventional space represented in the remaining five patterns, all of which allow for a certain degree of autonomy through employment participation.

*Patterns II to VI* represent variations of employment participation, ranging from the insistence to work to the view of work as a necessary evil required for financial reasons from the wife and mother in the family. The practical issues of sharing at least the employment part of the work necessary for the maintenance of a household with the partner are fully considered only in *Pattern VI: 'Reconciliation'* - hence the label. Yet this pattern displays a rather low level of female autonomy and refers to the Soviet model of the female double burden. All the other patterns (from II to V) involve a higher relevance of work, either for reasons of self-realisation or for economic survival. In pattern V, *'Responsibility and survival'*, the woman takes full responsibility for earning money. Having a family at some point is not questioned: yet this requires a sound material foundation. The moment of dependence in this pattern results primarily from the necessity of combining two incomes. Pattern IV, at the centre of the classification and labelled *'Between independence and dependence'* may move in either direction. Female employment remains important as a necessary 'insurance' against dependence. Yet the option of giving in to the apparent benefits of stereotypical gender roles is not fully excluded. *Pattern III, 'Independence and mutual support'*, refers to an independent woman who may decide to become a mother within a symmetrical relationship after becoming professionally and financially established. Finally, *Pattern II*, labelled *'Independence'* lacks any consideration of dependence on a male partner. With regard to social background, one can tentatively say that the *Patterns V to VII* represent young women in non-linear transitions with disadvantaged backgrounds. *Patterns I to IV*, on the other hand, represent young women in linear transitions with more favourable backgrounds.

### **9.5 Conclusion**

According to the accounts of the young women represented in this chapter there is no indication that any intended to make use of the recent right not to work by voluntarily withdrawing from the labour market. The economic situation barely permits the consideration of this option in their life plans. This finding supports arguments put forward, for instance, by Rudd (2000) for East Germany, Adnanes (2000) for Bulgaria, or Ashwin et al. (2006) for

Russia.<sup>251</sup> At the same time, young women do not, at least in their life *planning*, give up their role as future mothers. In essence, the combination of the two dimensions of work and motherhood points to a continuation of features of the Soviet model of the 'worker-mother'. The low birth rate, as one of the 'outcomes' of the competition between the two biographical dimensions, seems to confirm the subordination of motherhood to employment participation. Participation in further education is a third dimension. The difficult labour market conditions and the low levels of public family support facilitate this development and leave women with a double-uncertainty on both job *and* family.

In view of the findings, there is no indication that young women would prefer a return to conservative gender roles as politically promoted at the beginning of the transformation. For the time being, the 'male breadwinner model' continues to remain absent in these societies. The gender transformation attached to the socio-economic reorientation of former communist societies comes without the real option of male economic domination, and the only pattern in the present classification reflecting the full dependence of the female partner is the *Pattern of sponsorship*. On the contrary, the difficult labour market combined with high poverty risks results instead in forms of female breadwinning which trigger a 'gender role crisis' among men (Fodor 2006, Ashwin et al. 2006).

However, in a medium-term perspective gender relations may develop differently. The initial, unrealistic attempts to re-institutionalise pre-Soviet conservative gender relations in Lithuania by calling for 'the return of women to the family' (Purvaneckiene 1995) overshadow female participation in the workforce in order to ensure multiple incomes for households. Thus, with the chance of economic recovery the possibly more prosperous future of Lithuania and other post-communist countries is colonized by a potential revision of gender relations. Two possible scenarios are as follows: first, some of the autonomy gained by women through high labour force participation may be a temporary and fragile phenomenon that will disappear as soon as the economic necessity of multiple income households disappears. However, this option may have little real life relevance for a market democracy like Lithuania, as it would require the reversal of the general European trend towards increasing female employment participation, alongside a decline of the male breadwinner model (Lewis 2001). Second, public discontent with gender discrimination in employment matters, which is

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<sup>251</sup> Huinink/Kreyenfeld (2006), on the other hand, find that women in East Germany give in to the 'new institutional constraints' of unified Germany favouring the 'female housekeeper model' by at least temporarily withdrawing from the labour market. For a comparison of women's work patterns in West Germany, East Germany and Poland see Matysiak/Steinmetz (2006).

currently silenced by more urgent struggles with poverty and societal marginalisation (side-effects of transformation) (Watson 2000), might become more relevant again and accompany the negotiations of gender relations in the future.

Finally, some remarks regarding the labelling of the gender distribution of employment responsibilities. The terms usually associated with gender regime debates in the tradition of welfare state research (e.g. O'Reilly 2006) are remote from gender negotiations on the ground. Terms like 'male breadwinner' or 'dual earner' are indicative of formal arrangements on the surface, which, in my point of view, are useful for quantitative comparison. Yet they provide no information about changeable practical aspects and negotiations or about priorities or needs within such arrangements. The use of these conventional terms to label findings in qualitative research (e.g. Pascall/Kwak 2005: chapter 5) may result in a flawed connection of these findings to the gender regime discourse, which operates on a different level. Moreover, in the case of post-communist contexts, some Western concepts are entirely problematic. For instance, the 'male breadwinner', an appendix of the 'middle-class ideology of separate spheres for men and women' as Crompton (2006: 33) dubs it following Davidoff/Hall (1987), was not a relevant category in communism. Yet gender ideologies assigning family, care and housework to women *were* practically relevant and are still of significant importance in post-Soviet accounts. Thus, what might remind us, in post-communist narratives, of cultural features of what is commonly labelled the 'male breadwinner' (or 'dual earner' etc.) model, points, in my view, to something else that is at risk of disappearing behind this dominant label. It points to the fact that the gendered distribution of responsibilities has to do with the way work is shared between partners, and with the way positions of public and private status are distributed in a context which (a) first and foremost redefines female employment participation, (b) is characterised by an incomparably higher level of employment uncertainty, alongside (c) the insufficient public support of people out of work, and (d) invites informal means of (supplementary) income. These aspects distinguish post-communist societies from individualised 'middle-class' societies where a considerable share of welfare responsibilities is 'collectivised'. They require a different set of labels that break with the narrow perspective on the relationship within 'the couple'.

Altogether these aspects indicate the persistent importance of 'household strategies' in the background of individual orientations, and of micro rules of distributing and assuming responsibilities for work and livelihood in post-communism (Wallace 2002, Clarke 1999, Piirainen 1997). Such a household perspective would facilitate the development of higher



sensitivity for less visible, perhaps latent commitments rooted in the wider (family) context.<sup>252</sup> For instance, the orientations of young women towards work and independence can alternatively be understood as responses to the fact that individual responsibilities towards the wider family of origin cannot be shared with the partner (who has his own commitments). These responsibilities are not (yet) sufficiently 'collectivised'. The same applies to the prospective family. Young women perceive the provision of material security as their individual responsibility. Thus, in the current situation - and 'configuration' as can be added following the discussion in the previous chapter - the norm of employment in the life course is ratified by young women in terms of a citizenship duty towards the family context of the present and the future, rather than towards the state.

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<sup>252</sup> 'Young people in poor families cannot afford to be out of the labour force' (Rutkowski 2006: 28).



## 10 Time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in youth transitions to working life<sup>253</sup>

The enlargement of the European Union to include former communist countries qualifies as rather an abrupt cause of uncertainty in the 'New West' of Europe in the sense of 'youth's increased exposure to globalisation' (Mills et al. 2005: 424), as diagnosed and quantified by a recent study of 14 countries (Blossfeld et al. 2005). One may say that globalisation and its consequences add to the uncertainty inherent in young people's transitions by blurring outcomes and further destandardising the transition itself. Yet neither globalisation nor experiences of being in-between different statuses are phenomena that exclusively affect young people. The existential provisionality inherent in the concept of transition extends across the life course and reflects a general development towards a 'non-linear concept of life' (Gillis 1993: 13) in the background of uncertainty discussions. This is due first of all to changes in the material bases and economic foundations of advanced market societies in a global context. The shift towards a service economy, for instance, reorganises the social space and redistributes opportunities and obligations among all age groups. What used to be attributed to the status of youth is a universal feature. Importantly, some gender differences are also affected.

Today, youth has no monopoly on the future. In an economy where people as well as materials are constantly being moved and removed, everyone regardless of age is encouraged to think of themselves in a perpetual state of becoming. In the present troubled economic conditions, career lines have ceased to be so certain or continuous. The life-time job is all but extinct. We are asked to retrain, re-educate, and, in the jargon of the day, 'recycle', a word that suggests a non-linear concept of life. It is no longer only females who are asked to adapt, change, and accept the role of being relative creatures. Men as well are now told to keep their options open (Gillis 1993: 13).

Developments like these are recognised as generating 'uncertainties', sometimes addressed as 'risks' in the youth research discourse. This is not the place for an extensive review of issues of uncertainty in youth research ranging from general to specific as well as primarily empirical accounts (e.g. Furlong/Carmel 1997b; Cieslik/Pollock 2002; Roberts et al. 2000; Williams et al. 2003; Cavalli 1985; Leccardi 2005; Blossfeld et al. 2005). Instead, the review in the *first part of this chapter* is selective, giving more space to two very different approaches to youth uncertainties which are indicative of the scope of the debate and able to direct our attention to the main issues of this chapter. The first is a cross-national study of uncertainties in youth transitions as a result of processes of globalisation based on 14 single

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<sup>253</sup> I am indebted to Michael Vorisek and Vaida Jasiukaityte for commenting on earlier versions of this chapter; which helped me to sort out the argument and organise it in a readable form. The argument also benefited from a discussion of a shorter version of this chapter with the title 'Biographical uncertainty in the transition to working life among young people in post-Soviet Lithuania, presented at the 8th Conference of the European Sociological Association, Glasgow 3-6 September 2007.

country studies (Blossfeld et al 2005). The authors rightly emphasise the relevance of the uncertainty-problematic related to globalisation for young people. However, as I will argue, they do not, mainly due to their methodological approach and perhaps because of a lack of interest in conceptual issues altogether, manage to go beyond a notion of uncertainty as an external, structural phenomenon that is eventually reflected in variations in outcomes according to context and features and the preferences of supposedly rational individuals. Despite the general sensitivity of this approach to methodological issues of time, it can be criticised in this respect. Against the background of the sensitising concept of biographical uncertainty (see Chapter 3), which emphasises the status of expectations as well as time at the core of sociological notions of uncertainty, this approach cannot grasp subjective reconstructions of past experiences on a biographical level, or how they inform outcome-oriented action among individuals deemed 'rational'. In order to contrast this approach, an account of biographical uncertainty among young people is reviewed that emphasises the significance of the notion of time and considers the linkages between past, present and future at the core of the uncertainty problematic inherent in youth transitions. It was an Italian study (Cavalli 1985) conducted more than two decades ago that first recognised the interplay of historical, biographical and everyday time perspectives as constitutive of youth identities and the contemporary status of youth as such.

These two studies indicate the possible range of sociological studies of youth uncertainty; they highlight different aspects of the uncertainty problematic, including the problem of external uncertainties, in terms of macro-changes as well as internal uncertainty in terms of confused orientations. I elaborate on the latter aspect by providing, in the *second part of the chapter*, an analytic perspective on biographical uncertainty that renders the external relativity of human existence observable on the inside of action by drawing attention to the moment of projecting and planning the future on the basis of expectations. The time concepts of George H. Mead and Alfred Schütz, key figures of interpretive sociology, provide the basis for this enterprise that ultimately complements notions of uncertainty briefly discussed in Chapter 3 (i.e. Gehlen, Simmel, Durkheim, Park) with two accounts directly referring to the level of action. The general argument behind this is that social change is ratified and perpetuated on the individual level when it is appropriated in biographical projecting temporally oriented towards the future *and* the past as equally relevant to motivation. Action theories of rational decision-making that are primarily outcome, and thus future-oriented are unable to integrate this temporal bi-polarity of intentionality with the ontological micro-historicity of social action. That is not to say that external sources of uncertainty such as

those associated with the post-communist world of work (see Chapter 2) do not constitute a challenge to biographical planning in youth transitions. On the contrary, the task of constituting 'life as an individual project', a core-feature of modernity as well as a core-task of modern socialisation (Kohli 1991: 312), must be reformulated under new circumstances. Where institutions are undergoing change, the question is whether and in which way elements of this can be traced to the level of biographical projecting and planning.

In the *third part of the chapter* this refined analytic perspective of biographical uncertainty suggesting criteria for an assessment of biographical uncertainty is applied to the three general patterns of post-communist youth transitions to working life identified on the basis of the interviews. For young people in post-Soviet Lithuania the disappearance of channels to work constitutes an additional moment of 'objective' uncertainty besides globalisation and the transition. In order to become relevant and a 'danger within' (see Chapter 3.4) this still needs to be ratified in the course of biographical projecting.

The *fourth part* substantiates the empirical space of the study opened up by the three patterns by introducing additional short case profiles and finally synthesising the patterns. The *concluding remarks* review the argument, briefly discuss the relationship of the patterns to the socio-economic background of the respondents, and place the findings in the wider context of debates about accelerated societal transformation.

## ***10.1 Youth and uncertainty – two studies***

### **10.1.1 Globalisation and uncertainty in youth transitions**

The 14 single country studies presented in the book entitled 'Globalization, uncertainty and youth in society' (Blossfeld et al. 2005) represent, to my knowledge, the first systematic attempt to assemble comparable evidence concerning some of the specific consequences of globalisation on young people in their trifold transition to adulthood, including entry into the labour market, the transition to a first partnership, and parenthood. The countries covered by this study, which reports the findings of one of four sub-projects of a research programme into globalisation and uncertainty funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, include 'industrialised' or 'OECD-type societies' as different as Norway, Mexico, and Estonia. The primary hypothesis is 'that the increased uncertainty in early labor market experiences of youth seep into the partnership and parenthood domains of their lives' (Mills/Blossfeld 2005: 1). The empirical reference, obviously an *a priori* of the whole enterprise, consists of national retrospective or longitudinal panel surveys, which were analysed with event history methods

in order to arrive at a "causal-type' analysis of events that represent changes from one discrete life course state to another' (ibid. 19-20).

According to the model of the study the notion of 'uncertainty' is introduced and appropriated at five different levels (Mills/Blossfeld 2005). First, it is a general problem in the sense of 'structural uncertainty' (ibid. 2), which is introduced and increased by processes of globalisation (i.e. the internationalisation of markets, deregulation/privatisation/liberalisation, the significance of global networks, and the increasing importance of markets).

Second, as with all resources, whether positive or negative, the distribution of uncertainty follows the general logic of social stratification. Uncertainty is "institutionally filtered' and channelled towards specific social groups in various countries' (ibid. 6). Employment systems, education systems, welfare regimes, and family systems are the most important institutions of uncertainty mediation and distribution. What is crucial for the study is the comparison of national variations of institutional composition.

Third, uncertainty on the micro level of individuals is attached to decisions and choices with long-term implications. According to a central hypothesis of the study 'the uncertainty generated by globalization at the social-structural level *reduces or delays the propensity of youth to enter long-binding commitments* such as partnership or parenthood' (ibid. 16, emphasis added). This third kind of uncertainty, here part of the general hypothesis, addresses a commonplace in youth research (e.g. Du Bois-Reymond 1998). This project's aim is obviously to quantify the scope of this phenomenon in order to assess the share of certain institutional configurations therein. Decision processes are therefore de-individualised by suggesting typically rational, outcome-oriented actors.<sup>254</sup>

Fourth, under the conditions of globalisation these actors face 'three major decision problems' *qua* increasing uncertainties which they have to tackle in the frame of their 'rational decision-making'. These are: (a) the 'uncertainty about the behavioural alternatives themselves', which refers to incomplete knowledge on the availability and optimal timing of certain alternatives. (b) This is accompanied by the difficulty to anticipate the probable consequences of decisions, addressed as 'uncertainty about the probability of behavioural outcomes'. (c) There is 'uncertainty about the amount of information to be collected for a particular decision'. This addresses investments in searching for information according to cost-benefit criteria. The possibility that where the young person lives may undermine some

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<sup>254</sup> The study operates on the basis of a certain combination of rationality criteria which are reviewed, for instance, in Goldthorpe (1998).

of the proposed rationality by means of distinct traditions, norms and social institutions, is considered. Yet they are regarded as contextual heuristics of decision and tools for problem-solving that facilitate rather than bias choices (Mills/Blossfeld 2005: 16-17).

Fifth, in order to arrive at a level of observation elevated enough to allow the measurement of the impact of all these possible levels of uncertainty within the national contexts on the basis of the available survey data, the design incorporates another three types of uncertainty as well as corresponding quantifiable indicators and sub-hypotheses. (a) 'Economic uncertainty' refers to the level of precariousness in employment and education. It is operationalised in terms of four indicators: activity status (employment and education), occupational class, amount of extra benefits in addition to income, and earnings. (b) The dimension of 'temporal uncertainty' measures the hypothetical decrease in long-term commitments among young people. The incidence of cohabitation (instead of marriage) and temporary contracts (instead of permanent ones) would be relevant indicators. (c) 'Employment relationship uncertainty' refers to differences in terms of employment status (dependent versus self-employed) as well as employment sector (public versus private). A gender hypothesis cutting across the three observed types of uncertainty establishes criteria for an investigation into the possibly different effects of uncertainty on men and women (ibid. 17-19).

On the basis of the 14 country studies, the project confirms the expected increase in uncertainty among young people due to globalisation. Despite the mediating function of national institutions, the distribution of uncertainty is unequal; it accumulates among disadvantaged groups. The experience of uncertainty also contributes to the postponement of family formation. The identification of so-called 'rational responses to uncertainty' or 'diverse behavioural strategies' among young people is not surprising considering the in-built methodological assumption of rationality. The confirmation of what was anticipated is not the most important outcome of this cross-national project. Its main value consists in the advanced and comparative utilisation of available secondary data through the application of a rather rigid equation model. The findings thus provide a comparative grid against which institutional variations in mediating the effects of globalisation on young people can be assessed.

With regard to the notion of uncertainty, however, the study has little to offer in general or conceptual terms despite having introduced the term at five levels. Within the rational choice framework a general notion of 'risk' might have been more appropriate; especially in view of the overall probabilistic character of the argumentation. One particular criticism is

related to the issue of time, which Blossfeld (1996) acknowledged as crucial in an earlier critique of rational choice theories and their apparent preference of 'logical reconstructions of 'time-less' action situations' (189). Some of his arguments could be reiterated in a critique of the above study, especially those referring to the 'ahistorical approach' of rational choice perspectives, for which longitudinal data and event history modelling alone are no remedy. In addition, the concept of the rational, forward-oriented actor emphasises only one of the classical sources of uncertainty discussed in Chapter 3 – i.e. the loss of predictability. Such a restricted concept of action neglects the importance of the past in the process of projecting action and anticipating its outcomes, although this is empirically accessible, for example through the biographical analysis of subjective life constructions the motivations behind decisions.

The concept of time needs more attention if we are to arrive at a notion of uncertainty where the micro-causality of action – involving the reinterpretation of past experiences and action in the course of projecting future action – is explicitly addressed and *not* neutralised through methodological assumptions. An Italian study from the 1980s introduced in the following provides an important alternative approach to uncertainty. It establishes a bridge between uncertainty and the way young people relate themselves to the past and the future.

#### 10.1.2 Youth, time, uncertainty

The Italian youth study 'Il Tempo dei Giovani' (Cavalli 1985, 1988) is exceptional in its attempt to explicitly approach the phenomenon of youth in the perspective of time experiences. Its main interest is the phenomenon of 'temporal destructuring' ('destrutturazione temporale') as a source of biographical uncertainty ('incertezza biografica'), and the resulting typology of time experience provides an instructive starting point for a general analytic perspective on biographical uncertainty in youth transitions. The overall aim of the study is to investigate the world of young people, their relations to family, school, peer-groups, work, politics – in short: the relations between the individual and society in general - by analysing the patterns of young people arranging their 'own time'. Youth as a period of life is understood as an open transition to adulthood that is particularly difficult in a fast-moving modern society, because change is often perceived as nothing but uncertainty. This process, and the future in general, does not seem to be easily influenced or controlled. The tendency to prolong the status of being out of work not only supports the constitution of youth as a social category, it also leads to a blurring of occupational and social goals and plans; they become unclear and are replaced by an apparent diversity of possibilities. Young people are confronted with the



problem of dealing with the rapidly changing conditions of their present lives and of establishing some kind of temporal balance to transform social time into individual time.<sup>255</sup>

Against this background, the Italian study's aim is to explore young people's consciousness of time within three dimensions: historical time; biographical time; and everyday life. Consciousness of historical time refers to historical awareness – i.e. the ability to integrate one's own existence into broader temporal contexts. Biographical time - manifested on the individual level in 'memory' (past), in 'being here and now' (present) and in 'expectations, plans, hopes and fears' (future), - constitutes identity, which results from the way the three dimensions of time are connected. The time of everyday life, finally, refers to the daily handling of the three segments of time (see Cavalli 1988, 388).

Arranging each of these three dimensions along an 'axis of structuring and destructuring of time' the main-hypothesis of the Italian study is 'that a syndrome of destructuring of time becomes visible among a consistent minority of young people; it manifests itself in a lack or fragmentation of historical memory, in an instability of the temporal horizon with regard to plans defining personal identity, in a lack of stable criteria for organising the time of everyday life' (ibid: see Cavalli 1985, 39-41). Furthermore, it is assumed that discontinued institutional commitments and a lack of participation in collective activities are favourable for the phenomenon of temporal destructuring.

According to the study's aim of analysing how patterns of structuring and destructuring time are constituted, in-depth interviews with 200 young men between 16 and 27 years of age were carried out in Milan.<sup>256</sup> Due to the specific interest in the phenomenon of temporal destructuring, half of the interviewees were school dropouts engaging in casual work without any employment relationship. Due to the use of a battery of questions applied to all respondents, the analysis followed the logic of content analysis rather than case reconstruction. The results of the analysis of the interviews are summarised in a typology of time experiences.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> 'La capacità di gestire l'intensità, la capacità di passare da un tempo ad un altro e comunque di manovrare la sovrapposizione di tempi diversi, la capacità di stabilire criteri di priorità nell'allocazione del tempo, la capacità di ordinare temporalmente l'azione finalizzata, la capacità di elaborare progetti e di costruire strategie di azione in condizioni di incertezza, tutte queste capacità indicano modi diversi degli individui di porsi di fronte al tempo, modi diversi di trasformare il tempo sociale in tempo individuale' (Cavalli 1985, 37).

<sup>256</sup> Young women were interviewed in a second study (Leccardi 1990). A comparison of both studies can be found in Leccardi (1991, 125ff.).

<sup>257</sup> The summary of the typology is based on Cavalli/Calabrò (1985), Cavalli (1988), Leccardi (1985: 318-324 and 1990: II,2), and Rampazi 1985: 166-169). The Italian terms, used synonymously, are: 'tipologia dei modi di porsi nei confronti del tempo' and 'tipologia dei vissuti temporali'.

Based on the biographical dimension of time, the authors draft an analytic scheme to distinguish different types of behavioural patterns towards time. The classification results from a combination of two main categories: (1) *self-representation* ('rappresentazione di sé') ranging from autonomy to dependence; (2) *representation of life time* ('rappresentazione del tempo della propria vita') ranging from structuration to destructure. (1) *Autonomy* refers to the self-attribution of motives and consequences of actions and to individuals that perceive themselves as actors. *Dependence*, on the other hand, refers to the attribution of the current situation to external circumstances and to individuals that find themselves confronted with obligatory pathways; they feel exposed to external forces like objects in a magnetic field.<sup>258</sup> (2) *Structuration* of biographical time refers to the scope of the temporal horizon – i.e. how it reaches from the past (memory) to the future (expectations, projections) – and to the strength of the connection between these times. Biographical time is highly *structured* when the present is not perceived as isolated from the past and the future. On the other hand, *destructured* biographical time is characterised by a concentration on the present in terms of a unique and unrepeatable moment. The past is not seen in relation to the present or as a stage on the way towards it; time is a succession of presents. The future represents what will one day be present; it is characterised by vagueness and unpredictability. These categories are combined into four different types, pure types or ideal-types in the Weberian sense, as the authors say; they may exist simultaneously or as successive phases. The four types are: the self-structured type; the hetero-structured type; the self-destructured type; and the hetero-destructured type.<sup>259</sup>

The *self-structured type* develops an identity according to goals related to an occupational career. These young people strive for self-realisation and do not consider themselves as being exposed to external circumstances, fortune or misfortune. On the contrary, decisions are made consciously and responsibility is taken both for success and failure. Young people of this type recognise themselves as active subjects whose own life projects are the basis for time-related planning. The future is kept open by postponing decisions, and the past is regarded as an instructive collection of experiences. The principle of deferred gratification (Weber) characterises the motivations behind actions. The self-

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<sup>258</sup> This important distinction between autonomy and dependence, and the attempt to identify dominating shares, makes the Italian study, conducted in the first half of the 1980s, an early example of youth research where the interplay of structure and agency has central status (Evans/Furlong 1997).

<sup>259</sup> The corresponding Italian terms are: 'tipo autostrutturato, eterostrutturato, autodestruutturato, eterodestrutturato'.

definition of this type could be: *'I am who I will be thanks to the future I am building up'* (Leccardi 1985: 319).

The *hetero-structured type*, on the other hand, replaces autonomous planning with adaptation, hoping that the primary need for security will be satisfied by realising generally accepted aims in life. The future should be predictable, the past is considered to be an accumulation of events. Young people of this type expect to produce a stable and secure situation by following social norms. The acceptance of a predestined social role also determines the development of identity: *'I am who I am socially supposed to be'* (Leccardi 1985: 320).

For the *self-destructured type* time is comparable to a space to be explored in which chances have to be taken. There is no clearly defined action goal, because goals must not be exclusive. All stages are transitory; decisions that are irrevocable or restrictive are avoided. The present is the centre of all action and attention, and is not orientated towards the future. The future is simply an array of presents yet to be lived. The past is a repertoire of experiences; it represents opportunities discovered so far. With regard to time-related planning on the biographical level, this urge to realise oneself leads to the testing of different life projects without any temporal commitment; the future remains open and alterable. Identity is kept 'fluid' so that a sense of one's own continuity in time is missing: *'I am who I decide to be at any one time'* (Leccardi 1985: 322).

Finally, for the *hetero-destructured type*, the gap between social and individual time results in a total loss of control over time of life, which is essentially equated with the present. Both the future and the past seem to be determined by fate. Poor self-confidence and vague anxiety about the future preclude any planning; an open horizon is not seen as a chance but a threat. Time seems to be meaningless because it cannot be filled in; it is only 'killed'. The question of identity - *'Who am I?'* (Leccardi 1985: 323) - remains unanswered.

*Biographical uncertainty* ('incertezza biografica') is here first and foremost the difficulty to make life choices, a phenomenon that affects ever larger shares of people, especially, but not exclusively, young people. In a moment of projecting oneself into the future, this becomes problematic due to a lack of strategies for achieving any one of a range of possible outcomes, as well as an inability to establish outcome priorities due to the absence of socially available criteria (Rampazi 1985: 155; see also Leccardi 1999: 10). The problem, which is conceptually developed from psychological accounts like those of Erikson, Piaget and Lewin, is essentially related to the absence or distortion of the ability to plan ('progettualità'). This becomes

apparent when individual experiences confront areas of society without mechanisms of social orientation. A focus on life in the present ('presentificazione') that blurs the future is characteristic of this situation. The labour market sphere is a prime example of such a social area, where factors influencing the outcome are beyond control. This 'condition' does not affect all layers of the youth population in the same way, yet it is a general phenomenon among young people of the extended middle class who have been subject to mass schooling.

Rampazi (1985: 166-169) introduces a scheme of four ways of dealing with uncertainty. Although integrated into the overall typology presented above, it deserves a separate review due to the focus of this chapter. The first two patterns confront uncertainty, while in the remaining two the perception of biographical uncertainty is suppressed or does not emerge. (a) One answer to biographical uncertainty is the conscious emphasis of the present; the related moratorium can turn into a circular condition in the sense of a lifestyle. These young people look to the future with curiosity and consider the past as a source of self-esteem that allows them to appreciate the present. (b) For young people at the opposite end of the spectrum the reaction to biographical uncertainty is passivity and vague aspirations. They reject the conventional models offered by the environment, but make no concrete attempts to pursue alternative goals. They wait for something to happen to change their present situation but do not recognise their external determination. They refuse to think about the future and are indifferent to the past, which is reduced to a monotonous linearity. (c) A third category consists of young people with a more or less clear idea of what they want to achieve and the means necessary to do it. A 'life project' and the first concrete activities aimed at this goal are already taking place; achieving the goal is realistic due to the individual's capacity to establish a constructive and coherent link between the past and the future. (d) Finally, for a fourth category of young people biographical uncertainty does not exist, as they perceive the main features of their lives as predefined. They accept models of life that go hand in hand with relatively standardised projects; their biographies as well as their perspectives on the past and future are dominated by an attitude of routine. The future is ignored or considered only in terms of stereotypes. The past appears to be no more than a sequence of obligatory passages and is not considered relevant, either for the present or the future.

The Italian study of youth and time stimulated both quantitative and qualitative research into issues of youth and time in continental Europe (Du Bois-Reymond/Oechsle 1990, Kohr 1992, Reiter 1997, 2003, Leccardi 1999, 2005). Most probably for reasons of language it has been neglected in other, more recent studies dealing with associated issues (Brannen/Nilsen

2002; Anderson et al. 2005). As used in the Italian study, the notion of biographical uncertainty does not refer to a one-sided account of suffering.<sup>260</sup> It refers rather to an ambivalent experience that can be perceived as a 'flattening of life perspectives' as well as a 'necessary condition' allowing the emergence of new individual pathways and new ways of 'stabilising identity'. In this ambivalent sense it is also integrated in the general typology described above. The typology has, in my point of view, the qualities of an abstract tool for the analysis of time experiences across countries as well as age groups. Furthermore, the notion of biographical uncertainty applied in the Italian study has the advantage of directly referring to the problem of projecting oneself out of a transitional situation and into the future.

Despite its emphasis on time and time structuring as key to the analysis of changes in the ability to plan, the Italian study leaves, in my opinion, two of the main issues of biographical uncertainty underdeveloped. These are the difficulty of establishing and orienting projections, and the problem of determining reasonable expectations. One of the reasons for this limitation is related to the theory-generating character of this pioneering study; it arrives at an integration of key categories and the construction of a conceptual framework only at the end of the research. A second reason may be related to the cross-sectional character of the (content) analysis, which does not really allow the reflection of single cases in more detail (see Cavalli 1985: 44). Thus, there was no opportunity for the ambiguous realities of cases to challenge the rigidity of relations along the two axes suggested.

My ambition in the rest of this chapter is thus to use my privileged position of being able to build upon this work in order to try and fill in some of these gaps. In the next section therefore I briefly establish a temporal account of biographical uncertainty by discussing the problem of projecting in the perspective of two time concepts put forward by two key figures of interpretive sociology – George H. Mead and Alfred Schütz. Both provide *theoretical* as well as *analytic* perspectives on the uncertainty problematic; due to the limited space and the predominantly empirical interest of this thesis the emphasis in this chapter is on the latter.<sup>261</sup> Following this, I apply the analytic framework to three cases from the present study. These cases were identified in the analysis as representing the space of main patterns of post-communist youth transitions to working life.

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<sup>260</sup> Wohlrab-Sahr (1993: 35-36) would criticise some concepts of biographical uncertainty for such a bias.

<sup>261</sup> As I have reviewed these time concepts and associated secondary literature in more detail elsewhere (Reiter 1997: chap. 4; short: 2003), I introduce them here only selectively. The discussion here is complementary and focuses on the issue of uncertainty. Recommended reading in addition to the original writings: Grathoff (1995), Schütz/Parsons (1977), Bergmann (1981), Joas (1985: ch. 8), Baert (1992: ch.4), Flaherty/Fine (2001).

## 10.2 *Uncertainty in the time concepts of Schütz and Mead*

The key category for an assessment of the linkages between past, present and future in biographical projecting is that of the status of *experience*. This is characterised by a dual temporal horizon: through experience we conserve and reinterpret the past in order to orient our (biographical) actions towards the future (Fischer/Kohli 1987; Voges 1987; Hoerning 1989; Hoerning/Alheit 1995; Heinz 2002). Such a perspective is coherent with the definition of Wohlrab-Sahr's *sociological concept of biographical uncertainty* which provides the backdrop to the present study.<sup>262</sup> Biographical uncertainty here is generally identified as the weakening of the linkage between experience, expectation and projecting due to an erosion of intersubjectively shared certainty in a specific social situation. Processes of deinstitutionalisation can be among the reasons for this uncertainty. It is important to note that while the planning of action based upon such a linkage is at the core of biographical uncertainty, the realisation of a planned action does not have to be. However, the ultimate fictitiousness proposed with regard to certainty constructions also applies to the outcome of projecting action, i.e. the action itself.

Such a notion of uncertainty as a moment of doubt and disorientation in the process of projecting and planning biographical action points to two layers or types of uncertainty that can be analytically distinguished and conceptually elaborated on the basis of the time concepts of Schütz and Mead.<sup>263</sup> In short, on the one hand we have the Schützian problem of uncertainty regarding the practical validity and priority of knowledge and knowledge shares. On the other we have the Meadian problem of uncertainty regarding the outcome of action. In the following I briefly review both concepts in order to first conceptually identify the associated time perspectives of uncertainty, and then to describe them. In the third part of the chapter I can then apply the conceptual framework to the cases analysed in this study.

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<sup>262</sup> 'Ein soziologischer Begriff von Unsicherheit steht in unmittelbarer Verbindung mit dem der Erwartung und zielt damit auf die Zeitdimension. Unsicherheit besteht im Hinblick darauf, ob Erwartungen eintreffen werden, ob künftige Entwicklungen sich antizipieren, ob Erfahrungen sich in die Zukunft hinein fortschreiben lassen. Unsicherheit kann aber auch auf die Ambiguität der Ausgangssituation zurückverweisen, die eine eindeutige Erwartungsbildung (oder die Antizipation der Erwartung anderer) nicht erlaubt, und verweist damit gleichzeitig auf die Sach- und Sozialdimension. Auf solche Unsicherheiten reagieren Formen der Strukturierung und Normierung von Erwartungen, kurz: Formen der Institutionalisierung. Durch sie wird Sicherheit sozial konstruiert, eine Sicherheit, die letztlich jedoch immer fiktiv bleibt' (Wohlrab-Sahr 1992: 219).

<sup>263</sup> While Wohlrab-Sahr (1993) did not integrate these time concepts explicitly into her concept of biographical uncertainty based on a study of female temporary workers, they were part of the conceptual frame of reference of the larger project about temporary work of which the study was a part (see Brose et al. 1993). Interestingly, this framework project was started at the beginning of the 1980s and therefore evolved in parallel to the Italian study on youth and time. The literature associated with both projects does not however indicate any evidence of a German-Italian exchange.

### 10.2.1 The uncertainty of knowledge and the project of action – Alfred Schütz

According to the action theory proposed by Alfred Schütz, essentially a 'theory of the project of action' as Grathoff (1995: 160) notes, uncertainty is 'intrinsic' and inherent in the projecting and planning of all action (Schutz 1962a). In short, individuals outside biographically determined situations orient their projected actions towards practicable acts that, in their imagination, have the quality of being 'over'. Their 'interest' in pursuing certain projects and refraining from others has its roots in typically transmitted stratified biographical perspectives. These perspectives are 'possibilities for leading life' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 94) enabling as well as restricting the planning of action. These typical biographical options refer to the past experiences of the individuals themselves or to those of relevant socialising agents. As a part of the biographical situation of individuals, these typical options can, in terms of a consolidated stock of knowledge about life, motivate the project of action.

On the one hand, the ongoing process of action involves the actor *subjectively* in the time perspective of the future. Action is creatively oriented and projected towards the future, or more precisely towards an imagined accomplished act, which is the goal or purpose of action (i.e. an 'in-order-to' context). This orientation towards the outcome of an imagined action ('what for?') motivates the practical realisation of the project. On the other hand, projects have their reasons and causes in past experiences that can explain the plan of action itself (i.e. a 'because' context). The reconstruction of the causes of action is *objectively* possible in the time perspective of the past; meaning and causality are attributed in this perspective. It is only in this past orientation towards the constitution of the project ('why?') that the chain of motivation becomes complete and meaningful.

(The in-order-to motive explains the act in terms of the project, while the genuine because-motive explains the project in terms of the actor's past experiences (Schutz 1967: 91).

Depending on the importance of certain experiences or plans the balance of these two perspectives will direct present action either backwards (towards the past) or forwards (towards the future). The complete chain of motivating and motivated elements over the life course consists of aims and causes which evolve reciprocally. The reflective attribute of meaning turns former goals into later causes.

What is 'teleologically' relevant when seen from the beginning, is presented from the end as 'causally' relevant (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 214).

In the sphere of 'daily life' it is sufficient to rely on a form of knowledge providing 'rules of thumb' and 'habits' in order to 'satisfy the demands of the moment'. Schutz (1964b: 73) emphasises that 'the ideal of everyday knowledge is not certainty, nor even probability in a

mathematical sense, just likelihood.' In an everyday context, knowledge is 'useful' when goals come together with 'means to the end' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 107). The immediately available knowledge accumulated during one's own life and passed on by others can embrace the future only by the forward projecting of available experiences. The moment of uncertainty in Schütz's theory of projecting consists precisely in the fact that, until the anticipated event finally materialises, knowledge of its practical outcome must rely on the experience of previously performed acts. Certainty is only 'empirical', and can be taken for granted only 'until further notice' (Schutz 1962a: 95). Ultimately, it is the quality of the available stock of knowledge and experience at the moment of projecting that is decisive for the scope of uncertainty.

(P)rojecting like any other anticipation carries along its empty horizons which will be filled in merely by the materialization of the anticipated event. This constitutes the *intrinsic uncertainty* of all forms of projecting (Schutz 1962a: 69; emphasis added).

(T)he time structure of all projecting (...) refers to the actor's stock of knowledge at hand at the time of projecting and, nevertheless, carries along its horizon of empty anticipations, the assumption that the projected act will go on in a typically similar way as had all the typically similar past acts known to him at the time of projecting. This knowledge is an exclusively subjective element, and for this very reason the actor, as long as he lives in his projecting and acting, feels himself exclusively motivated by the projected act in the way of in-order-to (ibid. 72).

Theories of stylised rational acting emphasise the *subjective* share of motivation in a future-oriented perspective expressed in the last part of the above quoted passage. Yet in so doing they assume the capability not only to imagine, but to anticipate outcome, instead of studying the because-motivation *objectively* accessible in a past perspective. Paradoxically, the reason for this misconception seems to be related to the primacy of prediction and prognosis over actual explanation inherent in these approaches.<sup>264</sup>

### 10.2.2 The contingency of the future and the uncertainty of the outcome of action – George H. Mead

While Schütz's account conceptualises the planning of action, Mead provides the outline of a theory of action that, as Bergmann (1981: 351) notes, does not deal with the motives of individuals but with the action as such. Here, uncertainty takes the form of a contingency attached to the outcome of action despite attempts to anticipate it. This contingency can be

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<sup>264</sup> The model of 'rationalised individualisation' suggested by Furlong/Carmel (2003) is an interesting alternative to the rational action model. By trying to grasp the 'reflexive nature of the process', it comes closer to explanation and is empirically more challenging: 'With action being framed by past experience, an element of rationalisation is always present' (141). There is no need to give up the principle of 'rationality', what is required is the study of 'post-hoc rationalisation' in biographies in order to avoid the 'risk of making inferences which are far removed from the normative rationalities of groups of individual actors and can leave social sciences divorced from lived realities' (ibid.). However, this approach also remains strongly focused on outcome and does not, from my point of view, sufficiently consider the underlying process of biographical self-conditioning through motivation chains constituting life stories. For an appropriate discussion of the issue of decision 'rationality' in situations of transition see Burkart (1995).



rooted in three interrelated levels: (a) in the hypothetical character of both past and future; (b) in possibly interfering environmental factors; and (c) in the unpredictable shares of the self. The key to all three sources of uncertainty is the emergence of 'unique events'. Events turn preceding processes into causes or conditions which, due to their unpredictable novelty, break the continuity of time before they are, in retrospect, integrated into a continuous overall context.

(a) Past and future are only 'hypothetical', as Mead (2002/1932: 44) emphasises: they are relationally dependent on the present. The present is the 'locus of reality'; it is the centre of the individual's world and the temporal control centre of life - i.e. the 'place' in time where changeable and fluid horizons are established in order to monitor both past and future. The past is the basis for the assessment of the future; it is reconstructed as a condition. The future, on the other hand, is associated with the uniquely new as a consequence. Finally, the contingency of events also relativises the determining power of both past and future. What has emerged can only be integrated into the chain of causation and effect after it has occurred. Thus, contingency and discontinuity are only reduced after an action has been taken.

(b) Action evolves vis-à-vis the environment and is oriented towards the anticipated responses of the environment to possible 'alternative lines of action' (Baert 1992: 79) representing the future. The anticipated responses operate as corrective attitudes, feeding their information back into the process of selecting among alternative actions during projecting. Adaptation and adjustment to the context thus occurs by means of what could be called 'retrospectively pre-determined action'. Individuals, or organisms in general, stand at the end of a learning process and are teleologically oriented towards the future. Their past is 'contained in attitudes and implicit expectations, the future in the influence of the environment on the organism's act' (Joas 1985: 190). While the 'social reflective individual' (as distinguished from the 'biological individual') has the advantage of being able to identify, isolate, and manipulate experiences for the sake of adaptation and control, he or she still cannot establish the future with certainty.

There is present in the human world a past and an uncertain future, a future which may be influenced by the conduct of the individuals of the group. The individual projects himself into varied possible situations and by implements and social attitudes undertakes to make a different situation exist, which would give expression to different impulses.

From the point of view of instinctive behaviour in the lower animals, or of the immediate human response to a perceptual world (in other words, from the standpoint of the unfractured relation between the impulses and the objects which give them expression) past and future are not there; and yet they are represented in the situation. They are represented by facility of adjustment through the selection of certain elements both in the direct sensuous stimulation, through the excitement of the end-organs, and in the imagery. What represents past and what represents future are not distinguishable as contents. The

surrogate of the past is the actual adjustment of the impulse to the object as stimulus. The surrogate of the future is the control which the changing field of experience during the act maintains over its execution.

The flow of experience is not differentiated into a past and future over against an immediate now until reflection affects certain parts of the experience with these characters, with the perfection of adjustment on the one hand, and with the shifting control on the other. The biologic individual lives in an undifferentiated now; the social reflective individual takes this up into a flow of experience within which stands a fixed past and a more or less uncertain future (Mead 1934: 350-351).

(c) Yet even if the action has been carefully selected with regards to possible environmental responses, its realisation remains uncertain. A third moment of uncertainty is contained in one of the components of Mead's concept of the self. While the 'me' – 'the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes' – represents social norms and expectations, the 'I' – 'the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others'<sup>265</sup> – is unpredictable (Mead 1934: 175). The 'I' represents the spontaneous and impulsive part of the self, which is beyond control; it is 'something that is more or less uncertain' (ibid. 176) and 'gives the sense of freedom, of initiative' (ibid. 177). Mead's account of the process of walking as a movement into the future illustrates this idea.

If he (the individual: H.R.) says he knows what he is going to do, even there he may be mistaken. He starts out to do something and something happens to interfere. The resulting action is always a little different from anything which he could anticipate. This is true even if he is carrying out the process of walking. The very taking his expected steps puts him in a certain situation which has a slightly different aspect from what is expected, which is in a certain sense novel. That movement into the future is the step, so to speak, of the ego, of the 'I'. It is something that is not given in the 'me' (Mead, 1934: 177).

### 10.2.3 Towards a conceptual and empirical identification of time perspectives of biographical uncertainty

The concepts of time and action proposed by Mead and Schütz instruct the study of uncertainty of actions. Furthermore, as uncertainty is an integral part of both concepts they are not 'pathologising uncertainty', a tendency which Wohlrab-Sahr (1993: 36), BonB (1995: 12-25) and Zinn (2004: 205) criticise in some more common perspectives.<sup>266</sup> Uncertainty is ambiguous in both approaches: while uncertainty *qua* contingent outcome is the primary source of creativity in Mead's version, the intrinsic uncertainty of projecting in Schütz's concept of action is part of a forward-oriented, constructive moment of choosing between typically available options. However, both knowledge- and outcome-uncertainties *can* become problematic.

In order to arrive at an analytic notion of biographical uncertainty informed by these concepts two steps are necessary. First, the two accounts need to be recognised as compatible with a *biographical* perspective. While this seems unproblematic with regard to Schütz's

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<sup>265</sup> The distinction between 'I' and 'me' corresponds to that of the 'biological' from the 'socially reflective individual' above.

<sup>266</sup> In this view the observation that mainstream action theory in sociology pathologised uncertainty (Wohlrab-Sahr 1993: 36 Fn 82) needs to be re-evaluated.

concept, which is embedded within a comprehensive theory of the life-world, Mead's argumentation on immediate micro-action needs to be transferred to the biographical level by analogy. In principle, the time of action is not equal to biographical time. Yet as both concepts have been utilised in research into time and biography (Brose et al. 1993), I will refrain from a discussion of this point here.<sup>267</sup> Instead, I take this compatibility for granted presuming that both concepts provide valid sets of guidelines for an analysis of biographical uncertainty.

Second, in order to be instructive for the analysis of the available material, the two conceptual perspectives need to be synthesised and 'operationalised'. This is tackled in the following section. I limit myself here to the dimension of the biographical time perspective – i.e. the linkage of experience, expectation and projecting, or 'the linkage of the past and future of the life story in the present', as Brose et al. (1993: 170) define it.<sup>268</sup> The works of Schütz and Mead – one suggesting a theory of the project of action and time structuring, the other a theory of action and time constitution – indicate two different kinds of quasi-default time perspectives *in conceptual terms*. In the frame of the present study, the *empirical reference* that challenges these conceptual suggestions is the way in which young people make sense of experiences and their biographical situation during transition by practically formulating biographical projects.

#### *10.2.3.1 The conceptual location of biographical uncertainty*

In short, one can say that Schütz's notion of knowledge-uncertainty involves the failing of continuity expectations; it refers to the incompleteness and inappropriateness of the available stock of past experiences and knowledge for dealing with 'problematic situations'. While knowledge is never complete or universal, these situations constitute a particular challenge to the individual. They can be met by 'deliberation' and the attempt to apply and 'correlate' available categories to the new situation in order to 'master' and 'determine' the situation' by bringing it 'into a routine' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 113-118). Experiences themselves can become problematic 'in situations whose 'novelty' is imposed by the world'. Then 'imposed transitions' to other provinces of reality become necessary, accompanied by an

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<sup>267</sup> In fact, I believe that Mead's concept of time could be key to the social construction, reconstruction and revision of history in general. For instance, as I finalise this chapter (April 2007) there are protests in Estonia against the relocation of a memorial built after World War II to commemorate the Soviet victory over Nazi-Germany. Depending on the perspective, and moment in time, the memorial symbolised the liberation of Estonia from the Nazis and a victory against fascism, or the re-occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union and a defeat of freedom. Both interpretations have consequences for the future that could be connected to them.

<sup>268</sup> Wohlrab-Sahr (1993: 192 Fn 20) refers to the same authors to specify her notion of a biographical time perspective.

interruption in knowledge acquisition (ibid. 125). In his essay on 'The stranger' Schutz (1964) uses the terms 'crisis' and 'shock' (ibid. 96, 99) to indicate the dramatic confusion of knowledge that takes place while an individual's stock of experience is 'enlarged and adjusted'. Exact prediction is impossible and the future never loses its 'chance character'. The realisation of goals through acting itself may be affected by competing goals, and interruptions can even be motivated by spontaneity (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 126-131). Yet this problem of knowledge-uncertainty is neutralised by referring to the chance that typical aspects of experience become relevant. This reference is usually sufficient for the prediction to be regarded as 'successful' by the individual (ibid. 238-241). Planning, projecting and experience remain future-oriented due to this reference to typical schemes of orientation, and allow for the 'new' to come about. Creativity is not excluded by the routine character of acting, and even the process of coming to terms with an unpredictable future is characterised by a built-in mechanism of uncertainty reduction. This moment of unpredictability, which is also indicated in the dimension of 'hypothetical relevance' inherent in the act of planning (ibid. 195-197), is similar to Mead's emphasis on the contingency of the realised act.

Mead, on the other hand, is not interested in contemplating the origins of orientation. Compared to Schütz, the question of knowledge constitution is of minor relevance for him. Unlike Schütz, who 'was concerned with epistemological problems', as Adam (1995: 78) notes, 'Mead focused predominantly on matters of ontology'. Mead's taking outcome-contingency for granted and his emphasis on the quality of emergent events and their impact on time constitution and perspectives also result in a different solution to the problem of knowledge-uncertainty. Apart from strengthening counterbalancing shares of society, little can be done about the spontaneous dimension of the self (i.e. the 'I') that ultimately provides the source of creativity. But there is a remedy for uncertainty with regard to past and future, and the disposition of the environment. Experiences and the past are fundamental for action but only insofar as they can be utilised by means of transforming them (retrospectively) into necessary conditions for acting in the present. In this way the past is brought under the 'control' of the requirements of the present. The reduction of uncertainties associated with the future and its strong dependence on the environment follow a similar logic. However unpredictable a realised action may turn out to be, it is by definition oriented towards the anticipated responses of the environment. In this context to 'control', in the sense of manipulating or at least influencing the consequences of action, is the main purpose.

If reducing uncertainty had been the topic of a conversation between Mead and Schütz, Mead's solution to fundamental problems of uncertainty in planning and acting may have been more radical than Schütz's rather soft version of the 'mastery' of (problematic) situations by referring to typical knowledge categories. Mead might have pointed to the necessity of adapting actions to the requirements of the present, of establishing a pragmatic and 'short' time perspective together with a set of realistic interests, and of systematically minimising the potential for contingency in both the past and the future by delaying, where necessary, the action itself.<sup>269</sup> At this point I can identify the *time perspectives of biographical uncertainty* as they are *conceptually*, not empirically, suggested in the time concepts of Mead and Schütz.<sup>270</sup>

In Mead's concept of time, on the one hand, past and future are relevant only in and for the present. Time collapses into the present, which can be extended to 're-present' (*vergegenwärtigen*) the future in order to explore alternative actions. Past and future thus both remain open (contingent) and changeable (manipulable); and their 'presentness' moderates their contingency potential. This need for manipulation results in an attitude towards the future that involves the (*pro*)reactive control of the future environment in the present.<sup>271</sup> Such a time perspective was and remains prominent in various time diagnoses. The 'stretching' ('*Dehnung*') (Brose 1982) or 'extension' (Nowotny 1994) of the present for the sake of uncertainty management is also a common metaphor in youth research. On the other hand, the essentially *active* quality of the time perspective suggested by Schütz is underlined by the primacy of future-oriented action, at least on the level of subjective consciousness, as well as the emphasis on 'relevance', 'interests' and 'motivation'. Past, present and future are integrated in temporal continuity. All meaning refers back to the objectively equally important stock of past experiences and knowledge. This stock of knowledge is part of the biographical determination of planning, and is as much a source of uncertainty as a remedy for it. Conceptually, this entails the 're-presentation' and forward projection of the past for the solution of the uncertainty problem with regard to the future. Schütz's notion of time involves the extension of the past, rather than the present, for future action.

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<sup>269</sup> Some of these issues have been recycled in more contemporary accounts of uncertainty partly referring to the tradition of phenomenological sociology (e.g. Giddens 1991).

<sup>270</sup> As indicated in the previous section, the argumentation needs to be qualified. With regard to Mead's account in particular it is unclear how, for instance, this idea of 'control' could be transferred to the biographical level, since this has not, to my knowledge, been discussed by him.

<sup>271</sup> 'The surrogate of the future is the control which the changing field of experience during the act maintains over its execution' (Mead 1934: 351).

Table 10.1 forces some of the main points addressed in the course of the discussion of the two time concepts, as well as their links to biographical uncertainty, into a comparative overview.

**Table 10.1 – Time and uncertainty in George H. Mead and Alfred Schütz**

	Alfred Schütz	George H. Mead
	theory of the project of social action theory of time structuring epistemology	theory of action theory of time constitution ontology
<b>Time</b>	continuous	discontinuous
<b>Time structuring</b>	motives/project of action/interest	(course of) events
<b>Time constitution</b>	given (internal/external)	'unique events' (difference of cause and effect)
<b>Present</b>	locus of acting and projecting centre of experiencing	locus of reality control centre of life and biography
<b>Past</b>	reason, cause ('because' context)	condition ('hypothetical')
<b>Attitude towards the past</b>	meaning	control
<b>Quality of the past</b>	reflexively meaningful	changeable, present-dependent
<b>'Re-presentation' of the past</b>	reflection	reconstruction
<b>Future</b>	goal, purpose ('in-order-to' context)	consequence ('hypothetical')
<b>Attitude towards the future</b>	creation - creativity	control
<b>Quality of the future</b>	modifiable	contingent, present-dependent
<b>'Re-presentation' of the future</b>	anticipation of performed act	anticipation of responses to alternative lines of action
<b>Action</b>	selection, refraining, modification	selection, inhibition, manipulation
<b>Event/act</b>	anticipated: orients action	emergent: constitutes time
<b>Past → action/project</b>	experience future-oriented and constitutive of project of action	reformulation of experience as condition
<b>Future → action/project</b>	teleological orientation of the project	'retrospective pre-determination' of action
<b>Orientation of action</b>	towards imagined practicable acts	towards imagined reactions of environment
<b>Expectation</b>	continuity, typicality	contingency
<b>Constitution of expectation</b>	experience, reflection of past, knowledge, interest/relevance (typical)	experience, reconstruction of past, knowledge
<b>Continuity</b>	stream of consciousness, (life) plans - prospective	continualisation - retrospective
<b>Uncertainty</b>	intrinsic knowledge uncertainty of projecting (filling in of 'empty horizon')	contingency of outcome ('emergence', 'novelty') - creativity
<b>Time perspective</b>	active - constructive acting towards anticipated outcome of action (i.e. act)	(pro)reactive - control of past (condition) and future (response)
<b>Responses to uncertainty</b>	extension and re-presentation of past utilisation and adjustment of experience/knowledge	extension of present, re-presentation of future manipulation of environment

### 10.2.3.2 Preliminary empirical localisation of biographical uncertainty

However complex these concepts may appear, they provide a few practical clues on the identification and assessment of uncertainty as well as on ways to reduce it. In empirical terms these two sets of indicators, associated with the two different concepts – one referring to the projecting of action, the other to the structuring of time through events – are not mutually exclusive. In combination they provide an analytic tool for the empirical study of biographical uncertainty on the level of projecting in general. This tool can be applied to the

identification of related problems in youth transitions to working life in a post-communist context.

On the one hand, there is the Schützian *problem of knowledge-uncertainty* that I already referred to in the discussion on the new figure of the unemployed person in the post-communist world (Chapters 7 and 8). The transitions of post-communist societies into market democracies are, in Schütz's terms, 'imposed transitions' that question the validity of available knowledge and patterns of orientation. The range of typical societal statuses is changing, and relations between these statuses are being re-defined. The typical behaviour for one seeking to overcome this situation of 'knowledge crisis' would be the application, adjustment and updating of available knowledge and experience. With regard to biographical planning, the related time perspective would typically entail the continuation of recognised routines whether outdated or not. Somewhat counter-intuitively, conscious and active opposition to such routines can also be a manifestation of this time perspective. In both cases the reference to past experiences predominates in future-oriented actions. Where individual circumstances provide a bubble of security, this perspective may also be articulated in the production of uncertainty through creativity, conscious choice, or the mere consumption of the 'fun of the risk' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 197).

On the other hand, the transformation of the economy modifies the Meadian *problem of outcome-uncertainty* by adding unemployment to the catalogue of options in general and in youth transitions in particular. In this respect, the post-communist situation is characterised by a shift towards a kind of complexity that places a burden on individual action, although this is obviously not only 'negative'. The actual outcome depends on the extent to which shares of the future can be appropriated through the right assessment of chances, the anticipation of changes in opportunity structures, and, finally, the ability to consolidate one's own priorities. Additionally, a positive transition experience has become a value in its own right. From this perspective, modes of extending the present and delaying decisions, thereby slowing down the moment of transition, can help to establish one's situation more firmly and provide time for priorities and chances to become clearer and more predictable. The corresponding attitude is one of contingency-reduction. This reduction may be spurred by anxiety as well as rationality; in either case, the reference to an uncertain future and its environment, as well as the cognitive adaptation, or even the revision, of the past dominate a life evolving within the extended boundaries of the present.

The research into youth and biographical uncertainty and youth and time mentioned in this chapter describes findings with regard to youths' time perspectives unsystematically, and with concepts that could be associated *ex post* with the two conceptual programmes reviewed here. The systematic analysis of such arguments for theoretical implications as well as contradictions would be the next logical step. However, this would be beyond the ambitions of this chapter and the study altogether, and must be postponed to a later occasion. Instead, I move on to the introduction and discussion of the three transition patterns, that were identified in the course of the analysis, finally applying the established analytic perspective.

### ***10.3 Continuation, liberation, and trajectory - mapping time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions***

The analysis of the experiences of young people in linear and non-linear transitions to working life in post-communist Lithuania resulted in the identification of three general organising principles for transition events, experiences, and evaluations. The three patterns, which may of course also overlap or succeed one another, are labelled 'continuation', 'liberation' and 'trajectory'. In the following each is briefly introduced by describing single cases representing these patterns. Afterwards, they are once more paraphrased in conceptual terms.

At this point it seems important to emphasise that the conceptual work on uncertainty and the empirical reconstruction of patterns which finally meet in the following pages evolved largely 'independently' of one another. To be precise, the empirical analysis resulting in the three patterns was only preceded in conceptual terms by the consideration of a general account of biographical uncertainty as a sensitising concept; this general account remained largely unrevised (see Chapter 3). The conceptual location of uncertainty in the two theories of Mead and Schütz in this chapter was elaborated *after* the three patterns had been consolidated. However, a general idea of the time concepts of Mead and Schütz was in the back of my mind because of my earlier work (Reiter 1997, 2003). In the following pages I bring the two strands together.

The concrete questions for the remainder of the chapter are as follows. How, if at all, is uncertainty in post-communism manifested in the process of experience-based biographical projecting and planning among young people with regard to the transition to working life? What features of the transformation are related to the transition to work and contribute to the constitution of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions? How do biographical expectations with regard to work inform and orient the process of projecting, and



what are the sources of the expectations involved? Finally, and most generally, what are the relationships between past, present and future implied in these three patterns?

### 10.3.1 The Pattern of continuation and the time perspective of certainty production: MAGDALENA

In the postscript produced after the conversation with MAGDALENA the interviewer uses the following words to summarise her impression of the respondent:

The most important thing about the girl (that I noticed) is that she is calm about her future. She already knows what she wants to be in her life, what she wants to achieve, and how to achieve this. As she said herself: 'I already found my place'.

MAGDALENA is an 18-year-old student in her first year at the Faculty of Police. Her transition from lower to upper secondary education and into her first year of studies went smoothly, and it seems she had little doubt over what she wanted to study. She first thought of trying for the military academy, and then decided to become a police officer like her father, a profession that attracted her even as a child, she says. She even indicates that she first communicated this idea to some relatives at the age of four (i.e. around 1990). Asked about her motivation, she answers:

Somehow actually I thought about it since childhood, because my father (is) also at the police. So I remember when I was four years old, and when we used to go to the village, so relatives used to ask me: 'What are you going to be when you grow up?' 'A police officer, like dad.' (...) (21.9)

Nevertheless, in her later childhood she also had some other ideas, such as becoming a flight attendant or an actress. When she began to think seriously about her possible profession at school, her first choice of continuing to graduate at a university was given up, as she was not confident of success in view of her poor educational performance. Police work, on the other hand, could be chosen within the Lithuanian system of post-secondary education with the lowest marks. She felt safe choosing this option but was surprised when her final results were better than expected. She could actually have chosen an academic track in law at university, a choice that was very much supported by her parents. In fact her father also tried to 'push' her sister into studying law at university (21.50). However, MAGDALENA decided to stick to her choice and her father finally changed his opinion. Now *'he is proud that somebody wants to follow in his footsteps'* (21.10), and offers his support. Now that she has chosen this track and has begun her studies at the Faculty of Police the influence of her father, now retired, is omnipresent and her identification with his experiences is high. He is her general model of future work. Yet she also has a second, female, role-model of professional success: a high-climbing 28-year-old female officer who has had a successful career due to her ambition and communication skills facilitated MAGDALENA's decision to join the police; she is the *'example'* she wants to follow (21.26).

The continuation of the *'family tradition'* (21.45) of police work is a major motivating element in MAGDALENA's narrative. Over and over again, she repeats that she wants to please her family, to make them *'proud'* of her, and to prove that their initial scepticism concerning her performance at school was unnecessary.

(...) I'd like my family to be proud of me and, well, it was difficult for me because they used to say: 'Well, you don't study, you won't get anywhere.' And I used to think: 'Well, I have to. (...)' (21.45)

So, she made an effort, studied hard and was more successful than expected. Asked whether she felt any kind of pressure or wanted to do the same as her father, she once more refers to her childhood and says that she wishes her children to perpetuate this circle of intergenerational recognition:

No, nothing. I just, maybe, well, when I was a child, I used to look at my father, in uniform and so, and I used to think... Well, I was proud that my father was in the police force. And I also want my children to be proud that I would be as well, not only something simple, but I will hold a (responsible) position. And, well, maybe because from, from my childhood, I wanted it that way, I wanted it and now, well... I go and this idea: 'I will be...', even, 'I am already a police officer.' And this idea, as if it raised my self-respect very much. And I'm very happy about it. Well, and I hope, of course, that my children will also be proud of me... (21.46).

In order to study, MAGDALENA had to leave the place where she grew up and move to another town, where she now lives in a student dormitory. Her high identification with what she studies includes her new social environment – *'I'm telling you I feel that it is my place.'* (21.14). However, her relationships with her friends from the past, whom she meets occasionally when back home at weekends, have changed considerably. She even says that she *'got alienated from these friends because they stayed the same'* (21.15). She changed her lifestyle and feels that she has nothing in common with them anymore. Gradually losing interest is only one dimension of this process of dissociation. The distinction is finally quite explicit. While her friends continuing with regular studies at university will be able to continue an easy students' life for a while, MAGDALENA has a clear perspective ahead – a working life, her *'future'*, is just around the corner:

I can say that they drink a lot. Well, really, a lot, well, especially when they get, well, benefits, student grants or something, I don't know, I even... I am confused. I come there, everybody is drunk, they hug me. 'Oh, how much we missed you.' And I somehow... I look at them and think, 'They drink here....' I'm telling you, before I also... I used to drink earlier. Well, we didn't get totally drunk but... but on weekends... And now, I don't even want that. 'Are you going to drink?' they ask. 'No,' I say. Well, I don't know, I... I feel sorry for them, I feel sorry for them, well, I don't know, maybe I feel sorry that so often they... Well, they don't think yet. Because my future is very close. Because it is only one and a half years for me and that's it, I go to work. I'll have to work for a year. And I know that I have to study hard for a year, for a year and a half. Well, I have to get a good job. And then I should get good recommendations to study further. And this point is very close. Maybe it seems for them that, well, four years, so, 'We'll have time to get used to it, it is nothing.' (...) 21.16)

MAGDALENA's general idea of life is fairly well consolidated – growing up, education, going abroad to see a different life, and then working for a year or two in order to become established and begin a family. Going abroad is what she must sacrifice and postpone

for the time being. The contract she decided to sign in order to benefit from the job guarantee associated with her professional education requires her to stay in the country after finishing. She does feel a bit uneasy about being involved in a very strict educational programme, but the price she has to pay is small in view of the continuity advantages she expects, and compared to the transitional discontinuity she observes among her relatives, friends and former classmates. Compared to some of her former classmates who are now studying, or to other acquaintances that dropped out and use drugs, she is lucky to benefit from the job security attached to her professional track. Others will have to face the tough reality of the labour market where contacts, friends and money are the most important preconditions for admission. In her future job she will not be able to take career shortcuts or be promoted with the help of friends, something she anticipates her friends to benefit from. Her professional world will be regulated and predictable. She will have to start at the bottom of a strict hierarchy, get to know all aspects of her work and then slowly climb the career ladder – *'I will have to do everything step by step'* (21.25). The certainty of getting a job, however, is *'a very big point in favour of this profession'* and has already been promised by contracts. In a situation of unpredictability, she can be *'calm'* now, and is in the comfortable position of being able to say: *'I will have a job'* (21.27).

Her answer to the question concerning work possibilities for young people finally reveals an additional perspective on her choice. It transcends her references to both childhood wishes as well as the maintenance of family tradition. It points to her imagination, of the struggle of getting a job in the future, and is substantiated with examples from her experience. She talks about the wrong choices with regard to higher education (i.e. those disconnected from *'real possibilities'*): based on two examples she contemplates the advantages of associating oneself, like she did, with professional opportunities available through parents. Finally she mentions that in the context of police education things have improved and that now women can finally benefit from the job guarantee, while before they had to re-enter education at a lower level.

I think that in general it is difficult, especially if you don't have connections. That's why I can't imagine how... those who, well, now enrol in some kind of college, something like accountants, economists. There are a lot of them and nobody needs them. I really can't imagine... And if there are no parents, no connections, and then if I was in their place... Well, for example, my best friend who filled in (the application form; HR), she had poor exams, she got only 20th in the ranking, or 19th, in Vilnius college, she studies accountancy. So if I were her, well, I can't imagine, what she can do when she finishes, where she will find a job. Because there are lots of accountants also in universities. First of all it's them to get jobs and only then people from colleges. And her mother suggested, because her mother is a hairdresser, and she says: 'You'd better be a hairdresser.' Sort of: 'You will be able to work with me, so you will learn it.' Well, if I were her, so I would go where I would see more real possibilities. Well, of course, you also need education. But I would also take some kind of courses, like hairdresser or manicurist, so that I would

have more real possibilities. Because I really can't imagine where she will work. And that's why I didn't fill in all that law because there are lots of lawyers and I know that I wouldn't get a job. Besides ... we also... We also signed contracts that we are entitled to a job. And as far as I am concerned this adds a very big point in favour of this profession, because I know that whatever job, but I will have a job. And what concerns others, whose parents don't work in that sphere, or those who don't have much money, so I can't imagine where they will work. Okay, this classmate who studies veterinarian science, so his father is a vet, and he already announced: 'I know, he will find a place (for me) to work.' Because I think that without connections, without those, like ... without (things like) money, well, it is almost impossible to get a good job. Even when there were no such contracts (in her profession including a job guarantee; H.R.), so there were girls who studied for a year and a half and nobody wanted them for work. So they work as cashiers or shop assistants. So this is what they work. So only then they try to enter again in six months. And those who fail to enter, they try once again one year later, but they have to start over again from the beginning. And all this time they work as cashiers, or shop assistants. So they studied... well, they actually studied in vain previously. So it is a huge incentive with regard to this profession that they will have to give us (a job). That alone... (...) (21.27).

Although she believes that it should be possible to find a job if one wishes it, MAGDALENA recognises the lack of work places as a major reason for unemployment. She also criticises the fact that many young people end up in tracks of higher education without job prospects. She suggests that there should be ways of channelling them into non-academic jobs – *'people should be told what their real perspectives are'* (21.33). She chose the field of work where her father's social capital can be useful – *'I even went for that, because dad will help me somehow through old connections. Because I don't know, I wanted these kinds of guarantees.'* Otherwise she probably *'would go abroad, to do any kind of work'* (21.42). In this respect *'it was much more difficult for our parents. They did everything by themselves, and now parents can help us somehow. Well, at least my family'* (21.34). In the Soviet Union people usually had to go to work right after school and it was more difficult to continue education. Going abroad was impossible. For those who managed to study it was already clear before they had finished where they would work -*'as I was told, they also studied and maybe in the third year, when two years were left for them, so they used to have jobs, they already knew that they would finish and would go to work there, to some factory or something'* (21.34).

MAGDALENA's perspective of continuation with regard to working life is remarkable. In her account she emphasizes her conscious choice of continuity-guarantees, which she establishes on different levels. She maintains the family tradition and experience of appreciating and carrying out a certain activity despite the societal transformation, and intends to pass this wish on to the next generation. In addition, her choice allows the facilitating influence of her father's position to overlap into her own career. In this way, she will, whether consciously or not, benefit from the advantages of both the old and new systems. Through her choice she also escapes the difficulties of the current labour market, and maintains the

predictability advantages of the former system in terms of clear structures and perspectives with regard to both work and career prospects.

In terms of the analytic framework of uncertainty established in this chapter, MAGDALENA's case demonstrates that the time perspective of the *Pattern of continuation* is characterised by a configuration of experience, expectation and projecting which results in the comprehensive neutralisation of uncertainty and the production of certainty. In biographical terms, MAGDALENA is close to making an important decision about her (professional) future. The interview gives her the opportunity to reflect upon this and to locate her decisions in relation to her past and future, as well as her environment. 'Biographical rationalisation' could be a good general term to describe the process she is involved at the time of her interview. In her particular case this includes the production of predictability by extending the past, and the avoidance of contingency and outcome-uncertainty through the adoption of an apparently low-risk professional career in a high-risk labour market. It is a career that is also feasible for a woman and that comes together with a high level of acceptance among the significant others of her family. Many of her peers, however, have been relegated to a past life that she is ready to leave behind.<sup>272</sup> In this way, she avoids what, on the basis of the discussion of the sensitising concept of recognition (Chapter 3), could be called 'recognition-uncertainty'. The organisation and re-organisation of her life around this career track requires her to consolidate her priorities and interests. Conceptually, she is narrowing down her horizon of relevance. The potential for spontaneity, the contingency rooted in Mead's 'I', is thereby reduced, as is the knowledge problem, while 'control' is altogether minimised. In practical terms, the association established between her choice on the one hand, and past and future on the other, is strong. Her choice is supported by childhood memories, recognition within the family, competitive advantages in a difficult labour market, and the job guarantee that now also applies to women.

The extensive production of certainty at this moment in time does not necessarily imply that MAGDALENA's (professional) future will be deprived of creativity, change, or contingency. On the contrary, modern professional socialisation throughout the life course usually involves the fluctuation of competing priorities such as those of professional continuity versus self-actualisation (Helling 1996). Second, the assessment of the case with regard to the levels of biographical uncertainty perceived is not straightforward despite the negative uncertainty coefficient reflected in her answers to the related items of the

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<sup>272</sup> See SAULIUS' 'combing out of friends' (Chapter 7.2.1).

questionnaire (see Appendix 4). The fact that MAGDALENA's account provides so many links to the indicators of uncertainty suggested by the analytic framework may indicate the opposite. However, she has a remedy for it.

### 10.3.2 The Pattern of liberation and the time perspective of contingency reproduction: FACE

Unlike MAGDALENA's, FACE's combined uncertainty coefficient is positive; yet like her, he also rejects the item expressing individual insecurity (see Appendix 4). However, his background and overall perspective on life are very different. FACE is a 16-year-old dropout from lower secondary education that, after having changed schools, was expelled after six months for non-attendance. He completed only 9 years of compulsory education and has been out of school for about two years. From the very beginning of the interview he, the son of two teachers (art and music), declares his ambition to achieve something without having received an education (contradicting himself with regard to the general importance of education later on, 7.24). Asked by the interviewer to talk about the last five years, he says:

The recent five years. I don't remember everything well, but the point is, some time ago I changed my school and moved to another. I studied there for half a year more or less and I was expelled for not attending classes, because I didn't go to school at all, because I didn't have time at all to go to school. Because I was establishing a club X (name), in X (city), I had a lot of work and I started working as a journalist at the newspaper X (name) and I didn't have time for school. My attitude to work is very positive, because when you work yourself, you realise what it means. I work not only in X (city), I work in Vilnius in one of the newspapers. But in general, I don't relate anything serious to a job, because, the point is, my aim is to prove that it is possible to achieve something without studies. If it is impossible to prove it, then I give up and start studying. (7.1)

Although FACE would agree that a certain basic level of education is necessary, he categorically rejects the idea of studying '*something that doesn't interest me at all at the moment*' (7.6). He equally rejects any kind of paternalism with regard to how a person earns a living and demands absolute freedom in choosing his way of life. FACE is uncompromising in his demands for individualism and autonomy. For instance, he is upset when people are told to quit smoking – '*It is a personal business*' (7.44). He is not particularly interested in the issue of state responsibilities towards citizens, and advocates a position of radical independence.

(...) I live for myself and I care only about myself, and for me... everything about others or society, I don't care at all. Because I live by myself, I will create my life by myself and I will look at what will come out. (...) (7.47)

Consequently, he also makes this demand for independence and self-sustainability his starting-point for the assessment of unemployed people: '*They live on the dole and they are not able to live independently*' (7.40). FACE's own independence seems to be considerable; he even pays his parents some money for still living at home – '*I don't eat at home, I only come back at night to sleep, and I use some electricity*' (7.7). But '*since the sixth or seventh grade*'

when *'all these things started'* he has hardly spoken to them, nor is he interested in his older brother, a sculptor who has just graduated from university (7.9-11). His individualism isolates him from his family as well as from other people. His idea of achievement is that of self-made success, which is not shared with others. In this context his future perspective is also strictly utilitarian.

Interviewer: Let's come back to your parents and your family a bit. I wanted to ask, if you have a person to talk to when you have problems or difficulties?

FACE: No, I don't. I deal with everything by myself and it's fine with me. I haven't had a best friend for my whole life but that's not bad. I have a lot of contacts, I'm very open. I can tell things to everybody and it's not difficult. The point is, I don't need those best friends. What's the use of them? I have never had best friends or chicks nor anyone else. It is enough for me if I can do things myself, I can solve problems myself and so on.

I: Isn't it too difficult to do everything yourself, alone?

F: No problem. it is much more pleasant to do everything yourself, than with a group of people or so, because normally with some people everything goes wrong.

I: So you are an individualist type of a person, you do everything alone, you do everything by yourself..

F: Well, one has to, because normally if you create something, well, I tried to do something not alone, and it did not work out and so. And when you try to do something with a group, usually conflicts arise and so on. It is better alone, especially if you look into the future, as soon as you start (looking). Why to share with others, if you can take something for yourself, and you know that this thing that you made just for yourself will be useful for you in the future? (7.15-16)

FACE's decision to leave school and his disregard for education from books obviously implies that he questions and challenges both his parents' authority as teachers and the whole system of the education-based transition to working life. He is *'a very bad, bad child'*, as he says ironically, because he has broken with the family tradition of recognising the value of education – *'I would be an ideal child for my parents if I studied well. That's for sure. But I don't study'*. This is possible due to the fact that his parents, whom he calls *'normal'* simply because they are not *'alcoholics'*, stopped questioning his determination (*'This is my firm decision.'*) (7.8), and of course because he has the option of exploiting the opportunities offered by the new system.

In his home town, FACE is not the only young person in this situation – *'I know about eight people who do not study and whose situation is similar to mine.'* His own *'main occupation(s)'* he says, include *'event organisation, newspaper work, club work'* (7.12). The reason why his attitude to work is *'very positive'*, as he says at the beginning of the interview, is related to the fact that it is a *'pleasure'* for him, and money is *'the assessment of your work'* (7.19-20). However, he does not think that he will be doing this kind of work for long. He has some plans, even a timetable, and anticipates how his value will increase with experience alone. Yet some of the advantages of youth for this work may vanish with age.

I think that when I'm eighteen, I plan to work at the radio. It won't take long either, ten years at the most. To do something in relation to music, perhaps, when I am eighteen. Well, otherwise one can write

articles, do some kind of journalistic experiments. That's great, because as long as you are a pupil, I mean of this age, you don't need any certificates, diplomas and so on. And you still are able to do this job. Even an older person could do this job, in fact. It seems to me if you will do this job for twenty or thirty years, then you won't need any paper that you finished school, because a paper alone that you have worked there for thirty years will be enough. (7.13)

Retrospectively, FACE's quest for independence, as well his success in finding work, serve as good reasons for having left education. Yet an alternative reading of his story somewhat undermines his claims of self-determination and exposes his second identity of a bitter victim of school dismissal. The discontinuity experience was partly externally imposed, and only subsequently, it would appear, transformed and appropriated as part of a life project. He would continue studying if needed, but he has better things to do – *'Why should I waste my time if I can do far better jobs instead?'* If he had stayed in school, he would not have been able to work for the newspaper as a journalist, or organise events; he simply *'wouldn't have any experience of life'*. The combination of working and attending classes was too much for him; and when the school finally asked him to return his books, he was *'one of the happiest people in the world'*, he claims (7.31). However, his farewell is not without bitterness, as this passage indicates:

(...) I hate school itself. Because it is not a school, it is a prison, it was for me. My will, I would shoot all directors, because their job is very disgusting.

I: So is it worthwhile shooting people only because their job is disgusting?

F: Of course. No, it is worthwhile shooting all those who torture pupils and throw them out of schools. That is not nice.

R: But if they hadn't expelled you, you would still be tortured there.

F: No, I wouldn't have gone. I did not attend school anymore, I didn't go to school at all for the whole week. I decided that I know better from before and was not attending it anymore. And when they expelled me, I felt very much relieved, because I thought now that no one would ever force me to go to school anymore. Well, normally I don't ever skip classes. (...) (7.31-32)

FACE points to his shares in the story as well as to those associated with 'the system'. In fact, somewhat surprisingly but consistently with this alternative reading, FACE articulates a rather paradoxical belief system that embraces both fatalism and self-determination. He says, rather unexpectedly while talking about the difficulties of leading a 'normal life' in Lithuania, *'I know that God exists, (...) but the point is, there is some kind of fate'* (7.36). Later in the interview, he says: *'People die when they have to die, but not because of smoking or diseases and so on'* (7.44). In his case, self- and external determination go hand in hand.

His self-determination is reflected in his choices and acts of self-actualisation, in the pleasure he gets from providing, and in his drive to work and achieve. In an exaggerated version, autonomy should also allow people, such as unemployed people, to *'shoot'* themselves if they want to, as he says at the end of a passage dealing with his point of view on unemployment. In short, work is essential for him and he has little sympathy for those who do



not manage to find a job when even a teenager can. In this respect, FACE is another example of Type II in the heuristic typology introduced in Chapter 8.

Interviewer: What does unemployment mean to you?

FACE: Unemployment?

I: Yeah, if you didn't have work.

F: If I didn't have work, I wouldn't exist at all. If I didn't have work, I wouldn't have legs, I wouldn't have eyes, I wouldn't have a sense of hearing... I wouldn't have home, I don't know, well, I won't live without work.

I: So you cannot imagine yourself without work?

F: No. Because I cannot imagine myself sitting on a sofa and being able to read a page in a newspaper or something else, because there's work all the time. (...) Work is to talk, to communicate, then to write about that and show to the others.

I: Is it easy to get a job? In Lithuania, now, what do you think?

F: The easiest thing is to get a job, it is more difficult to work than to be employed.

I: Why do you think so? Most people say that there are no jobs.

F: Those who say that there are no jobs are idiots. There's plenty of work everywhere, you only have to have a wish. Those people do not want to work. They are only able to complain. If a sixteen-year-old is able to have five jobs, so it is a shame for a person who is not able to find at least one. It is possible to find a job easily. (...) You have to put your nose into everything, you have to be pushy <slang>, in this sphere. You'll achieve things if you are pushy. A person must have brains. A modest person will never find a job, if he will sit in a nice queue and wait, while the others will jump the queue. It means that he doesn't deserve to live. They'd better shoot themselves at once.

I: You said about shooting oneself. That's interesting. Do you think that it is good to shoot oneself?

F: Of course. If a person knows that it is better for him to commit suicide – let him do it. It is better for him this way. Why should one live if he doesn't like that? (7.22-23)

External determination and contingency are also permanent components of his life. This is even personalised in terms of a perceived relationship of dependence, articulated in the form of a set of opportunities, or better: hopes and expectations, attached to one person that FACE met by chance – *'That was a huge, huge coincidence, the greatest I have ever had in my life.'* What had happened? FACE met another young journalist by chance in an internet chat forum after having read about him the evening before. They finally met face-to-face and the journalist, who is just one year older than FACE, the editor of several student newspapers and doing some work for a record company as well as a radio station, gave FACE a job at one of his papers. FACE realises that the only thing he needed in order to get the job was a coincidence, not education. The young journalist finally became FACE's idol, role-model and, according to his hopes, his career-facilitator.

(...) So. There is this pupils' newspaper, free, 20.000 circulation, quite big. So I got a job easily, and I didn't need anything special for that, well, a coincidence. But because that person has achieved a lot in life and in Vilnius, he will help me a lot in the future. Because he himself publishes about ten different magazines. (...) The point is that he has very good contacts and acquaintances and he will help me a lot in life. Surely, I will achieve a lot more with his help. I could even say that he is my ideal. My ideal is such a person who has a lot of contacts and who can achieve a lot in life without education. And he strives for everything, I don't know, also without education it seems to me, because he is seventeen. It is outstanding for this age, when a seventeen-year-old person knows all Lithuania. He works at television as well. (...) (7.27)

The chance and experience of meeting new and interesting people and of facing diverse and unexpected challenges means that FACE is convinced that finding a job is easy. It also means that his life is unpredictable with regard to: (a) a potential future working routine – *'No, I'm such a person, I will never do only one job, surely, I know that perfectly, that things will change every half a year, my whole life is like this'* (7.30); (b) a possible 'normal life' – *'No, my life will never be normal, because, I'm telling you, I constantly change jobs, I constantly change friends, I constantly change the way of live. One day I like one thing, the other something different. So it will never become a normal life'* (7.34); (c) a concrete future. This remains contingent, as is illustrated by the following dialogue:

I: Let me ask about your future. How do you imagine your future?

F: I don't imagine my future, well, how could I do that? If I imagine my future then I see it in the best way, that I'm the President of America, driving around in some limousine, I live in some hotel that belongs to me, so.. Well, so this is how I imagine my life... Dreams are your life, but in reality I don't imagine my life. What do I know about what will be tomorrow? I may receive a call today saying that I'm fired from X (newspaper), that I'm fired from Y (newspaper). And, look, this is me sitting without a job. So I don't plan my life.

I: You don't plan at all? You don't think about the future?

F: No, well it's obvious, well, maybe I'll be hit by a car while crossing a street today, so why should I think? Or I lose my voice today, though I have almost lost it anyway...

I: So it is possible to say that you live in this day?

F: Not tomorrow, that's for sure, I don't live in the tomorrow. I don't have plans for tomorrow, for example, and so on, because every day someone calls me and tells me that this or that should be done. Every minute you can do something else. You don't know, what will be in a minute. I don't live in the day, I live in the minute. Look, how cool. Maybe I go downstairs now and they tell me that I have to go to Vilnius today. This is such an incredible life, but it is very interesting when you live like this. You spend the night in the street, you talk to drunkards and homeless people, and it is very interesting. (7.48)

FACE refuses to think ahead and imagine himself in the future. The investigation of the interviewer into why this is so even causes discomfort.

I: Try to imagine yourself in five years.

F: No, it's absolutely not interesting.

I: Why? And in ten years?

F: It's also not interesting. I cannot imagine myself at all.

I: Why?

F: Well, I'm telling you that I might get blind today, well. Then I will regret it a lot and tell myself: 'I imagined that I would have such a beautiful life, and now I am blind, and I won't find a wife or anything else.'

I: But anyway you do have a vision of your life in future?

F: Well, what do I imagine? I know that when I'm forty I will shoot myself, because why should an old man live and make public buses stinky and spoil young people's mood. (7.52-53)

FACE has learned to deal with the unexpected and to appreciate it, even if it constitutes a massive threat; or at least he has embraced it in terms of a retrospective rationalisation. He complains about people who are unable to learn from extreme situations and recounts the 'useful' experience of having '*realised what it means to live without eyes*'. Once he was not able to see for twelve hours and thought he would become blind. The feeling of happiness he

experienced after it was over was overwhelming. Learning about the rules of the street from homeless people or talking to other *'very interesting people'* would be another comparable experience that others do not usually benefit from (7.37-38).

However, all this does not mean that FACE would reject everything that is 'conventional' and provides stability. For instance, he actually likes the idea of a permanent job and says that he *'envies'* people who have a job for life, *'especially if they like the job'* (7.29). It just means that, according to his experiences, he cannot expect it to happen to him. He cannot anticipate the future; he can only dream about it. His living in the moment also implies that he leaves the past behind. His reaction to the interviewer challenging him with questions about the Soviet system and how it would have restricted the freedom he appreciates so much underlines this tendency. He is reluctant to talk about a period he does not know much about. However it may have been, he insists on his attachment to the present and to his absolute determination to live *'according to the rules that are now'*, referring to the post-communist present.

F: No, I don't have it, it is absolutely not interesting to me what was in the Soviet times. I live now and that's it. What do I know? I know that in the Soviet times it was easier to find a job. I know that most of the people had jobs, most of the people had things to eat, most of the people had cows, and so on. And I think that they lived better in the Soviet times.

I: But then... there was nothing to be bought. Well so what's the use of money then?

F: But they had something to eat. The most important thing for a human being is to have something to eat and to be healthy, and to have something to eat. That is most important...

I: But such people like you who do not study and do not have a permanent job would be imprisoned...

F: Ayh, then I condemn... but no, I think that in the Soviet times you finished four grades and you go to work.

I: But everybody was given a job by force. You wouldn't be going to Vilnius now. They would tell you to sit in X (newspaper) in Y (city) for twenty years and you would sit.

F: No, then I would shoot them, in case I didn't like this job, really. Then it was easy to find a cheap gun. I would have shot the authorities. No, I don't know, well, that is history. It is the same if they asked me if it was good to live in Napoleon's times. Well, I could not care less about what was then and I don't compare it. I live now, I live the way I have to, according to the rules that are now. So this is how I live, this year and not the last year. And I don't make conclusions if it was better to live last year or it is better to live this year. Well, it is the way it is <dialect>. Cigarettes become more expensive, well, let it be, no problem... of course, it was better last year, because they were cheaper, well they are more expensive this year, well but you can't change anything about it. So why should we talk about it? (7.43)

FACE is an example of a teenager who fights against the usual constraints of growing up in a way that would have been impossible in the old system. In an optimistic reading he can be called productive and creative. He illustrates a *Pattern of liberation* which incorporates the ambivalence of system transformation. A combination of external determination and fatalism is coupled with a strong desire for autonomy, the consumption of contingency, and the utilisation of emerging chances now available in the context of the post-communist society. FACE's level of agency and his everyday competence and knowledge are high, there

seems to be no reason for his non-linear transition to develop into a 'failure'. Despite his obvious confusion, the outcome also seems open because of his family's resources and his personality. The break with what his family represents (i.e. educational capital), may firstly be a private statement of revolt; but as a part of his personality in the making he has carried it into his early professional life and into his work-mediated understanding of society. Selfishness, social isolation and autonomy are part of this utilitarian attitude of a young person ready to seize opportunities and to take the first chance to make use of the freedoms of post-communist society. The kind of (hyper-)activity he displays, which may be called 'entrepreneurial', is certainly appreciated in the new society. But the fact that it is a 16-year-old school dropout who displays these qualities deserves a second thought. However, the interviewer classifies FACE's account as a 'highly credible' story. In the postscript to the interview, which was one of her last from the first group of young people in non-linear transitions, she writes:

The respondent is very interesting, as his opinion about work and school is exceptional. I don't think, that there is another such kid from our interviews whose opinion is the same. We spoke much about school, work and youth these days. (...) (A)s a guy who finished 9 grades, he is quite clever, and thinks about life, work. I should say, that he was maybe the most interesting to talk to from all my respondents.

Unlike MAGDALENA, FACE decides not to make use of the 'capital' available within his family. This may be partly explained by family relations, or by his parents' disappointment at his dropping out of school. Yet a sociological perspective is needed to add a wider context to the story. FACE does without the support of strong ties, disregards continuity-guarantees, and perceives the labour market as a field of chances, at times personified in casual contacts which need to be explored and exploited. Notions of routine and predictability have no place in his world. Yet he suffers from no lack of hopes and expectations, where these are qualified. When the interviewer challenges his perspective and confronts him with the coercive character of the Soviet system, FACE turns against it, despite having identified some of its advantages. He insists on living according to the rules of today with all their contingencies, which affect the world of work as well as his own future. Unlike MAGDALENA he is driven by independence and the ambition (and likely the thrill) to prove himself in situations of indetermination. However, a possible return to education is kept open and, in his case, not completely ruled out.

Against the background of the analytic framework of biographical uncertainty this case suggests that the time perspective of the *Pattern of Liberation* is characterised by a configuration of experience, expectation and projecting that results in contingency (re)production. It creates the conditions and chances for more or less unexpected

opportunities to come about. Once thrown out of school, FACE turns his back on the past as well as the typical socialisation programme he would have gone through. This step is radical and involves the substitution of at least two important frames of orientation and reference. First, the possible future associated with the standard programme – i.e. participation in an education-based transition to working life – is replaced with the unclear prospects and high outcome-uncertainty attached to an alternative programme – i.e. the production of an event-based establishment of competences and experiences. As he is aware of the fact that his lack of formal education might become a problem later in life, he anticipates the fragility of this alternative programme as well as the effort he will need to invest in order to keep it going. Second, the discontinuation of the social environment – i.e. the breakdown of the relationship with his family and the complete abandonment of strong ties in terms of friendships – implies the need to establish an alternative 'circle of recognition' in which interests can grow (Pizzorno 1991: 219) here in the form of an accidental set of key-contacts that he trusts will become useful. The potential arbitrariness of useful contacts involves a high level of recognition-uncertainty; whether this is perceived as a burden or not is ambiguous here.

However, he is, as he notes, not 'alone' and there are other young people, 'eight' in his hometown, following similar alternative paths. FACE lives (a) 'now' and (b) 'according to the rules that are now'. (a) By living 'now' he narrows his time horizon down to the present, while at the same time remaining open to any opportunities that might arise. He remains spontaneous, facilitating contingency in the sense of Mead's 'T'. The consequences of this spontaneity are manageable as it occurs in the present, in a sphere he can survey. Furthermore, he refuses to bring the future into his sphere of control by anticipating or working towards some positive image of it. Yet how *could* he know what it might look like? How could he anticipate what lies on the other side of what he has initiated? His role-models are his age, pioneering, like him, an unknown way of life in a new society. FACE's encounter with *his* ideal, a coincidence, is indicative of how he expects to meet his future, and perhaps of how he expects his professional career to 'happen'.<sup>273</sup> (b) By living 'according to the rules that are now' he, like his like-minded fellows, consolidates a mode of operation ('know-how') rather than goals. The latter are still out of sight. The Schützian 'knowledge crisis' is pending, because FACE displays a lack of (biographical) ends to the means, rather than the other way round. To put it differently, the 'reasons' - the 'why?' and the 'because' - for doing what he

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<sup>273</sup> This encounter with his ideal qualifies as what Thomson et al. (2002: 339) call a 'critical moment' – i.e. an 'event described in an interview that either the researcher or the interviewee sees as having important consequences for their lives and identities.'

does still need to be constituted, accumulated and integrated into a coherent set of experiences *qua* resources, both individually and collectively.<sup>274</sup> By innovating and improvising against the mainstream, FACE and his acquaintances expose themselves to a high level of knowledge-uncertainty; in fact, they contribute to the establishment of the stock of innovative knowledge. The work of Ken Roberts et al. emphasises this important and ambivalent dimension of both the post-communist transformation towards capitalism and the transformation of youth transitions to the world of work (e.g. Roberts et al. 1998, Roberts/Fagan 1999, Roberts et al. 2000, Roberts 2003, Tarkhnishvili et al. 2005).

Finally, FACE's capacity to plan is undermined. Apart from his rejection of the typical, his image of what his future should *not* be like is vague; even this is yet to be explored. Because he discards recognised patterns, and according to the knowledge and experience he *can* mobilise, FACE can only expect certain things *not* to happen to him, for instance, getting a permanent job that he would like. But then again, who could? In the long run, his specific 'cognitive strategy' (Reiter 2003: 275-276) for uncertainty management of keeping the future out of sight may really be one of avoiding the disappointment of unfulfilled expectations, '*dreams*' as he calls them.

The reproduction of contingency and uncertainty does not necessarily imply that FACE's future will turn into a downward 'trajectory' (see below) beginning from the moment of his exclusion from school. As indicated above, FACE seems to have the personality features and background that could allow him to become a competent surfer on the waves of transformation and liberation, to borrow Kovacheva's metaphor (2000). Assessing the level of uncertainty involved is difficult, despite the 'positive' uncertainty coefficient based on his answers to the items of the questionnaire (see Appendix 4). The way uncertainty becomes relevant on the inside of action here is completely different from MAGDALENA's case. While contingency is ratified and reproduced, FACE simultaneously manages to turn it into productive creativity and enthusiasm for unconventional activities. In order for this to persist and outweigh his bitterness with regard to his exclusion from school, as well as, perhaps, the detachment from his parents, he would need some success and the chance to continuously re-interpret and connect experiences to this success in a constructive way.

MAGDALENA and FACE are two cases that outline a wide field of options for transitions to working life, which have only recently become available to youths in former

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<sup>274</sup> As a reminder of this central feature of knowledge constitution: 'What is 'teleologically' relevant when seen from the beginning, is presented from the end as 'causally' relevant (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 214).

state-socialist countries. Despite the variety of possible tracks indicated by the two cases, many other features remain obscure. For example, neither of these two young people actually expects personal problems in the labour market: MAGDALENA already has a job guarantee; and FACE, generalising on the basis of his own experiences, does not understand how people could have any difficulty in finding a job. Other features that are relevant in the transitions of other cases include issues of poverty or the financial situation of the family in general, the state of the young person's relationship with the family and parents, issues of health and disability, problems related to living in the periphery, and gender-issues where they become more explicitly relevant to life planning. A third case, NATALJA, which illustrates the *Pattern of trajectory*, covers some of these issues and provides an additional axis for the empirical space covered by the study.

NATALJA shares the feature of dropping out with FACE; yet she is not able to combine it with the same kind of internal drive. On the other hand, NATALJA shares a strong attachment to her family with MAGDALENA. Yet, due to the lack of resources within the family and the altogether ambivalent but nevertheless high level of attachment, she is not able to transform this in any beneficial way. The case of NATALJA represents an example of a young person whose narrative contains indicators towards the emergence of a 'trajectory' (Riemann/Schütze (1991), a biographical process with the potential for 'cumulative disorder' and suffering.

### 10.3.3 The Pattern of trajectory and the time perspective of restoration: NATALJA

NATALJA is a 17-year-old dropout from upper secondary education. According to the questionnaire her attitude profile could be called 'flat', i.e. she agrees (but not strongly) with all items related to the importance of work, and with most items on achievement through work; her answers to the uncertainty items indicate a 'neutral' attitude (see Appendix 4). The interviewer describes her as '*a very nice, communicative, extrovert person*', who was '*very confident in herself*'. Her appearance resembled that of '*a little bit old-style girl*'; her way of speaking and acting was like that of an '*elder person*'. During the interview '*she showed her emotions very openly*', as the interviewer notes, '*she was laughing, crying, I could see anger in her face, fear*'. Due to her '*unselfconscious*' involvement, the interview flowed smoothly; the '*two main topics*' are '*school and family*'. In fact, it seems that her personal experience is the reference point for all her answers, even to general questions; and she has little to say where she does not have the possibility of establishing this egocentric perspective.

NATALIJA lives with her parents, her grandmother and her 19-year-old brother in a small house in a regional centre of Lithuania; her brother studies at college and the two share a room. After having completed ten years of compulsory education NATALIJA changed schools, but was dismissed in the eleventh grade for not attending classes. She is now registered at the labour exchange but does not consider herself unemployed because she has never worked and does not have a *'workbook'* - *I'm not considered to be unemployed, but it would be good to have a job. (...) I neither study nor work, that is, ..well, like I'm on holiday'* (24.39). The reasons for her dropping out of school are numerous, but three important background aspects can be distinguished: two of which evolve as parallel stories. The first story (I) is about her increasing involvement in out of class activities with her friends and schoolmates resulting in truancy and finally in being dismissed. The second story (II) is one of external determination, of sickness and poverty within her family that 'forced' her, as the only daughter, to take responsibility in the home. In both trajectories she perceives her behaviour as being strictly observed by members of her wider family. This constitutes an important third background element (III) that deserves explicit discussion as it is very present in her account.

(I) The story of truancy, which appears somewhat detached from her socio-economic context, concerns the excitement and consequences of awakening to the world of a female teenager. NATALIJA maintains that she did not attend school *'for a long time because of some problems'* (24.1) and was dismissed. The apparent reasons for this dismissal, the reasons she puts forward from the very beginning of the interview, are *'personal problems'* with her *'friends'* (24.2). Her apparently rather unexciting childhood of going to school, watching TV, sitting at home, attending choir lessons, drawing, reading or going *'to church with my grandmother by force'* came to an end when she was 14 years old and started to establish closer contacts with her classmates. In short, she *'changed a lot because of friends'*, as she says at the beginning of her response to the interviewer's invitation to talk about the last five years of her life. What is striking is the way the story oscillates between her peers on the one hand, and her grandmother and the topic of going to church on the other.

In general, I changed a lot because of friends. (2). Well, if to start with, when I was 12 years old, I used to go to school, I would sit at home, I would watch TV, I would go to choir repetitions, I would go to church with my grandmother by force... what else? Well, I used to draw and read in my free time. Then since I was 14 years old, well, I began to mix with several of my (female) classmates closer. We would go to dances, they would put some make-up on me: 'So put this on and that.' Like this. Well, what do I know, from some 13 – well, yeah, from about 13 to 14 (years) with those classmates – well, it is spring, it is warm, everything starts, we don't go to school, we agree every morning. Well, we used to go to school together. If we didn't feel like, then: 'Well, let's not go to this class!' – 'Well, let's not go.' Well, so we don't (go). Well, one year there were a couple of weeks left till the end of the school year, and those



couple of weeks, I don't even know... I go to church with my grandma, our class curator is coming: 'Good afternoon.' – 'Good afternoon.' And again I am not at school. Then all those dances started (2), I don't know, summer and everything. I don't know, what else can I tell you? (3) I don't even have a clue... (7) (24.3)

Her retrospective rationalisation of dropping out is that she '*didn't like studying*' and she was '*not one of the good at school*' (24.4). Altogether, she says, her class was one of the worst, after that of her brother, illustrating this with extensive and involved narratives about the dynamics in class and her ambivalent relationships with (certain) teachers, who were sources of both advice and physical punishment (24.4-6). Altogether, as she notes later in the interview when talking about the pressure she felt from her family and her relatives' expectations, these incidents of truancy during lower secondary education were a form of protest. When asked about '*people's reaction to young people who don't study and don't work*' (24.44) later in the interview, she admits that she did not attend school in order to protest against the control of her wider family, which she refers to throughout the whole interview.

They expected a lot from me. I don't know, maybe... all those aunts and uncles, for example, expected, I don't know, that I'll finish 12 (grades) with tens (the best grade at school; H.R.). But, somehow when I was 16 or 15 years old, I... Earlier I used to do everything how other people wished. And now, I don't know, why it turned that way... I figured: why should I do something I don't want to. Ok, now about this school, that somehow I did not attend it in the ninth or eighth year only to run counter to my parents and all the others. And I don't know, they would... And for example, my aunts of either of my parents: 'Look at X (name), look at Y (name), they do this, they do that, why can you not?' I don't know, maybe because they expected a lot from me and I really couldn't (do) all that for them. I don't know. That sort of expectation - what do I know? (24.44)

(II) The second story of quasi-imposed responsibilities, which embeds her non-linear transition in an unfavourable socio-economic (family) context, is about her being forced to leave the environment of school and peers. While her non-attendance during lower secondary education was motivated by peer activities, her recent dropping out of the eleventh grade of education obviously had more substantive reasons. It was related to the poor health of her mother and the difficult material situation of her family. NATALIJA clearly identifies this second trajectory as leading to her dropping out of school. However, she does not seem to fully disentangle these two narratives, which may have allowed her to omit her own actions leading to her exclusion from the story.

Neither of her parents works; her father is unemployed and her mother receives a disability pension. Her low educated mother did work '*for twenty years*' but lost her job as a bartender/waitress when many employees were made redundant due to the economic crisis of the 1990s. Afterwards she worked for some years for very little money. Some months before the interview, and coinciding with NATALIJA's dropping out of school (see below), her mother '*came back from hospital*' (24.42) and NATALIJA took responsibility for caring for her. Her mother is '*ill, seriously ill*' and '*doctors also don't promise that she will live long*'

(24.33). Her father, on the other hand, who had some specialised education, had a recent income from various service sector jobs. But he had to give up his job as a taxi driver because of a lack of clients and the bankruptcy of the company that employed him. He never really managed to get back to work, taking a few short-term jobs and trying to make money in Poland, because *'he knows that we have to go to school'*. Asked about the reasons for the joblessness of the people around her NATALIJA tells how she experienced the family's decline into poverty.

For example, my mum was employed.. she worked for twenty years... she worked since, as soon as she moved to X (hometown), (...) (tape change) [there were no people, there was little work, the X (employer) almost went bankrupt, they fired a lot of people; interviewer]...then she lost the job. Then she worked for five years for a thank you, so to say, no salary, nothing. My father was a taxi driver, but then somehow, there was a time, how can I explain, it wasn't worthwhile working as a taxi driver, because you had only losses. And somehow, I don't even know, that firm, in which he worked, went bankrupt as well. Well, and somehow he didn't work then, then he had a job for a summer, so he worked, that was two years ago, then there was a two-month job in winter, so he worked a bit. My father used to go to Poland, in order to get money, because he knows, that we need to go to school, well... and as I'm the apple of his eye... so, there's a birthday or something else. There's no such thing for me. I don't know, I got used to that from my childhood that if there's something, a holiday, I have something... And now, in the recent time when there's no money, so it's difficult. You come, it's Christmas, 'Ayh, there's no money.'. But somehow...even...I don't know, how...how to explain this (2), I have already (2) got used to the idea that it is the way it is, well...For example, I need trousers or something else. I don't go, I don't ask, I know, that anyway there is no...so they'll tell me it is enough for bread only. Of course, I'll better eat, but... I could. 'Ayh, my shoes are worn-out, if they are, they are.' Or something else. That's my attitude now. But at the beginning it was difficult, as I was used to getting anything I wanted. Mainly from my father, but later it was more and more difficult... But now, for example, if there's a birthday or some holiday, or Christmas, or Easter, it is important that they congratulated me in the circle of the family and that I congratulated them. And I don't even need those gifts. For example, there was my dad's birthday, I didn't have anything, so I made a postcard, I made Christmas postcards for everybody...For example, for my family.. in my family everyone was satisfied with it from me. My friends were also satisfied with it. I don't know... somehow there was this attitude, that we celebrated somewhere, there was some present, so. (24.31)

In the context of this situation of unemployment and creeping material deprivation, NATALIJA says she had no other option than to stay at home when her sick mother returned from the hospital. Asked about her feelings on not finding a job she reveals this second story of how she turned out to be the one person in the family that had to make a sacrifice. In a dense passage she talks about being ashamed of being out of education and work; about the necessity of taking responsibility; the involvement of other family members and the negotiation of 'guilt'; the 'shame' and embarrassment of being without horizons; the apparent ungratefulness of her mother; and the *'lost'* competition with her brother whose education and career obviously took priority in the family. At the end of the passage quoted below she refers to her desperate attempts to keep up with school by reading textbooks at home, hoping to be able to return to school some day.

What am I anxious about? For example, it really is embarrassing for me that I neither study nor work anywhere, I don't know, somehow... And I myself partially sort of, I sort of condemn myself a bit. Because somehow... In short, I understand that I'll have to study and to find a job now. For example, there is almost no chance that one will find a job here. One certainly cannot find it anywhere. Regarding my

studies, so I also know that until... there won't be anything until September. And somehow... Of course, what concerns this school... Well, how? I could, for example, attend school, but it was important to me that... My father broke his arm then, my brother studied in Kaunas college, anyway he was in the first year... My mother came back from hospital and someone had to look after her, everything. I could have simply burdened all this mother (business) on my grandma's shoulders or something. But, I don't know, I would sit with the mother, so she: 'Go and make something to eat', or something else. Well, simply in this way I didn't go to school for three months, and I was dismissed, because I didn't show up for a single time in three months. So I was dismissed because of that. Somehow my mum: 'So why didn't you go?' I say: 'Should I have left you alone?' 'Oh, I wish I had died.' She starts talking nonsense of this sort. Somehow, I don't know, for example, surely I could have gone to school, no one forced me to stay with my mother, but anyway... I don't know, somehow (to leave) her alone... I couldn't allow that mother there... Somehow anyway, she would ask for a cup of tea or a sandwich or something else. My brother had to go to school, my grandma also was not able to do a lot. Somehow it was necessary to make something to eat for my brother as well. So, well, I lost... In general, I regret that I didn't attend school. I think sometimes, I should have attended. It would be (better) for my grandma... My grandma and I talked about it. She said: 'Better I should have taken care of your mum, and you should have gone to school.' (2) I don't know... I don't know. The way I feel, somehow I condemn myself, I condemn, well (3) Like it is now, I have too much of free time. I don't know, where to use all that time. (3) But what else do I feel? I think that I want to study badly <informal> or something else. Especially, when I'm alone then particularly (I feel so). (2) For example, [...] I even started thinking now, it is interesting, 'Will I manage with these studies, or not?' Because anyway I finished ten grades somehow, so now that I will be in my eleventh year it will be more difficult to study, because I forgot everything, everything. (2) When I go to my ex-classmates from the secondary [school]: 'Lend me textbooks of math and Lithuanian.' Just like that [she laughs]. For example, I sit down and try to solve one problem or another, in order not to forget. For example, there are three history textbooks for the eleventh grade, so one textbook from one friend, the other from another and I read them through in this way. Just like that, for my own interest. (2) In this, well, I'm doing my best not to forget what I had learned. (...) (24.42-43).

(III) The third background element that accompanies NATALJA's transition is her complicated family relationships. The complexity and importance of this issue is underlined by the fact that, as the interviewer's postscript notes, NATALJA has even discussed this with a school-psychologist. The family relationships changed fundamentally after she dropped out of school and remain important throughout the interview. According to her, her extended family developed an intense interest in what she is doing now. What disturbs her particularly is the fact that her dropping out of school evoked both the concern and the interest of her grandmother and aunt in her activities - *'Grandma looks somehow strangely at me, relatives from X (town) call: 'Why doesn't she study?'* (24.7). On the other hand, at least quantitatively, her relationship with her parents improved - *'I even communicate more with my parents now that I don't go to school'* (24.7) - as did her relationship with her brother - unsurprising since she even prepares his meals. However, the relationship with her mother is difficult. In a dramatic passage,<sup>275</sup> right after mentioning her mother's bad health and poor life expectancy, she talks about what she identifies as *'my biggest tragedy'*, the reason for her troubled relationship with her mother. When NATALJA was twelve years old she *'found out'* that, unlike her brother, she was an unwanted child. Her mother revealed that *'she did not want me and if it were not for my father, I would not be here.'* Although their relationship has

<sup>275</sup> For reasons of privacy I decided not to include this disturbing passage.

improved in the meantime, probably due to her efforts to *'get along'* better, this issue continues to come up - especially during quarrels - and there are obviously occasions when NATALJA falls back into deep suspicion and despair (24.33).

In spite of being equally ambivalent, her relationship with her father is altogether less problematic, and her father remains an important gatekeeper to what could be called her 'counter-family'. This consists of his first wife and their children but, somewhat unsurprisingly, excludes her biological mother, who she considers to be *'more like a relative to me'*. To complicate the situation further, NATALJA seeks out and enjoys the company of her father's former family, preferring it to that of her own mother. For instance, her close relationship with her half-brother used to be the source of intra-family conflict. However, this alternative family is not only a source of support, but also yet another 'circle of recognition' (Pizzorno) towards which NATALJA feels equally committed – *'They also expect a lot from me'* (24.46).

The most respected character in the whole family system is probably her grandmother; she mentions her repeatedly, sometimes most unexpectedly. Her grandmother keeps the family together and supports it financially; she holds an important mediating function between NATALJA and her intrusive relatives, and was at one point her primary educator. Her grandmother also has a leading role in terms of 'skills transfer', helping NATALJA to integrate into what appears to be a system of family reproduction – *'As a hairdresser, she taught me to be a hairdresser, so one of my friends comes to have her hair cut, then another. I also do my mum's hair (24.23). 'Dressmaker'* would be another profession that her grandmother promotes, and NATALJA has already started to produce her own clothes, although she would actually prefer to study *'design'*. Finally, her grandmother represents the one authority figure that NATALJA would like to appease regarding her failure at school (see below).

*'I don't think about the future a lot,'* NATALJA replies to the interviewer investigating her plans. There is order to what she plans to do immediately – *'I decide to finish some studies, to acquire a profession, to find a job. Then, I'll think of something'*. Additionally, she has a *'biggest dream, to build a house and to have a happy family.'* She wants to have a child, *'at least one'* and is convinced that *'of course, the first will be a son.'* She will *'try that my child doesn't lack anything'* and she expects to inherit a piece of land from her grandmother where she wants to build a house on the bank of a river. What she needs in order to achieve

all this is '*a resolution and a strong desire*' (24.35). A partner, however, is not mentioned in any of these '*dreams*'.

In five years, so I...if we speak about...in general, I don't think about the future a lot, now... what I... I decide to finish some studies, to acquire a profession, to find a job. Then, I'll think of something. But in general there are such dreams like to have a family, and everything, well fine...well I don't know...a baby, at least one. Of course, the first will be a son. I want a boy very much, and I don't know, and I'll try that my child doesn't lack anything. I have, I don't know, ... a dream, so.. I want a house, .. we have X's (name) land, so I want a house there. My grandma will leave it for me when I'm 18. So I want to build a house there, on the bank of the X (name of a river). This is my dream, I said, I will do everything, if I have no means, absolutely everything. So this is my biggest dream, to build a house and to have a happy family, and I don't know, these are the main two main wishes that I have. (24.35.)

In spite of announcing that she actually does '*not plan too much*' and that she does not '*expect too much from this life*', NATALJA does have a few plans for the future and some expectations. First of all, she plans to have a family and she wants her children to live '*differently than I do*' (24.34). At the same time, looking back at her own childhood as well as other families and children in the neighbourhood who are living in misery (24.30), she is anxious that she might not be able to provide for them. As was discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.3.7, NATALJA follows the example of her '*best friend*' and is involved with a man who is '*a bit older*' (24.40) who could probably support her financially were she to become a mother. Apart from that, her main priority is to resume studying as soon as possible. Depending on how well she does she will then decide how to continue, but is bearing her grandmother's suggestion of '*dressmaker*' (24.34) in mind. Her denial of having plans for the future, which stands in contrast to her actual plans, could also mean that she is very uncertain about her chances of achieving all this. A family and children, on the other hand, may not only be a big dream of hers, but also something that she can realistically accomplish.

Asked to reflect upon a '*typical life story*' NATALJA seems to bring all the main issues of her own life together into one long monologue of her hopes and doubts and how they intertwine with the others' claims as represented by significant people. The account is dramatically framed by her expressing fundamental doubts about being able to live up to what she considers the '*aim*' of the life of a woman. The passage starts with her declaring that a woman lives to give birth; doubting her capacity to provide material security she concludes by indicating her readiness to renounce having children. In between she lists the people confronting her with their expectations and ideas of achievement. Most importantly, by '*finishing something*' she wants to get her grandmother's '*trust*' back. Her idea of life corresponds to that of a life cycle where generations are bound together by mutual support and expectations. The entity of the family may be disturbed by an individual's '*misbehaviour*'; but what overshadows this ideal is the (new) threat of poverty, which she painfully started to

experience as a child. In general terms, this very narrative could represent the dilemmas and internal struggles of a young woman, perhaps pregnant, who is in the process of searching her feelings about becoming a mother. She deliberates about her needs, the claims of others, and the actual possibilities her life and living context offer. However, having a child or not will certainly not solely be the outcome of such a rational act of consideration.

A person's (typical life story), for example, as I recall, we sit and talk with my friends and we would all put it this way: 'What's the aim of living?' Anyway, you are born, for example, a girl gives birth to a child, an offspring of hers, and then she dies, and that's it. So, what's the point of living or seeking for something in life? For example, recently I talked to my neighbour, this teacher, and this... For example, she puts it this way: 'You have to aspire that you live, not only exist, that you achieve something, that...' I don't know, well briefly, her daughter, hmm.. Her husband, well the daughter's (husband), has written... They wanted to give him some kind of a doctoral degree, he makes sculptures and [...] wallpapers in Vilnius. We all used to help with wallpapers and... (2) So, to achieve something, so that someone knew something about you, that you weren't an empty place, that you lived your whole life and you grew old, well, you lived to be old and you died - so that your grandchildren, well, to leave something for your grandchildren, for your kids. So, she drummed it into my head that it is necessary to have an aim, and to think about the future... Sometimes when I'm on my own, somehow I think about the future, so it seems to me sometimes that there won't be anything good, that there'll be only dreams, some illusions. But in general, if you care, that's enough, you can achieve. Regarding those studies, so I don't know (2). Everybody wants me to study, all my relatives, but I promised myself that I'll finish something and... I want to get my grandma's trust in me back. This is what I want. I know that if I start studying again, I'll get along with my grandma better again (2). In principle it was my grandma that brought me up, only with my father. I hardly saw my mother. I remember that my grandma used to make something to eat for me and... Mostly, my grandma looked after me, because my father worked, my mother was busy with her affairs visiting one friend or the other, or with my brother. Somehow from mother's side I was not wanted, I don't know (2). There was no such thing from my mother that, that I would feel much love from my mother, so it wasn't that way in my life. I had... what? Principally there was my father and my grandma. My grandma would be there when my father was at work. Grandma would be there instead of father and mother and grandmother - and everything. I don't know... (3) This way... I say: 'If there will be nothing, for example, if I hardly can make ends meet, then surely I don't need children.' Because anyway one day... it hurts to see when a child wants something and doesn't get that, and those tears... I can't watch small kids, especially small ones, cry. (4) (24.36).

Three main lines and stories run through NATALJA's account. In the first, the one that she seems to favour, her share of agency is higher. This story tells of the increasing involvement of a defiant teenager with her friends and schoolmates resulting in truancy from lower secondary education. The second story, of her finally dropping out of school, is one of external determination, of sickness and poverty within her family that forced her as the female child to take responsibility for her sick mother. Depending on the perspective, she turns out to be the weak or strong person in the family. In fact, analytically these two stories can be integrated into one, ending in her suffering. However, she does not establish this link consciously. Furthermore, in both trajectories she perceives her activities as being accompanied by a generally complicated family situation and the not necessarily supportive attention of members of her wider family. This constitutes an important third background element with the character of an omnipresent observing reference group.

Unlike FACE, NATALJA cannot turn the story of school-related failure into one of liberation, not even momentarily. Economic changes and her mother's sickness preclude her becoming independent. On the contrary, these factors have, for the time being, a strongly negative impact on her opportunities, and she slips back into a very tight and unfavourable family net where her contributions do not seem to be recognised or appreciated. The economy in her small hometown has collapsed, and is reviving only very slowly under the new circumstances. Both of her parents were employed during the Soviet period, which they describe as having been *'better'* (24.50). Her aging parents become less attractive in today's labour market that has in any case little to offer. NATALJA's childhood during the 1990s is accompanied by her family's drifting into poverty and her father's attempts to take advantage of the nearby Polish border in order to bring in some money. Her mother's illness aggravates the family situation and NATALJA decides to stay with her.<sup>276</sup> Finally, her grandmother is an important figure and a moral authority in the family; she can provide financial support, but is also important in terms of skills-transfer and suggests, within the logic of a patriarchal family where her brother's career has priority, NATALJA's taking up an activity with little future (i.e. dressmaker) which only makes sense within a household economy.

NATALJA's story of agency, on the other hand, the story of a teenager enjoying life and revolting against the claims of her wider family, results in her being expelled from school. Retrospectively interpreted, this narrative is a story of shame and embarrassment. It is answered by NATALJA's demonstrative determination to continue with her education, a plea sometimes directed to individuals, and the observation that something went wrong that is difficult to remedy – *'If I only was allowed to go to school'* (24.4). As her family's tight financial resources seem to be concentrated on her brother's career, NATALJA counts on the support of an 'older male friend' who remains unspecified (see Chapter 9.3.7). In fact, NATALJA's suggestion that her mother might not live for long indicates a window of opportunity in this direction. But as Thomson et al. (2002: 351) write in their analysis of critical moments in young people's narratives: 'While most young people may speak the language of individual choice, control and agency, it is only for some that the rhetoric is accompanied by the requisite resources and opportunities.'

For NATALJA family attachment and external determination merge unfavourably with gendered disadvantages in a situation of economic deprivation. She shares with MAGDALENA an awareness of the problematic labour market. But NATALJA has no

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<sup>276</sup> The fact that this sacrifice should have contributed to healing a very fragile mother-daughter relationship is another important element, which cannot be discussed here.

resources, whether material or non-material, to realise an alternative track and make use of the lost but recognised advantage of the Soviet system in terms of having a job waiting after completing education. This element is intertwined with and reinforces the overwhelming problems within the family, which also involve the economic and physical incapacity/impotence of important figures. Finally, NATALJA represents a female trajectory affected by a multiplicity of disadvantages. Her educational path is, unlike that of her brother, burdened by care obligations. Furthermore, her expectations of a life course as a mother are tainted by the experience and awareness of the possible impact of poverty.

NATALJA's account and her experience share several of the basic features associated with a biographical trajectory (especially Riemann/Schütze 1991, Schütze 1999). Unlike the notion of trajectory used in youth research, which generally refers to 'structuralist influences' in youth transitions and is open into both directions of social mobility (Evans/Furlong 1997), the *concept* of 'trajectory' applied here refers to a biographical process of suffering. Trajectories are 'social processes structured by conditional chains of events that one cannot avoid without high costs, constant breaks of expectation, and a growing and irritating sense of loss of control over one's life circumstances' (Riemann/Schütze 1991: 337). The concept of the trajectory draws our attention to the general fragility of (biographical) expectations towards social reality, thus constituting another uncertainty assumption. At the same time the concept exposes 'the order of the dynamics of chaos' associated with the 'fateful logic of events' (ibid. 353) imposed on the individual, who gradually loses the capacity to perform as an 'actor'. The concept suggests an analytic perspective into processes of suffering; its empirical foundations provide indicators for the discovery of contexts where it is relevant (e.g. Riemann/Schütze 1991: 342-344).<sup>277</sup>

In NATALJA's case societal transformation, unemployment and poverty trigger a downward trajectory for her family. Together with her mother's bad health, these conditions result in NATALJA's assuming family responsibilities. Ultimately, all this contributes to her dropping out of education. Although the trajectory argument cannot be fully made here

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<sup>277</sup> 'Trajectory' here refers to a concept first developed by Strauss/Glaser (1970) in the context of studies of dying trajectories. It was further developed for biographical research by Schütze (1981: 88-103; 1999; also Riemann/Schütze 1991). As it is 'a highly abstract conception' and 'firmly rooted in empirical data' (Riemann/Schütze 1991: 354) the concept of biographical trajectory is a rare example of a fruitful marriage between theory and evidence. In fact, it probably represents a synthesis of the various forms of biographical uncertainty discussed in this chapter embracing, for instance, the features of the hetero-destructured type from the Italian classification. Alternative notions of trajectories are numerous. For instance, Giddens (1991: chapter 3) uses the term in the sense of a reflexively organised and potentially internally referential form of self-development. Bourdieu (e.g. 1990: 80) uses it to refer to a series of positions of a person in a constantly transforming social space. Sackmann/Wingens (2001, 2003) survey yet another set of possible meanings of the term. Finally, for a discussion of the term in the context of youth transition research see Evans/Furlong (1997).



(because of the interview type and mode of analysis), NATALJA's case involves features that qualify as 'conditions or seeds for the emergence of a trajectory', as Riemann/Schütze (1991: 337) put it. Whether a trajectory will fully develop, ending in her breakdown, remains unclear, but 'trajectory potential' (ibid. 349) is certainly building up:<sup>278</sup>

- NATALJA's trajectory potential is based on two external aspects of vulnerability – the socio-economic situation of her family together with her mother's illness, and the incompatibility of family and educational responsibilities. NATALJA does not seem to be fully aware of the interaction of these dimensions.
- Her everyday situation lacks essential components of active steering, and within her most relevant context, i.e. the (wider) family, she is exposed to multiple sources of intervention. Yet NATALJA does not seem to be in a state of shock; she does have plans, however fragile these might be. Nevertheless, she lingers in a state without direction, a state of not being able to find a job, or of not being able to begin searching because of additional obstacles; her next chance to resume education is more than six months away.
- Her social relations are unbalanced and harmed by incomplete reciprocities. Her family status appears to have been damaged by several serious incidents of (emotional) misrecognition, including in respect to her status as a female child. Trust relations are sought in an alternative family.
- Her strong focus on family relations not only obscures her explanation of her situation, but also the available alternative of continuing her education and seeking independence. It also repeatedly confronts her with other people's claims about how her life should be.
- NATALJA's denial of her status as an unemployed school dropout by claiming to be on a kind of 'holiday' (24.39) reflects an attitude of refusing to accept reality, which does not necessarily require an active answer; it contributes to her not being 'in control' of her situation.
- The projection of her (past and current) family experiences, especially the experience of poverty, puts her in a moratorium situation that does not allow the establishment of a concrete and realistic future perspective. While she clings to her determination to continue her education, her (alternative) trajectory as a woman and a mother is open to uncertainties.

The case of NATALJA suggests that the time perspective of the *Pattern of trajectory* is characterised by a configuration of experience, expectation and projecting oriented to restoration and normalisation. Unlike FACE, NATALJA is not able to turn her experience of discontinuity into an alternative and constructive life programme. Instead of establishing distance with the past, she lingers in a state dominated by it, circling around it, regretting it. In her imagination, she continues her interrupted education; while, in reality, she and her family continue to suffer the material deprivation that began when the economic crisis hit the small town they inhabit. This keeps her, the female child, at home looking after her mother and

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<sup>278</sup> The label 'trajectory' has been used with this qualification by Brose et al. (1993) to classify one of their typical patterns of biographical development of temporary workers.

other family members, and out of education. The combination of these elements and a suspicious and intrusive social environment locate her at the opposite side of both FACE and MAGDALENA. In other words: (a) her problem with the future is not one of contingency and outcome-uncertainty, but one of the continuity of the past, of tradition; (b) her knowledge problem results exactly from this continuity, also represented in her social environment; (c) her tight family circle of recognition hardly gives her the space to breathe and misrecognises her sacrifices. But NATALJA does not escape any of these three dimensions; instead, she tries to normalise them by attempting to restore the typical. (a) As there is *'no chance'* to find a job, she wants to resume her education. (b) Due to her doubts about the prospects of a certain professional track and the influence of her environment she is inclined to aim for the reproduction of the family and the household. (c) Both should improve her relations with her significant others as she remains committed to them. The main route out of her situation is represented in her *'biggest dream'* of becoming a mother in a *'happy family'* without financial problems. At the same time, this represents a restriction of interests and a form of gender normalisation attached to her perception of the natural *'role'* of a woman. But even this is a fragile project; her sponsor may solve at least the financial side of it (see Chapter 9).

The case of NATALJA challenges the conceptual tools established on the basis of Schütz and Mead and stretches it to the limit. On the one hand, it can be argued that past, future, and the present environment are *'out of control'* in Mead's sense, despite *and* because of the underlying continuity which is outside her sphere of influence. After all, the Schützian strategy of extending the past, instead of the present, which is part of this time perspective of restoration, is critical here. It could also be said that NATALJA, unlike the other two cases, lacks both the means and the ends to reduce or creatively transform uncertainty. Altogether, her level of biographical uncertainty is high despite the fact that her answers to the uncertainty items indicate a *'neutral'* attitude (see Appendix 4). On the other hand, the assessment of the case with regard to the two dimensions of temporal uncertainty related to outcome and knowledge, as well as the third dimension of recognition-uncertainty, is more difficult than in other cases. All three dimensions are highly *relevant*, but their levels are ambiguous and NATALJA's reactions are contradictory. According to what she says and *'knows'* about her present position, she does *'not expect too much'* from her life, not even in terms of her future performance as a mother; yet she is unable to act in line with this expectation, not even in an *'in-order-not-to'* manner of conscious avoidance. She also repeatedly experienced and *'knows'* about her discouraging environment, but is unable to leave this unfavourable situation and establish an alternative forum of recognition.

The trajectory concept introduced above could provide an answer to this inconsistency. Negative biographical trajectories gradually undermine the individual's capacity to act ('rationally'), and they invalidate normality assumptions. This phenomenon is thus able to 'explain' why the analytical tools are insufficient and also lose their power as descriptive tools: Ultimately, they were developed on the basis of the assumption that individuals as equipped with some kind of 'rationality'<sup>279</sup> as well as 'ontological security' (Laing 1965). Riemann/Schütze (1991) describe the earlier stages of a trajectory as follows:

Except for sheer accidents and the sudden awareness of severe diseases the trajectory process does not start suddenly. Rather, powerful outer forces slowly build up a fateful trajectory potential within the person's life situation. There is a fateful interplay of these forces, which begin to entrap a person. There are signs of a looming fate, but the person focuses on the project or problematic force and/or even actively attempts to fade out of his awareness the more or less hidden signs of trajectory. (...) An overwhelming series of central events has the effect of falsifying expectations of a normal course of affairs. The person realises that she is driven by powerful outer forces and that the use of familiar strategies of social and behavioural action are no longer possible. A conditional state of mind in experiencing events and organising personal activities becomes the dominant orienting principle for the person's life organisation (ibid. 349).

Again, NATALJA's story will not necessarily develop into a full downward trajectory; yet from the material available it is difficult to see why it would not.

This is certainly the point where the capacity of both the data collected in the course of the present project as well as the comparatively superficial analysis applied has been exhausted. Pushing the interpretation beyond this level would require a different approach and research design.<sup>280</sup>

## 10.4 Discussion

The three time perspectives of biographical uncertainty were elaborated by linking conceptual perspectives with a classification of patterns of transition represented by three prototypical cases where key-features were observable or even exaggerated. Short portraits of selected cases from the present study associated with these three patterns contribute to a substantiation of the empirical space opened up by them. This is the aim of the following section. Afterwards, commonalities and differences between these three patterns and other typologies in the relevant literature suggesting similar classifications are described.

### 10.4.1 The empirical space of the study – short case profiles

#### 10.4.1.1 Continuation

Young people associated with the *Pattern of continuation* typically have favourable social backgrounds. Their mostly linear transitions are facilitated by supportive and

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<sup>279</sup> I am thinking of Max Weber's types of social action here.

<sup>280</sup> Two examples of youth studies are Nölke 1994 and Alheit/Glaß (1986; English: Alheit 1994).

resourceful parents, usually university educated, and/or grandparents. Although these young people do not necessarily 'continue' the career of one of their parents, like MAGDALENA they all are well on the way towards reproducing the cultural or economic capital available in their family.

The moment of continuation in the narrow sense is most explicit in the case of INETA introduced in Chapter 9. However, her quest for independence and the externally provided security necessary for that independence constitutes a moment of liberation in her story. INETA's business college education is essentially sponsored as well as supervised by her grandfather, who holds a leading position in a big company. This same grandfather supported her mother, his daughter, who went through a few divorces including INETA's father. INETA is fascinated with the business world and her grandfather gives her plenty of chances to apply her newly acquired knowledge. Her grandfather, who impresses her with his agility and his enthusiasm for his job, is her *'ideal of a person'*. Having already done some work for the company, she considers continuing her grandfather's project and taking over the business from him as if she were the eldest son in the family – *'Because it is a custom with us, that usually the oldest son overtakes father's business. So I, since I'm the oldest, like it or not (but) I am woman, so I should overtake that business. And I want that'* (11.12).

GABJA, a young woman introduced in Chapter 8, is the youngest of three children of parents with higher education; her father owns a company. Her brother could not find work in Lithuania and successfully established himself and his family in Spain. Her sister could not find a job within her academic specialisation and decided to become her own boss and earn her living in the service sector. GABJA acknowledges the difficult work situation in Lithuania after the breakdown of communism, which provided more *'order'* (8.27); she decided to study business management because she expects this to be one of the more sought after professions in the European Union – *'As we are in the European Union, so in the future a lot of economists will be needed, and managers. But I didn't make it into economics, so only management. But maybe I will succeed with economics in the future'* (8.21). A woman should have a family only after she has finished higher education and has a job. Becoming a mother too early would be a *'tragedy'*, she judges based on what she can see from young mothers around her; they have no chance to enjoy their youth (8.43). GABJA is determined to avoid this problem; her future plans are more or less set and in order:

In general I plan, if everything turns out the way I plan it, I plan to graduate, and as I mentioned, first of all college, maybe even master's degree because it is also very important. Then I will maybe find a well-paid job, I will work, at least I will start working. (...) I don't know what kind of job but I really plan to

work and maybe while doing this job I will extend the range of my acquaintances and so on but I don't plan any relationship, well, I don't plan to get serious and to plan family (...).

XXX, 19, and WIZARD, 18, are two young men from well-off families. Their parents received a university education and are very supportive. WIZARD, who is introduced in Chapter 8, is preparing to study *'either architecture or design'* (29.15). He thinks that it is *'too early'* (29.15) for him to think about a job; he can do that later – *'When you finish studies and you have nothing to do, then it's the right time to look for a job'* (29.17). He does not seem at all concerned about his future; on the contrary, even if he may not be serious, he has rather ambitious plans: *'I hope I will finish my studies, and I hope I will start studying architecture. I will finish it and will be an architect. I will have a family and I will live. I will build some skyscraper, I will design one'* (29.50). XXX, on the other hand, was a more than averagely gifted pupil in his hometown; he was even allowed to skip one of his school years. He moved to Vilnius where he now studies psychology, a subject that was not his first choice. However, he is confident and has even started to do some work on the side as a trainer for a team building company; by the time he has his bachelor degree he will still be *'young enough'* (30.12) to either study something different, such as business administration, or he go for a master's degree. In any case, in line with his parents, who complain about the low levels of social security in Lithuania and the low salaries in their profession as compared to other countries, it is important for him to earn well in the future. He considers membership in the European Union an important step in this direction – *'At some point I told myself, you know, either I will earn a lot or I will not live at all... Yeah, everything will be shit for me. (...) Maybe I will not be a big boss or I will not become a president, you know. But simply, I want to have a normal job like people have in that, you know, praised Europe'* (30.37). He thinks that in five years time he will have some kind of standard job and an adult life. In ten years his life should be *'totally formed'* (30.39). And in 20 years he will be a full member of society doing his *'civic duties'* (30.40).

#### 10.4.1.2 Liberation

Young people associated with the *Pattern of liberation* have mixed social backgrounds. Their non-linear transitions and withdrawal from education are characterised by agency and a break, or at least dissociation, from parents and their family of origin. Yet the family background is not typically one of poverty, unemployment or misery. As seen with FACE, creativity or the realisation of an unconventional lifestyle are driving forces in alternative transitions of this kind. Some of the more central features of the extreme case of FACE are

relevant in some of the cases discussed below in the frame of the *Pattern of trajectory*; this link indicates the openness of the *Pattern of liberation* towards trajectory.

JUOZAS is a 19-year-old dropout from school-based secondary education. His alternative status is literally written all over his face. Due to his many piercings and his dreadlocks, the interviewer describes his appearance as *'a little bit mind-blowing'* – *'Usually in the society such people like JUOZAS are named and treated like 'rebellious or mutinous teenagers'*. He began to have problems at school only when he had to change after his original school was transformed. He was finally told to leave when he started to play truant. Nevertheless, he managed to complete his upper secondary education outside the standard school system by attending evening classes and institutions of adult education, which he appreciated more as he was not treated like a child. His *'whole life changed'* when he met these *'new friends'* (14.2) that were older than him and introduced him to an unknown world of parties and entertainment, a world that finally alienated him from his peers as well as from his conventional childhood. Conflicts with his parents, especially with his father, were unavoidable. JUOZAS started to busk and to travel abroad and discovered his passion for piercing. After he had studied and practiced piercing in the streets for several years, he acquired a certificate as a piercer. Now that his skills and specialised knowledge are officially recognised – *'I can put it under one's nose and say: 'I know that.'* (14.64) - he also associates his professional future with it. From his current perspective, he considers school a *'waste of time'* because it does not prepare a person for life and is overloaded with redundant information – *'They'd better teach about one war and then you know everything about the whole history'* (14.12). In the meantime, he has become independent and is his own judge of what kind of knowledge is relevant – *'No one can tell me anything brand new anymore'* (14.13). His plans for the future include working as a forester because he likes nature; but most likely he will be working *'in a beauty salon or pierce earrings'*. In any case, he wants to work with *'interesting normal people'* (14.27) and he is horrified at the idea of establishing any kind of *'routine'* in his life. This is the reason provided for his statement that, for the time being, family is a *'bad thing'*, *'because routine occurs with a family at once'* (14.65). *'I don't want permanent jobs at all'* (14.51), he says. Instead, he wants to combine work with travelling abroad, which he also sees as necessary for perfecting his specialised knowledge. As he has to earn money somehow, he anticipates his future to be a bit of a struggle between these two competing features; yet he even does not exclude the possibility of studying again.

Interviewer: So you think your future will be linked to earrings and piercing, and with learning all that?

JUOZAS: Yeh. I don't know, if I'll be doing this job...well most probably. Anyway I'll have to do some job. Well in case it becomes boring and unpleasant, I'll think of something else...Maybe I'll start studying or something else.

I: But you haven't thought of it yet ?

J: No, to start studying, it's not for me.. Well maybe I would like in a way, but well, I don't want...I would like to study in general, but I don't want such a monotonous thing as having to be somewhere every day without being able to leave or something ...well, I cannot be absolutely stable...in one place (14.59).

DIZAINERIS, a 17-year-old dropout with Russian background, is another example of the *Pattern of liberation* (for an introduction see Chapter 8). However, this young man fits this pattern more as a result of his intentions than his actions. In fact, his dropping out of education as the result of a serious disease indicates a certain 'trajectory potential'. His parents are between 40 and 50 years older than him, and he has little in common with them. His father is a retired labourer and driver with only a basic level of education and poor Lithuanian skills. His mother, a former accountant, cleaning lady, and finally unemployed but close to retirement, is a loser of the transformation. DIZAINERIS, on the other hand, is, as his parents call him, '*a white handed person*' – '*You may understand after working hard for a while that if you do not want to plough all your life as a horse, then you have to go to a university and try to make a career so that you were able to use your mind and not your physical power*' (5.20). Like FACE, he believes in '*fate*' (5.23) and, in principle, in a predetermined future. Yet some determination is necessary, as well as a good family background as this is the one thing that can '*spoil*' children the most (5.31). DIZAINERIS calls himself '*a very impulsive person*' who likes art and whose ideals are painters like Picasso and Van Dyke (5.62). His love of art and the lifestyle he associates with it is part of the reason for which he considers that his life is '*not normal anymore*' (5.49); it is also a way of escaping the pressure he is beginning to feel from his family now that he has been out of education for some time. Asked about how he imagines the future and his life he says: '*I am a realist and I have chosen such a strategy – I live here and now and nowhere else. (...) I am not determined about my final aim yet*' (5.59). He does not like to think too far ahead, but he would like to finish university and to work as a designer or an architect – '*Well I'm not very determined yet, I hesitate, I'm telling you, but I would like to do something in the sphere of art*' (5.61). In five years time he would like to be studying at the '*Academy of Art*', or, if he is '*not lucky*' at least at some college (5.64). In ten years he will already have achieved something, if he has managed to go to university. In twenty years time, he '*should be enjoying the fruits of his achievements*' and the things he will have created by then. His responsibility for all this will be substantial, but not exclusive – '*For me, undoubtedly, everything is related to will power and luck*' (5.66).

### 10.4.1.3 Trajectory

Young people associated with the *Pattern of trajectory* typically come from disadvantaged social backgrounds. Their non-linear transitions are burdened by factors like unemployment and/or poverty in the family, 'broken homes', hopelessness due to living in remote rural areas, or experiences of physical or drug abuse.

AGNE, 20, sums up her childhood at the beginning of the interview: *'All my childhood and (life) since I was fifteen, well, was not very good because of a lot of pain. I don't really remember happy days'* (1.6). Her parents separated before her birth and she grew up at her aunt and uncle's house. They live in a small village; her aunt is unemployed, her uncle is a *'tractor driver'*. At the time of the interview she was attending a special vocational school for disadvantaged and disabled young people; she boards at the school. Work is a *'source of living'* and represents money, a flat and the chance to have family; she has dreamed about having a job since she was fifteen years old (1.29). From her answer to the question about what she considers a *'normal life'*, - i.e. an intact family, *'enough food'*, no violence in the family, *'money for education and food'*, and no alcohol abuse (1.58) - the interviewer concludes in her postscript, that *'she understands the normal life (as) just the opposite (of) her own life.'* She does not live for the moment but for the future, as she says (1.73). At the same time she finds it hard to imagine a positive vision of the future. She is concerned about it and afraid to come to the end of the temporary security she enjoys at the school. Asked whether she often thinks about the future she replies:

I certainly think about it, and I am afraid of the future. It might happen, for example, that I finish school and don't find anything and live among a sort of trash. Sometimes a thought crosses my mind that you might get lost after you leave school. You got used to the daily bread at school, and what will you eat afterwards? (1.72)

ANITA, a young Polish woman of 20, is the daughter of a divorced couple who lives with her mother, an unskilled labourer, and her two sisters in a two-roomed flat in a poor area of Vilnius. She has no contact with her father who lives with another family. She says that there have been *'a lot of mistakes'* in her life - *'I wouldn't say that my life was very good'*. She was an outsider at school and when a certain (male) friend that she had met before came to her school she began to have more serious problems - *'the whole school was against me'*. Finally, she was forced to leave school at upper secondary level (2.2). She recounts that she was kidnapped, locked up and had to *'work'* as a prostitute (2.13). Despite death threats she finally managed to escape. Yet due to drug abuse, anxiety, depression and other diseases, as well as the mere memory of her past, which she tried to suppress with alcohol, she ended up in psychiatric care. She has been under observation for five years because, as she says, *'I even*



*cannot live normally now'* (2.13). After finishing her training she intends to find a job. If this does not work out, she is, like NATALJA, determined not to have family – *'If I don't have a job, I won't do anything, no family, nothing. I don't want to have any problems'* (2.27). Altogether, her perspectives are modest and restricted to normality. Asked about her plans and what she wants to achieve in life she says:

In general, I would like to finish this [training; H.R]. (2) Then some small things, well small, for example, some course, because I know that I won't be able to survive with one profession only. Then I would like...I would like to work at a beauty saloon very much. (2) Of course. I am not a beauty, but I like putting on make-up and the like. (5) Well, I cannot talk about my plans a lot, because I haven't finished a single... I'm not saying that I will have millions or something like that, but I would like to live normally at least. (2.29)

AURIMAS is 15 years old and described by the interviewer as a *'typical guy from a village'* whose hands are *'black from land working, black nails (like an old man's hands, who does a dirty job)'*. He lives with his parents and three younger siblings in a renovated wooden house in a small village. His father, 40 years old and an electrician by education (unfinished), works on a poultry farm in a different town and comes home only on weekends; sometimes he is away for the whole month. His mother, 34 years old, has no job at the moment and looks after his three younger siblings; she used to work in the canteen of a collective farm but then: *'Everything here collapsed, so work finished'* (3.21). The policy of rationalising the already poor infrastructure in rural areas, including the closing down and merging of schools, contributed to his and his family's problematic situation. Like NATALJA, AURIMAS maintains that he was thrown out of school because of 'problems' linked with falling in with the wrong people. Yet his case also indicates an alternative story in the background: his contribution, as the eldest son, to the division of labour within the family and the maintenance of their small farm is important. His dropping out of school certainly made some things easier, at least for the time being – *'I do all the work for father'* (3.3). Work is essential for him – *'you simply cannot live without work'* (3.23). He considers going back to education but has no concrete plans. Searching for a job is not an option at the moment, and neither is going to work with his father – *'I can't leave mother alone'* (3.34). The professions he could imagine doing are that of a *'car mechanic'* and a *'race driver'* on the race track of a local town; then he could make this town *'famous'*, as he says, ironically (3.16).

MARIUS and VYTAS have some features in common with AURIMAS; in both stories the pattern of dropping out to support the family is repeated. MARIUS, who was introduced in Chapter 8, is in a similar situation because both of his parents are unemployed and his family lives in obvious material misery in a small village, with little chance of improvement. His perspective is fatalistic – *'I will be what I will be'* (22.32), and: *'There is no choice'*

(22.58). VYTAS, a 17-year-old school dropout of Russian origin, emphasises that he dropped out of school because he was '*stubborn*' (28.4), considered school to be '*a waste of time*' (28.8), and did not want to continue. Again it is his family situation that provides an alternative angle. His father's legs had recently been amputated because of a '*hereditary disease*' and VYTAS, an only child, stayed at home to help while his mother, a waitress, was at work – '*When mother is working, I help there, I stay at home sometimes*' (28.5). He regrets having left education, which is a requirement for a profession. He thinks that his life has little in common with the '*normal life*' that the interviewer asks him to comment upon – '*Well, my life, to be precise, is such ... (laughing) my life is not much... Well, what is my life like? It broke... halfway ...*' (28.31). His views on the future are pessimistic: Lithuania's accession to the European Union did not change anything; on the contrary, things got worse. What will happen in five years time? '*Maybe a war will start. (...) Maybe I will have a job*' (28.44). In ten years? '*I don't know, in ten years... maybe I will be the same as I am, I will look for a job and I will not find it, I don't know. Maybe I will deteriorate, or maybe I will become a businessman, I don't know*' (28.45). And in 20 years? '*Maybe I will be working somewhere, I don't know, live well, maybe it will change... life will be better...I don't know how it will be in life. What it will bring, that's how I will live*' (28.47).

Finally, JAN, MUSTAFA and RIMAS are three respondents that share the 'trajectory potential' of a criminal past they are trying to leave behind. Moment of liberation is also inherent to their stories, although they have difficulties in utilising these 'productively' in a more conventional sense. Of these three young men, MUSTAFA (see Chapter 8) appears to be the most determined and capable of normalising his trajectory. He talks about his involvement in criminal activities such as smuggling for money and status, he also indicates that he witnessed people being killed. Now he is determined to finish with this part of his life. Yet his preferred profession of a car mechanic, which would require a certificate, is impossible as proper professional training would take too long – '*To sit and study for five years, I won't stand that by no means*' (23.12). When the interviewer asks him about his future, he says that he has no idea and covers his face with his hands. In five years he will probably still be doing the same things, but he would '*escape Lithuania immediately*' (23.37) if he had the opportunity. Accession to the EU will only be felt very slowly, and the country will probably need around 30 years to catch up. Furthermore, some people say that '*the first year after the accession we have to leave, because there will be a great mess and people of 30, 35-years-old, have experienced this and seen how Lithuania became independent*' (23.39). MUSTAFA has the impression that the only way for change to come about is for all the

people and qualifications nobody seems to need anymore to disappear. He laments how whole towns die, like those around the Lithuanian nuclear power plant in Ignalina, and how formerly sought for experts lose their work: finally, he implicates himself, a young man at the age of 22, in this development – *'Someone said that in order for Lithuania to achieve something and live well you must wait until all people who lived under the Soviets will die out. So when I die, maybe my grandchildren will see better times and will live a really normal life'* (23.41).

JAN is a 19-year-old Polish man who managed to complete upper secondary education despite massive problems with selling and using drugs. The death of his father, with whom he had a close relationship, when he was about 13 initiated his downward trajectory – *'Well I was very much at a loss. (3) Well then... until then I was, it seems, as all other children. And then all that started, new friends, new acquaintances. When I was fifteen, I already, you could say, used to spend days and nights, well, at night I used to go to clubs for those over eighteen or twenty one. During the day, well during my free time, I used to spend all my free time in billiard clubs'* (13.17). After his father's death *'no one and nothing could stop me anymore'*, as he says; looking back on the period, he now thinks that it was a kind of negative liberation – *'when I had that freedom, I didn't know what to do with it'* (13.18). Moreover, for him, as *'for everybody from seventeen to twenty five years money is the most important thing'* (13.3). He got involved in drug dealing – *'There were a lot of offers, there was one to sell heroin'*; and finally started using himself – *'I used it for a long time, a year and a half or so'* (13.11). He *'was brought to trial a couple of times'* (13.3), and convicted once but never sentenced to prison. Nevertheless, he managed to finish upper secondary education and wanted to study social work at university, but was not admitted. He tried to find a job but even private labour agencies were of no help, despite their high fees. He had a couple of informal jobs and had the opportunity to learn about the exploitative features of the world of work. As he had nothing to do, was *'bored'* and afraid that he might fall back into his old life, he found a solution to keep him out of trouble for at least 15 months – two weeks after the interview his military service started: *Now I'm waiting for that 18 of February when I finally start the military service. (...) I have nothing to do here. I don't want to do the military, but anyway. (...) Well... I postpone the problem of what I'm going to do until I come back'* (13.26). Afterwards he will once again try to get into university, but he cannot be sure of this and has no idea what to do if he fails again. He does think about his future, but always conditionally – *'Well I think about it, but it is very vague, because there is always a 'but'... if I don't enter (a university) again, what shall I do then?'* (13.60) His fear of the future most likely results from the combination of not finishing higher education and ending up doing casual jobs. Asked what he is afraid of, he

replies: *'Well that I may fail in the future. That I won't finish my studies, that I will have to work a couple of months here and there all my life. And that I will neither have a permanent job, nor anything at all'* (13.60).

Finally, RIMAS is stuck in a vicious circle. Although his background would not necessarily suggest it – his parents are well-educated, married and employed – he is a deeply troubled young man. At the time of the interview he is 24 years old, in remedial employment as a craftsman, sick from drugs and without perspectives. Asked about his ethnic origin he calls himself a citizen of *'the planet of Earth, I am a bipedal, white'* (25.43). It all began when he was thrown out of several schools and started using drugs and alcohol:

Since some eighth year at school my studies and work have been like this, such a system: I study at some school for some 4 or 5 months, then they expel me, then I don't do anything for a couple of months, then I find a job and work somewhere until the next...until next September. Then I go again to another school and there, as a rule, they expel me again. And then again I don't do anything and then I start working (...) This is how I live. (2) There were different things with drugs and alcohol, but a time comes when (3) you simply do not want to do that to yourself anymore. (25.2)

He tried to escape his situation and even went abroad, but was deported. The major part of the interview consist of a coherent tirade against 'the system' and the situation of contemporary society in general. Confronted by the interviewer with his apparent pessimism he replies: *'It is not pessimism, it is realism'* (25.17). He thinks that people cannot handle the 'freedom' they now have and that they wanted so much under communism. No doubt, the system used to be like an 'incubator' but there was nothing to 'worry about'; everybody had work and a salary that was sufficient to get something to eat. 'Freedom' contributed to polarisation: *'Some went very far forward, whereas all others remained far behind. They surely live much worse than in the Soviet times'* (25.20). RIMAS detests normal life as he understands it including striving for success, being pushed into employment by contacts rather than talent, and finally earning 'money for everybody except yourself' (25.2). After having done many informal and illegal jobs including selling drugs in the streets for over four years, RIMAS wants to be 'calm' and live in 'peace'. He wants to live quietly with his girlfriend and to be left alone. But considering his story he understands that the chances that this will happen are low. *'You cannot plan anything'* (25.24), he says, and he is not able to establish any kind of positive vision of his future. Asked about how he imagines the next five years he can only indicate what he does *not* want to happen:

I only know what I don't want. What I'm even afraid of. To sit in jail and I'm also afraid, fuck,<sup>281</sup> to be on the needle. (2) But I might be dead in five years, because of my diseases, fuck, or even a falling icicle.

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<sup>281</sup> The translator did an excellent job preserving the style of this interview; it is loaded with swearwords. She notes that she decided to replace the different very strong Russian expressions with this quite common English term.

There's no point in looking so far. For example, I cannot even imagine now at the present moment how I will pay for the flat tomorrow. And the day after tomorrow is not important to me. There are some three things that you plan somehow, fuck.... at least I did everything for this winter, I am calm, fuck. But the spring came and somehow again...hurricanes in my head will start. We'll see how things are later. (25.25)

RIMAS agrees with the interviewer that he *'lives in this day'* - according to him *'everybody'* does - yet for him it is a matter of survival and a way of controlling a future with no prospects. *'Well today I'm trying not to spoil tomorrow, for example. But I surely don't think very far, because there is nothing to think about and how'* (25.27). Ultimately, it is the organism that dictates the rhythm of life of a junkie; it drives you *'crazy'* but focuses your attention on getting the necessary money *'until the evening'* - *'That's how the problem is. At least there's something to do'* (25.31). RIMAS is not sure about how long he will still be strong enough to live like this - *'I'm young, and I'm playing a fool, being vicious, I still have some strength, I'm still young, fuck? But if... I think that a few more years and I give up, fuck it'* (25.37).

#### 10.4.2 Synthesis of the three patterns

The three patterns are directly comparable along several categories, which are generalised and summarised in Table 10.2. In this way they can also be assessed with regard to their relation to the typology of time experiences suggested by the Italian study (Cavalli 1985) introduced at the beginning of this chapter; references to additional literature are made without broader discussion.

**Table 10.2 - Dimensions of transition patterns and time perspectives of biographical uncertainty**

	Continuation MAGDALENA	Liberation FACE	Trajectory NATALIA
Example			
Time perspective	certainty production	contingency (re)production	attempted restoration
uncertainty of...			
... outcome	low	high	ambivalent
... knowledge	low	high	ambivalent
... recognition	low	high	ambivalent
uncertainty management	mobilisation of resources	mobilisation of creativity	reiteration of the same
cognitive strategy	keeping future under control	keeping future out of sight	emphasis on the 'achievable'
outlook	focused	open	closed
contingency	avoidance	reproduction	reduction
interests/goals	consolidation	consolidation of mode of operation	restriction
typicality	reproduction	rejection/de-normalisation (after failure)	normalisation (after failure)
means/ends	means and ends	no ends to means	neither means. nor ends
family relation	resource	estrangement	constraint

a) The first *Pattern of continuation* is one of certainty production. Outcome-, knowledge-, and recognition-uncertainty are neutralised by mobilising resources and knowledge available within the family. Once interests and aims in life are consolidated, the

focused reproduction of familiar normality brings the future largely 'under control'. Contingency is replaced with possibility within the logic of the chosen career. Uncertainties with regard to the world of work as well as the possibility of unemployment are associated with life outside this track. The involvement of young people in traditionally acknowledged forms of activity, or 'meaningful tradition' involving a sustainable biographical project, results in a unity of forms of emotional recognition (family) and social recognition (employment security), at times at the cost of sacrificing some of the freedom of the new system.

Conceptually, this pattern is similar to some of the features of two types described in the Italian study (Cavalli 1985): the hetero-structured and self-structured types. Both are characterised by the acceptance of standard patterns and norms in order to ensure the predictability of the future. Where external shares predominate, the adoption of normative biographical patterns (in the sense of Schütz) merges with the reactive repetition of unproblematic solutions for the sake of establishing security (in the sense of Mead). The internal shares appear to predominate, while socio-economic background moderates basic uncertainties and simultaneously invites reproduction. Here, young people construct their futures consciously and on the basis of their accumulated knowledge and experience. Planning goes hand in hand with the postponement of decisions as a strategy for keeping the future open, but responsibility and commitment are not avoided. The 'model of deferment' suggested by Brannen/Nilsen (2002: 520-524) in their classification of time perspectives of young people would be another example from youth research that is similar to the *Pattern of continuation* with stronger internal shares. Young people described by this type are oriented towards a parent's life but actively postpone it. A generally strong will to work is accompanied by the intention to reconcile employment and motherhood among young women. The authors' 'model of predictability' (ibid. 527-529), on the other hand, refers to young men conforming to the conventional male breadwinner model. Young people associated with this type are characterised by a 'clear view of their future adulthood', they are 'the true planners' and conform to the idea of upward mobility.

b) The second *Pattern of liberation* is one of contingency production and reproduction. Outcome-, knowledge-, and recognition-uncertainty are high but not necessarily 'problematic' because positively exploited as creativity and self-actualisation. The future is kept open and 'out of sight'; fatalism underlines this attitude. A certain mode of operation, a lifestyle, is consolidated rather than interests and priorities. The rejection of the typical is part of the reaction to dropping out (sometimes on purpose) of the usual programme of socialisation.

Uncertainties with regard to the world of work concern the quality of activities rather than unemployment as such. This pattern goes hand in hand with estrangement from social background and high internalised standards of (unconventional) achievement, which allow the clear distinction of oneself from others, peers or members of society in general. The newly available opportunity structure of the westernised system is appreciated as a challenge that needs to be faced. However, the strong moment of (possible) external determination in a space of social contingency, potential intolerance towards others, and a marginalized group that is too slow to cope with the rapid change are the price of such liberation.

This pattern comes close to Cavalli's (1985) idea of self-destructuration; it breaks with (family and societal) tradition and is oriented towards the present, and driven by a conscious dissociation from the past and its representatives. The present is the most important time segment, from which the past is accessible if required, and where the future is kept open. The primary attitude is that of conscious discontinuation. Elements of this type are prominently featured in the current Western youth research discourse, apparently indicating a shift in (youth) biographies. For instance, Du Bois-Reymond (1998) uses labels like that of 'trendsetters' to underline a shift in life styles, mostly among middle-class youth, towards 'choice biographies', self-determination and self-realisation in late modernity. Also, the 'model of adaptability' introduced by Brannen/Nilsen (2002: 524-527) is similar to this type; its emphasis is on individual choice and the establishment of a 'contingency mentality' as the primary attitude among associated young people. Some of the cases discussed in Leccardi (2005) also try to deal with uncertainty in life by concentrating on projects and activities that can be controlled in an extended present.

In view of the findings from the present as well as an earlier study (Reiter 1997, 2003), I want to emphasise the ambivalence of the experience of liberation. The cases that I have studied and would classify under this heading, such as FACE, are characterised by a moment of profound disorientation in establishing a time perspective that constructively links experiences and expectations in a process of projecting. Despite its potential for creativity, this loose linkage, in fact the opposite of choice, constitutes an element of discomfort and suffering that requires at the very least a favourable background and/or a strong personality in order to be absorbed. In these cases fatalism, 'the refusal of modernity' in Giddens's (1991: 110) words, is part of the general attitude; they do not 'know' how their future will look but accept whatever will happen. Furthermore, the moment of external determination relevant to the constitution of this type, which appears to involve a high level of agency, becomes

obvious when we consider that 'liberation' in post-communism required the breakdown of communism and its institutions.

c) The third *Pattern of trajectory* is characterised by an apparently idiosyncratic mode of uncertainty management, and by the attempt to restore a life burdened with extensive external determination partly due to social and family situations. Outcome-, knowledge-, and recognition uncertainty are dealt with in an ambivalent way; the latter due to multiple experiences of misrecognition - especially those most painful on the primary emotional level. Achievement logic is reduced to the immediate environment following a pragmatic and closed process of stabilising one's situation and relationships. Opportunities beyond the present are conventional or confused; or they reflect tracks that have already been interrupted, indicating that the interruption has never really been acknowledged. The lack of resources as well as unemployment in the family constrains possibilities and constitutes uncertainty with regard to the world of work. The latter is seen as a real threat that is answered with gendered strategies of coping as well as involvement in 'meaningless tradition' with no sustainable biographical project.

Young people associated with this pattern are those most likely to develop along the lines of the hetero-destructured type proposed by the Italian study, which Leccardi (1985: 322) associates with Laing's (1965) notion of ontological insecurity. This type refers to individuals that lose control of their time of life and suffer from vague anxiety and poor self-confidence. The openness of the future is a burden rather than a chance; identities tend to become 'precarious'. Giddens (1991: 52-55) reviews some of the aspects endangering self-identity in late modernity. He indicates that a normal sense of self-identity would be characterised by integrity based on stable forms of recognition, biographical continuity and reflexive control. In the perspective of the findings of the present study it is particularly striking to realise that a case like NATALJA, who is 'fatefully' trapped in a non-modern form of 'meaningless' and gendered tradition, is one of those most affected by critical issues jeopardising the late modern self. From an empirical point of view the core of the problem, at least with regard to the 'New West', seems to consist in the unfavourable combination of disadvantaged living conditions and the consequences of persistent traditional knowledge, which continues to be represented first and foremost in the social environment beyond the immediate impact of social change. Forms of primary misrecognition add to the problem.



## 10.5 Conclusion

With the general sensitising concept of biographical uncertainty in the background, this chapter demonstrates how the post-communist transformation of the world of work contributes to the uncertainty of young people in transition to employment. Unlike youth studies, which consider societal or global transformations as external processes finding their expression in the outcomes of young people's transitions, the focus here is on the ratification of uncertainty on the inside of action – i.e. its manifestation as *biographical* uncertainty. In order to arrive at a substantive notion of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions, this chapter, more so than the others, attempts to integrate conceptual and empirical perspectives. However, the preliminary synthesis of the empirical findings into three patterns preceded the detailed conceptual work, and integration and generalisation was done *ex post*. In short, together with their conceptual implications the two main dimensions that were theoretically identified - i.e. outcome-uncertainty (Mead) and knowledge-uncertainty (Schütz) – support the assessment of the empirical material. A third category of recognition-uncertainty, which refers to the second sensitising concept in the background of the study, contributes to the differentiation of the findings. According to the overall methodological approach of classificatory analysis, the findings are represented in a set of three patterns of transitions to working life and related time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in the sense of linkages of experience, expectations and projecting.

The first *Pattern of continuation* is one of certainty production. Young people associated with this pattern have the resources to aspire, pursue and maintain pleasure, security and recognition. The post-communist transformation of the world of work does not restrict, and even increases, their opportunities and certainly the freedom to choose among them. Past and future are meaningfully connected in a realistic project. The second *Pattern of liberation* is one of contingency production and reproduction. Young people associated with this pattern break out of a socialisation programme they have learned to reject. By pursuing an unconventional and creative career they expose themselves to considerable uncertainty with regard to outcome, knowledge and recognition. Yet in this way they also have the chance to occupy some of the more recently available positions in the market of rewarded activities, or indeed to create it via their own means and interests. They live in the present, breaking with the past and keeping the future out of sight. The third *Pattern of trajectory* is characterised by an attempted restoration of a life burdened with extensive and unfavourable external determination as well as few or no resources. This pattern is largely deprived of positive

connotations and reduces the agency of the young people associated with it to forms of coping. These young people are fully affected by the negative aspects of the post-communist transformation, in the sense of both liberation and residualisation, and these contribute to the worsening of their situations already characterised by failure, misrecognition and unfavourable fateful events. Past and future are connected by means of the 'meaningless' reiteration of tradition, wrongly suggesting what is supposed to be still 'achievable'.

Within the limits of this explorative, non-representative study, some links between socio-economic background variables and transition patterns can be suggested. With regard to *gender*, the first *Pattern of continuation* and the third *Pattern of trajectory* prevail among young women. Moments of liberation can be identified but do not seem to unfold despite evident efforts. Liberation appears to be a male phenomenon and young men seem to be more equally distributed across all three patterns. However, it may well be that the gender situation beyond the 'worker-mother' ideology requires a more careful assessment in order to validate such a conclusion. The postponement of motherhood, for instance, can be understood as a form of female liberation. Yet the discussion of patterns of gender-work relations in Chapter 9 exposes it as a mixed blessing; it is primarily (material) independence that these young women are striving for. This has become possible, but, due to the residual welfare situation single motherhood or motherhood without a male partner is an unrealistic or minority programme at best. Unsurprisingly, a rural and disadvantaged socio-economic and family *background* pushes non-linear transitions into trajectories. Continuation in rural contexts appears to be impossible; unless improvement is massively promoted by external funds rural areas of post-Soviet Lithuania do not seem to have a future worthwhile perpetuating. The only chance for liberation and escaping the vicious circle of rural disadvantage is to leave the village or the country altogether. The interviews provide too little evidence for an evaluation of the gender dimension here or for the implications of going abroad. Finally, a preliminary reading of the findings would suggest that young people of non-Lithuanian *ethnic origin* are more likely to be involved in non-linear transitions taking the form of trajectory or liberation. It is also true that ethnic disadvantages and discrimination can be identified in the interviews. In this sense, the break with the past is reflected in these biographies. However, sampling was certainly not 'random' and a bias needs to be assumed. In order to arrive at valid conclusions the ethnicity dimension also requires follow up research, perhaps sharpened by means of stronger assumptions concerning cultural differences that may ultimately turn out to be non-existent. Altogether, the findings support 'conservative' arguments in youth research emphasising the unbroken reproduction of established socio-economic divisions, even if the

personalisation and individualisation of responsibilities for failure or success are ongoing (Heinz 1987, Furlong/Carmel 2007). The implications of these mechanisms for the 'New West' still need to be teased out.

The advantage of studying biographical uncertainty from this action-perspective *and* in the context of a post-communist transformation is twofold. On the one hand, the action-perspective provides access to the biographical ratification of uncertainties, not only to their (exogenous) sources. The post-communist situation, on the other hand, is an exogenous source of uncertainty that results in the dissolution of what is taken for granted (Bonß 1995: 23). Yet the abruptness of its occurrence seems to make references to meta-narratives of an evolution of modernity to another level obsolete. For instance, arguments like those connecting the observation that 'normative concepts of the right way of living (...) are eroding' (Zinn 2004: 200) to the idea of the weakening institution of the life course in a 'second modernity', or the general reference to a 'modernisation of modernity' (Beck) suggested by Wohlrab-Sahr (1992, 1993), are redundant here.<sup>282</sup> In other words, the study of post-communist youth in transition does not, in my opinion, need 'risk as a metanarrative of an age of manufactured uncertainty', as Kelly (1998: chapter 4) puts it. There is no doubt that the certainty advantages of the Soviet life course model did disappear. But while the standing of the USSR may have been affected by creeping social change, the dissolution of its institutions was due to the *immediate* collapse of the system itself. It is this suddenness that facilitates awareness.

The explicit consideration of the dimension of time, on the other hand, can benefit (youth) research into post-communism. Leccardi (2005) sums up youth research's preoccupation with the phenomenon of time when she claims that the phenomenon of 'biographical uncertainty', a 'characteristic of the condition of young people in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century' has evolved into the 'present-day 'society of uncertainty'' (Leccardi *ibid.* 139). The findings of the present study may be connected to the ongoing debate about the acceleration of social change in (late) modernity (Rosa 2003, 2005). First, according to the concept of the 'contraction of the present' ('Gegenwartsschrumpfung', Lübbe), the present – 'the time-span for which the horizons of experience and expectation coincide' – is gradually deprived of the privilege of providing 'some certainty of orientation, evaluation, and expectation' (Rosa 2003: 7). Experiences and expectations become increasingly unreliable; the stock of knowledge of the last generation turns out to be 'anachronistic and meaningless'

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<sup>282</sup> The empirical base for these arguments is altogether questionable, see Münch 2002.

(Rosa 2005: 187). Ultimately, the biographical practice is characterised by the dissolution of the traditional links between biographical experiences and expectations. This phenomenon, which entails the breakdown of the Schützian principle that the present, once lived, becomes the 'because' for the biographical future, could be called 'biographical alienation'; it can be an individual as well as a collective phenomenon.<sup>283</sup> In conceptual terms it ultimately points to the failure of self-socialisation as learning from biographical experiences (Hoerning 1989). The pertinent question here, however, is what could replace experience as a source of biographical projecting? This seems to be a rhetorical question pointing to a theoretical problem rather than an empirical one; unless post-communist societies become populated by ahistorical stimulus-response units, or a mass of self-alienated psychiatric patients lacking the 'experience of temporal continuity' in the sense of Laing's (1965: 42) notion of ontological insecurity.

Finally, a second link to the debate about the speeding up of social change regards the post-communist transformation as an experiment in social acceleration, an example of societal synchronisation and an 'imposed transition' (Schutz/Luckmann 1973: 125) to a 'faster' time regime in Europe (see Eder 2004). On the collective level, knowledge confusion, which affects the individual in the sense of a 'crisis' or 'shock', can become part of what is referred to in the sociology of post-communist transformations as 'cultural trauma', i.e. a constructive or destructive 'shock to the cultural tissue of a society' (Sztomka 2000: 449; Aarelaid-Tart 2006). The chance for 'cultural consolidation and construction' in the long run is part of an optimistic reading of changes of such scope; while a 'vicious cycle of cultural destruction' characterises the pessimistic version (Sztomka 2000: 464). However, the danger that former communist societies themselves enter 'trajectories' involving anomic conditions will not pass as long as destructive shares predominate, and as long as these shares are reinforced by a perpetuated polarisation of life chances that undermines recent promises of autonomy (Alheit 1994).<sup>284</sup> Should polarisation continue, the 'collective trajectory' of post-communist societies could entail the confusion of time perspectives on the societal level. The empirical warning signs could include 'a massive appearance of disorder, the breakdown of expectations, a growing loss of one's planning capacities, a deterioration of social relationships and a breakdown of social reciprocity, an entrapment in guilt-stricken activities, and quite often the emergence of

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<sup>283</sup> I use this term following Riemann's (1987) sociological study of biographies of psychiatric patients with the title 'Das Fremdwerden der eigenen Biographie'.

<sup>284</sup> For instance, the privatisation of housing in Lithuania and other former communist countries provided most people with a roof. Consequently, low income levels were compensated by housing ownership, though of an extraordinarily heterogeneous quality. This is an important competitive advantage that will be exhausted at some point.

individual biographical trajectories' (Riemann/Schütze 1991: 355). These could be the indicators to consider in a study of the mid-and long-term social effects of the post-communist transformation.



## 11 Concluding remarks

Attempting to conclude an explorative study is of course a contradiction in terms, since the purpose of exploring is precisely the establishment of preliminary knowledge about a largely unknown field of research. Thus, the following concluding remarks that survey the interest, outline, and findings of the study are not intended to close the issue. Instead, they point to areas which the research contributes, the questions it answers, and the research issues it identifies as requiring further investigation.

'What happens in a post-communist society that had not known unemployment for several decades and was suddenly confronted with this phenomenon that redefined the landscape of societal positions and possibilities in the course of the socio-economic transformation towards a market economy?' This was the general question that motivated the research. As a youth sociologist I translated this interest into a research agenda that addresses the narrower question of how this new phenomenon of unemployment unfolds in the life-world accounts and reflections of young people in transition to the world of work in the post-communist context of Lithuania. Lithuania represents a case of a particularly rapid and radical transformation. In less than 15 years the country transformed from a former Soviet Republic into a recognised market economy and a member state of the European Union. Mass unemployment and forms of in-work poverty were among the adverse effects of this transformation. Youth transitions to working life could no longer rely on the previously tight institutional links between education and employment, nor on the certainty of getting any kind of job. Work-based routes to vocational education disappeared altogether, as did much of the former Soviet industry, and new training responsibilities for employers were not established. The ongoing reform of the education system indicates a development towards an internal polarisation of two main tracks. The labour market is characterised by high job-related uncertainties. Altogether, transitions to work and family are postponed.

Against the background of this societal transformation and the re-organisation of the arrangements for youth transitions to working life, the main aim of the study is to provide the perspectives of young people inside these changing transitions. How do they make sense of the newly possible outcome of unemployment, which needs to be dealt with in biographical terms as a new option or outcome, and which needs to be negotiated in normative terms as a new criterion for social integration and exclusion in the life course? The study evolved according to these two interrelated levels of analysis, the biographical and the normative. These levels of observation were introduced at the very beginning of the research process in

order to demarcate the scope and direction of the study. The first, normative level of analysis observes meanings of work and un/employment at the end of a socio-economic transformation that introduces unemployment as both a functional category of the labour market and a criterion mediating social citizenship status. In the former system, the status of citizens was defined by an all-encompassing explicit ideology of work involving both the right and the obligation to work. In the new system it is the problem of unemployment that reveals the implicit centrality and ideology of employment as the basis for assessing the individual's citizenship and recognition throughout the life course. The second, biographical level of analysis observes meanings of work and un/employment after the certainty of guaranteed (and forced) employment was abandoned in the course of the transformation to a market economy. The former system constructed life course continuity through a rigid combination of coercion and provision. In the new system no such promise of continuity is present, instead, choice and biographical uncertainty are incorporated without the framework of an established normal biography.

These two levels of analysis were integrated into a frame of reference that was conceptually substantiated by two 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer). On the one hand, the newly available option of unemployment places young people in a situation of 'biographical uncertainty' (Wohlrab-Sahr). On the other, unemployment has become a new dimension of the '(mis)recognition' (Honneth) of a person's contribution to social reproduction. These two main axes of the research conceptualise unemployment as an ambivalent moment of 'danger' (Douglas) that accompanies young people on their way to the world of work. The sensitising quality of these concepts consisted in the way they were used to guide and orient research by suggesting directions and main questions without dominating analysis and interpretation. Related hypotheses and assumptions had the status of heuristic tools for specifying questions.

The design and process of the project adopted a qualitative-empirical approach. Altogether 30 'problem-centred interviews' (Witzel) with young men and women in linear and non-linear transitions to working life were conducted by native speaking interviewers. The data analysis followed the logic of the construction of 'empirically-grounded typologies' (Kluge), resulting in a representation of the findings in the form of classifications and patterns. In addition, elements of numerical classification as well as extensive single case reconstructions were integrated into the process.

The twofold formulation of the problem of unemployment in post-communism was translated into research questions on the meanings of work and un/employment among young



people on their way to the world of work. The findings from the interview analysis were presented in four chapters dealing with three main issues related to the overall interest of the study. However, as these chapters were written in order to 'stand alone', the specific guiding and sensitising questions formulated at the beginning of the research process were kept in the background. Instead, priority was given to the way the data suggested the treatment of the main issues; the alternative would have been to subsume the findings to the given framework. In the following I return to these issues by linking the findings more directly to the sensitising conceptual frame of reference that informed the research design and process. The conclusions and generalisations need to be read according to the small-scale, explorative character of the present study and the classificatory data analysis.

The analysis of meanings of work and un/employment represented in the classification in Chapter 8 was preceded and prepared by a single case discussion in Chapter 7. The case of SAULIUS demonstrated the tensions inherent in establishing a consistent perspective on the problem of unemployment between the two reference systems of the past and the West. The findings and specific conclusions made on the basis of this case were carried into an analysis of all the cases; this resulted in a heuristic typology of current triangular configurations of the (mis-)recognition of unemployment in the perspective of young people (Chapter 8). The analysis was then reduced to the three main dimensions of the triangle of (non-) solidarity - the relation of the individual to the unemployed person and the image of the unemployed person; the relation of the state to the unemployed person and the citizen in general; and the option of leaving the established triangle in case of discontent. The five types of classifications constitute different combinations of three main dimensions. First, the image of the unemployed person ranging from the stereotypical to the exceptional reflects private notions of (mis-)recognition. Second, the perceived performance of the state and its agents towards both the unemployed and the problem of unemployment points to public notions of (mis-)recognition. Third, the various reactions to the current state of the triangle by leaving it opens up the option of 'exit'. Apart from these main dimensions, the classification integrated two additional categories: the status of work, and the relationship to the former Soviet system. As a by-product, the classification can also be read as a typology of the stereotyper; this strand of interpretation, however, is not further developed here.

*Type 1* represents the citizenship ideal of an unprejudiced private attitude towards unemployment and the unemployed; it goes hand in hand with the approval of individual and

public responsibilities for work and employment. Correspondingly, there is no reason to doubt the general quality of the imagined triangle in its current form.

*Type II* is burdened by prejudices, suspicion and the misrecognition of the individual towards the unemployed person, who is deviating from the norm of employment participation as a citizenship duty. The state, on the other hand, should provide a minimum of support for its citizens but is criticised for not meeting even low level expectations. Looking back in time reveals that some advantages have been lost. However, leaving the country is not a priority even if the newly available option of emigration is acknowledged as a popular response.

Ambivalence characterises the triangular configuration represented by *Type III*. The tension between external and internal explanations, between stereotypes and the reality of unemployment is unresolved, and allows for a third moment of occasionally sympathising with unemployed people in certain circumstances. Altogether work is considered to be a turntable of citizenship; but it involves responsibilities for both parties. Discontent with the state here is more directly linked to neglected responsibilities towards unemployment and other social problems; shortcomings of this kind become evident from a comparison with the previous regime. Going abroad is acknowledged as a legitimate option.

*Type IV* represents a triangular configuration that incorporates a somewhat paradoxical moment of reflexive stereotyping. According to several features, the respondents represented by this type are part of the stereotype. Apart from external explanations, general stereotypes of misrecognition are ratified and applied to situations representing the proponents themselves. The state is accused of ignoring its responsibilities and of misrecognising both the unemployed and the citizenry altogether. All three modes of leaving the triangle are relevant, including the option of 'loyalty *qua* underlife'. Correspondingly, work as source of income is highly important but not restricted to formal employment. There is no regret with regard to the collapse of the former system although its advantages are acknowledged.

Finally, *Type V* represents the collapse of the triangle as a framework of solidarity and citizenship. There is no escape from either private or public misrecognition and the respondents associated with this type reproduce at least a moderate version of the stereotype. The disempowered victims of unemployment are left alone with their problems, and their insufficient coping resources prevent them from considering alternative settings for living and working. Work is a necessity for survival with no citizenship connotations. Non-exit in terms of emigration is a requirement for the survival of the household. The previous Soviet system

is an important nostalgic reference category in the overall negative assessment of the current situation.

One of the advantages of the classificatory analysis and the synthesis of the findings in an empirically grounded typology is that the variation indicated by this allows the careful rejection of some of the study's initial assumptions, especially those arguing in only one direction. One of the assumptions associated with Honneth's concept of recognition was that the emergence of a dominant idea of 'individual achievement' would be part of the post-communist transformation. The findings of the study suggest that this is not necessarily the case, or at least not yet. Although there is no doubt that the individual is regarded as the primary unit responsible for his or her life situation and employment status - an attitude that was also present under communism - the state is still held accountable for social problems including unemployment. This attitude towards state responsibility is common to all of the five types, but turns into disappointment and frustration where life chances deteriorate. Should the polarisation of society, for example through the problem of the 'working poor' persist, more and more people are likely to be pushed to the margins of the triangle or beyond. 'Exit' in its different forms is a common societal response. Yet whether the decision to take this road to achievement qualifies as self-realisation is, from my point of view, ambiguous due to its overwhelming dependence on context.

Alternatively, these responses could be part of 'creative and resistive processes of everyday practice' (Burawoy/Verdery 1999b: 7), undermining the imposed and flawed order of post-communist market societies, or a form of situative remedial agency compensating for their systemic shortcomings, or simply the reflection of disempowerment. *Leaving the country* to work abroad is not only a way to finally learn what the 'West' is all about, it is an escape from hardship that is not mediated by welfare or quality employment. *Refusing to work* for a minimum salary or refusing to work at all may be the realisation of the recent right not to work; yet it is more likely to be the expression of a deep confusion about the value of work if it does not pay for even the most modest lifestyle. Finally, '*underliving*' the new system used to like a highway to 'individual achievement', especially during the early years of post-communism. Yet like informal activities during communism, underliving is the execution of the implicit right to counteract 'the subjectively perceived maladjustment of the system to the needs' of the people (Marody 1988: 104), and in this sense underliving represents an attitude of 'loyalty' (Hirschman) to the previous system and related patterns of behaviour.

Another related issue is the post-communist 'recognition crisis' (Krömmelbein 2000) generally associated with the gap between expectations of the new situation and one's status within it, and the availability of options for realising these expectations. In practical terms the notion of recognition crisis refers to disappointed promises of the transformation with regard to (a) the chance to be able to prove oneself in the new society, (b) the freedom to choose a job, and (c) expected rewards for moral behaviour. Such a phenomenon, which Krömmelbein (2000) proposes in reference to the altogether different transformation of the former GDR, is corroborated by the interviews with young Lithuanian people. Yet the Lithuanian transition was different as it involved the complete reorganisation of state, society, and institutions within the original national container; it involved, in other words, a completely different triangular configuration than in East Germany: (a) People were not confronted with western fellow-citizens and they had to prove themselves in their own developing society. (b) Formal employment was not only scarce but available only in the context of a hostile labour market. (c) Public role-models of immorality shared the same past, but also publicly disregarded it by not recognising employment achievements from the old system (i.e. employment during socialism was only reluctantly recognised and not appropriately compensated). The young people's accounts, references to the past, assessments of their experiences in the 'New West' (for East Germans this is simply the 'West') and their readiness for cross-border mobility need to be assessed against the background of this entirely 'home-made' recognition crisis.

One point discussed in the context of the sensitising concept of recognition is related to the way in which unemployment is represented. The question raised was (a) whether a 'western' image of unemployment is emerging, and (b) whether it goes hand in hand with a change in the status of employment as means of social integration over the life course. *Ad a*): The typology summarised above indicates a stratification of images of the unemployed. It also indicates that this variety of images includes one that articulates a deep suspicion towards unemployed people under the new social contract. One could call label this either a western image of the unemployed person as seen throughout history (e.g. for Germany: Zukas 2001, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit 2005), or a stubborn stereotype recalling the social outcast who rejected work from the communism era. The fact that these images are so similar and the observation that they are shared by most of the respondents, even those actually affected by the criteria involved (especially *Types IV* and *V*), would seem to suggest that they are universal. In both societies they were and are part of an 'ideology of social parasitism' (Sennett 1998: 140) and may underline the human need for distinction and exclusion rather than the semantic colonization of the 'New West'. In any case, the fact that

these images are related to the status of work in both types of society underlines their significance and begs additional comparative research.

*Ad b):* With regard to the changing meaning of employment in the life course, the findings are ambivalent. Young people's commitment to work is unbroken: but with education or family, other categories central to the life course as an institution, the possibility of finding formal and permanent employment is uncertain. Further education depends on the financial situation of the family, and family formation is conditionally related to employment, especially among young women (see below). The citizenship dimension of work as providing social integration and establishing a life-long exchange between the individual and society is of limited relevance. The concrete shape of the life course as an institution, the reliability of its promises, and the expectations of biographical normality attached to it are unclear. The fact that many young people leave the country to work and perhaps have family abroad indicates their search for a more sustainable triangle where they could live according to such a life-long contract. In other words, it seems that the ratification of the life course as an institution in the home country depends on the performance of the state as a party in the triangle. In any case, mass emigration and declining fertility may further undermine the state's ability and gradually exclude more generous life course policy options.

The notions of a 'good', 'successful', or 'normal life' articulated by these young people reproduce the norm of a tripartite life course (Kohli) in terms of biographical and normative categories. Regardless of gender or their involvement in linear or non-linear transitions, the succession of education, work, family, and retirement is the uncontested key feature of this norm. Most of those who failed to achieve this norm and dropped out of education are painfully aware of the likely consequences. Young women in their transition to adulthood especially are faced with the twofold uncertainty inherent in the redefinition of their former roles as 'worker-mothers'. They are, like young men, confronted with uncertain employment perspectives in a difficult labour market, but also perceive more clearly the material constraints to family formation. This uncertainty is reflected in the classification of imagined patterns of gender-work relations in the perspective of young women discussed in Chapter 9. After a brief review of the Lithuanian gender regime and order, this chapter presented a synthesis of the ways in which young women propose to combine work with motherhood, partnership, and earning a living, in the form of seven patterns. They are organised into an imagined progression from female independence to female dependence. Most of these patterns are characterised by the priority of work over family formation and the decision to

postpone motherhood. The arguments against early motherhood can be attributed to all three dimensions of the classification; they include references to self-realisation through work, financial independence from a future partner, and worries about maintaining a family and providing for aging parents without working.

Pattern I, '*Exit to independence*', refers to a pregnant woman who transfers the solution to the problem of combining work with motherhood, partnership and earning a living to another context supposedly providing better conditions. She decides not to marry but to remain independent; she emigrates, gives birth abroad, benefits as a lone mother from better maternity leave regulations, and eventually establishes herself in a completely different context.

Pattern II, '*Independence*', lacks any consideration of dependence on a male partner. Instead, achievement in the world of work dominates all other areas of life. Accordingly, motherhood as well as partnership and possible ways of having a family need to be adapted to the career.

Pattern III, '*Independence and mutual support*', describes an independent woman who might decide to become mother within a symmetrical relationship once she is professionally and financially established. Imagined childcare arrangements facilitate the combination of work and motherhood and provide both partners with enough space for their professional performance.

Pattern IV, '*Between independence and dependence*', lies at the centre of the classification and incorporates aspects that indicate its openness in both directions. The imagined struggle for independence through employment participation, an 'insurance against dependence', goes hand in hand with sympathy for stereotypical role models. The orientation towards family is complemented by the wish to be involved in the parallel world of work, which provides security and recognition.

Pattern V, '*Responsibility and survival*', is characterised by dependence on a second breadwinner deriving from the strong emphasis placed on economic security through employment as a precondition of family formation.

Pattern VI, '*Reconciliation*', involves the female partner as a subsidiary breadwinner in a family constellation that follows the ideal of a joint project. Motherhood is postponed until material security, the prime responsibility of the male partner, is achieved and sustainable.

Pattern VII, '*Sponsorship*', refers to the relationship of a dependent woman and mother with a partner who can provide the economic security and conditions necessary for an idealised family.

The double uncertainty regarding employment and family reflected in these patterns of imagined gender-work relations provides an answer to the general question of the biographical level of analysis of the study. The threat of unemployment is part of a cluster of uncertainties characterising the individual reorganisation of biographies. Yet in view of the findings first reported in Chapter 10, it would be a simplification to reduce the problem of uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions to the possibility and novelty of the outcome of unemployment.

The purpose of Chapter 10 was twofold. On the one hand, it presented general patterns of post-communist youth transitions to working life. These patterns were the outcome of the comparative analysis of all cases in the sample. On the other hand, the chapter analysed how uncertainties associated with the post-communist transformation were ratified as *biographical* uncertainties on the inside of action - or in other words how they became relevant in the process of establishing links between experience, expectation and projecting biographical planning. In order to arrive at a substantive notion of biographical uncertainty in post-communist youth transitions, this chapter integrated the empirical findings with two conceptual perspectives. 'Knowledge-uncertainty' (Schütz) and 'outcome-uncertainty' (Mead) were analytically integrated in an assessment of the empirical material. A third category of 'recognition-uncertainty', referring to the social dimension of uncertainty, contributed to the differentiation of the findings. According to the overall methodological approach of classificatory analysis, the findings were represented in the form of three patterns of transitions to working life and their related time perspectives of biographical uncertainty in the sense of linking experience, expectation and projecting. Changes in the world of work and the new social category of unemployment are important in all three patterns; their capacity to produce uncertainty, though, differs.

The reaction of representatives of the first *Pattern of continuation* to labour market insecurity is that of certainty production. Uncertainty is neutralised at all levels by mobilising resources and knowledge available from within the family; the reproduction of the 'familiar' brings the future largely 'under control'. Unemployment is perceived as a very real threat, but due to self-restriction this threat remains outside the chosen track. The involvement of young people in traditionally acknowledged forms of activity, or 'meaningful tradition', together with

a sustainable biographical project, results in a unity of forms of emotional recognition (family) and social recognition (employment security), at times at the cost of the sacrifice of some of the freedom of the new system.

The second *Pattern of liberation* is one of contingency production and reproduction. Different types of uncertainty are high but not necessarily 'problematic' due to their positive relation with creativity and self-actualisation. Young people associated with this pattern explicitly reject typical forms of socialisation, but without transcending the shared normality of social life. Uncertainties with regard to the world of work concern quality rather than unemployment as such; in fact, unemployment is perceived as a problem for individuals who cannot adapt to the new situation. This pattern goes hand in hand with estrangement from social background and high internalised standards of (unconventional) achievement, which allow a clear distinction from others. The newly available opportunity structure of the westernised system is appreciated as a challenge that needs to be faced. However, the strong moment of (possible) external determination in a space of social contingency, potential intolerance towards others and the consolidation of a marginalized group too slow to cope with rapid change are the price of this liberation.

The third *Pattern of trajectory* is characterised by an apparently idiosyncratic method of uncertainty management and the attempt to restore a life burdened by extensive external determination partly due to the social and family situation. All types of uncertainty are in principle high but dealt with in an ambivalent and idiosyncratic way. A lack of resources as well as unemployment in the family constrains possibilities and creates uncertainty with regard to the world of work, seen as a real threat that is answered with gendered strategies of coping as well as 'meaningless tradition' without sustainable biographical projection. Achievement logic is reduced to the immediate environment; it follows a pragmatic and closed perspective of stabilising one's situation and relationships in the frame of available conventions.

On the basis of these findings the remaining questions formulated in the context of the sensitising conceptual frame of reference can now be addressed. One of the initial assumptions was that abrupt change would leave young people with confused work-related normality expectations, and that these would not focus exclusively on formal employment. According to the findings we can say that the establishment of strong normality expectations with formal employment at their core requires a privileged situation in terms of family support as well as sufficient material resources. The availability (a) or lack (b) of these



conditions has different consequences. (a) Where these conditions are missing, normalisation, instead of normality, by alternative means is the aim. This is illustrated in the *Pattern of trajectory*. A male pattern of coping would perhaps consist in informal activities combined with fake employment, as described in *Pattern IV* of the heuristic typology of triangular configurations presented in Chapter 8. Examples of the female equivalent could be the patterns of 'Exit' or 'Sponsorship' introduced in Chapter 9. (b) Where the conditions are available, the reproduction of typicality is possible as demonstrated by the *Pattern of continuation*. But under these same conditions the alternative of de-normalisation is also available, as seen in the *Pattern of liberation*. In other words, one could conclude that biographical normality expectations are generally problematic for the option of unemployment as one of many new features of the current situation. Their status within individual life plans is strongly mediated by social and material background.

The answers to questions on ways of dealing with devaluated knowledge and the significance of socialising agents are related to this last observation. The quality of available traditional knowledge and its perceived usefulness depends on context. In general, there is no indication that the transformation, which necessarily involved destandardisation, resulted in the declining significance of the family. Yet the findings are ambiguous with regard to the use and impact of biographical 'knowledge capital' available in the family in particular. The knowledge struggle identified in a general way in the case of SAULIUS in Chapter 7 may develop in different directions, as indicated by the three patterns discussed in Chapter 10. In the ideal case of MAGDALENA, representing the *Pattern of continuation*, some of the family's knowledge capital is adapted to the current situation. I labelled this phenomenon 'meaningful tradition' involving a sustainable biographical project. The case of NATALIJA illustrates that where knowledge capital is adopted without modification, as in the *Pattern of trajectory*, the perpetuation of tradition is 'meaningless' and remains without a sustainable biographical project. Finally, the *Pattern of liberation* represented by FACE breaks with tradition and available knowledge capital. Once off track, he claims to expose himself to uncertainty in order to live according to the requirements and opportunities inherent in the present situation. On the basis of this brief review I would conclude that, for better or worse, the post-communist situation of uncertainty cannot undermine the fact that biographical orientations among young people are predominantly path-dependent. Where knowledge strategies appear convergent, they largely involve the contingencies of the situation, at least in the short run. This last point could point towards an alternative perspective on the future

entrepreneurs of the 'New West'; yet the moment for studying this may already have passed. However, these are daring conclusions that need follow-up research.

Thus, I arrive at the last task of the concluding remarks, i.e. suggestions for follow-up research on the basis of the more specific research desiderata identified in single chapters and the findings of the whole project. First of all, in order to substantiate and differentiate the findings, the original idea of the project could be taken further into a more comprehensive, perhaps longitudinal study covering a larger sample in different countries under similar circumstances, maybe even outside Europe. Such a study would then provide a more appropriate basis for assessing differences and commonalities of apparently similar phenomena in the East and West and their relevance for school-to-work transitions like the erosion of the normal biography or rising uncertainty in view of unemployment. Second, the interest in the two important issues of intergenerational knowledge constitution and transfer on the one side, and the issue of 'exit' on the other, could be merged in a study of young emigrants from former communist countries in selected countries in Western Europe. By including the perspectives of older family members from their countries of origin, such a study could analyse young people's experiences of migration to established work regimes as cross-cultural transitions to working life, and as cognitive and intergenerational journeys of knowledge and meaning through time and space from (post)communism to capitalism. Third, the possible co-evolution of private and public forms of (mis-)recognition and (non-)solidarity in post-communism could be studied in a separate project. Following the basic idea of 'configuration analysis', such a project could systematically analyse the socialising effects of state trajectories of (non-)support on individual as well as civil society trajectories of (non-)solidarity in the sense of (perhaps unintentionally) linked developments. Fourth, the paradoxes of system justification and the 'belief in a just world' that were found to be relevant in the post-communist context beg for a more sociological in-depth analysis in addition to the social-psychological one. Related research into the constitution of post-communist belief systems of justice could be informed by the political sociology of inequality and the sociology of religion. Fifth, the investigation of female and male perspectives on gender-work relations in post-communism could be combined with a stronger consideration of the role of the 'household of origin' and the imagined or available 'household of destination'. One would expect the internal conflict between commitment to the family of origin and the family of destination (or partner) to be higher for women than for men. This household perspective could also be applied to the investigation of young people's dropping out of education as well as various exit strategies. Both could help to identify the secondary effects of poverty and

disadvantage on the reproduction of inequalities in general and gender inequalities in particular. Sixth, the conceptual perspectives on issues of time and uncertainty among post-communist youth invite a comparative review of classifications with a similar purpose. This could be a starting point for a more general notion of time and uncertainty in youth transitions. Finally, theoretical work and concept development was not the purpose of this study. Yet in order to improve their usefulness for research, the different theoretical variations of recognition and uncertainty need to be systematically confronted with the findings of the study.



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## 13 Appendix

### 13.1 Appendix 1 – Item battery qualitative interview

	<b>English</b>	<b>Lithuanian</b>
	- strongly agree	- visiškai sutinku
	- agree	- sutinku
	- neither agree nor disagree	- nei sutinku, nei nesutinku
	- disagree	- nesutinku
	- strongly disagree	- visiškai nesutinku
* 1	It is very important for me to have a job.	Man yra labai svarbu turėti darbą
* 2	If I won lots of money I would still want to work.	Jeigu laimėčiau labai daug pinigų, vis tiek norėčiau dirbti.
3	I hate being unemployed	Aš jaučiuosi negerai būdamas bedarbiu.
4	I feel restless if I do not have a job.	Aš negaliu nustygti vietoje, jeigu neturiu darbo.
* 5	Work is one of the most important things in life.	Darbas yra vienas svarbiausių dalykų gyvenime.
6	I would prefer to work even if unemployment benefits were generous.	Aš norėčiau dirbti net ir tuo atveju, jei bedarbio pašalpa būtų pakankamai didelė.
* 7	If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself.	Jeigu žmogus sunkiai dirba, jis gali sau susikurti geresnį gyvenimą.
* 8	It is the duty of a good citizen to have a job and to work.	Turėti darbą ir dirbti yra gero piliečio pareiga.
* 9	Having a job means having achieved something in life.	Turėti darbą reiškia, kad kažką jau pasiekei savo gyvenime.
10	I do not know what I will do if do not get a job.	Aš nežinau ką veiksiu, jei man nepavyks gauti darbo.
11	Being unemployed makes me feel uncertain.	Būdamas bedarbiu jaučiuosi nesaugiai.
* 12	Life is very difficult; I do not know what do to.	Gyvenimas yra labai sunkus; aš nežinau ką daryti.
* 13	Life is becoming more and more difficult.	Gyvenimas vis sunkėja ir sunkėja.
* 14	It is very difficult for young people today because nobody knows how life will be.	Dabar jauniems žmonėms labai sunku, kadangi niekas nežino kaip gyvenimas klostysis toliau.
* 15	I agree with what some people say, that the life of people was easier when Lithuania was still a part of the Soviet Union.	Aš sutinku su tais žmonėmis, kurie sako, kad gyvenimas buvo lengvesnis kai Lietuva buvo Tarybų Sąjungoje Sovietmečiu.

\* - Considered for the classification of cases through cluster analysis. See Chapter 4 and Appendix 3.

### 13.2 Appendix 2 – 30 cases, overview

	Agne	Anita	Aurimas	Deida	Dizalneris
transition	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear	linear	non-linear
age	20	20	15	17	17
gender	f	f	m	f	m
residence	village	Vilnius	village	reg. centre	Vilnius
ethnicity	LT	PL	LT	LT	RU
education	comp. edu. completed	comp. edu. completed	comp. edu. not completed	pupil grade 11	comp. edu. completed
dropout	no	yes	yes	no	yes
school change	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
parents	parents separated (before birth). never met father. 'mother gave me to grandfather' as a child; when father left mother. => lived with aunt/uncle(married); contact to mother maybe for 1 year <b>altogether</b>	divorced, father has other family, no contact	married, mother 34, father 40	married	married (for both second marriage, unclear if divorce), distanced relation to older parents, mother 56, father 67
father education	uncle - no information	professional school	not completed professional edu.	professional college	secondary education, driver
father job	uncle - tractor driver	various (repairing shoes, conductor)	works in poultry farm 'with tractors'	leading position after recent promotion	pensioner, before: construction work, trolleybus park, driver
mother education	aunt - no information	unclear	professional school, cook	professional college, hairdresser	secondary education (connected to medicine)
mother job	aunt - unemployed, farm	various (cleaner, housepainter)	out of employment, farmwork, mother, housewife	unemployed for 2 years, hairdresser, allergy to chemicals	unemployed, ('soon pensioner'), before: 'home office', accountant, <b>cleaning lady</b>
siblings	1 sister (grew up with mother), 4 years younger, pupil; 1 male cousin, university student; 1 female cousin, pupil	sisters (14, 15), pupils	2 younger sisters, 5 and 6; younger brother, 12, pupil	no	half-brother from mother's first marriage; half-sister (36) from father's first marriage (rev.25.08.06)
housing	dormitory, shared room, uncle/aunt have house, 2 rooms, shared room	flat with mother and sisters, two rooms, shares room with two sisters	with parents, renovated house, 4 rooms, own room	with parents, flat, 2 rooms, own room, parents sleep in living room	with parents, flat, 3 rooms, own room

	Drakula	Face	Gabiija	Gabriele	Hapariga
<b>transition</b>	linear	non-linear	linear	non-linear	non-linear
<b>age</b>	17	16	19	19	17
<b>gender</b>	m	m	f	f	f
<b>residence</b>	Vilnius	town	Vilnius	village	Vilnius
<b>ethnicity</b>	mixed	LT	LT	LT	LT
<b>education</b>	pupil grade 11	comp. edu. not <b>completed</b>	student 1st year	comp. edu. <b>completed</b>	comp. edu. not <b>completed</b>
<b>dropout</b>	no	yes	no	unclear	yes
<b>school change</b>	no	yes	no	unclear	yes
<b>parents</b>	married	married	married	foster parents married; parents died in accident when she was 3; all siblings in foster families	married, distanced relationship (because of age difference)
<b>father education</b>	12 years + professional. construction. machinist	higher education. arts	higher education (mechanics)	probably prof. education	higher education. unspecified
<b>father job</b>	logistics. before truck driver and abroad for long time	teacher of arts	company owner	pensioner. woodworker	retired policeman
<b>mother education</b>	sec. Edu. Completed	higher education. music	higher education (technical university)	higher education	unclear. professional education (saleswoman)
<b>mother job</b>	tailor	teacher of music	retired. before: technologist in Soviet bread company	pensioner, teacher of Lithuanian and music	out of work for along time (earlier: saleswoman)
<b>siblings</b>	brother 14, pupil	brother 23, higher education. artist	brother. 32, owns company in Spain. 2 children; sister. 31, higher education. manicurist with own beauty salon. 2 children	up to 8 (confused information), 6 siblings from original family (3 sisters, 3 brothers), 2 from foster family	brother. 30, education unclear. factory worker. no contact; brother. 27, education unclear, no contact; brother. 22, comp. edu., factory worker. contact
<b>housing</b>	with parents. flat. 1 room. no room	with parents. flat. 3 rooms. own room	Vilnius: dormitory; home: with parents. house. 8 rooms. own room	school dormitory. shared room. family moved towards place of school	with parents. flat. 3 rooms. own room

	Ineta	Isi (Isimintinoji)	Jan	Juozas	Jurga
transition	linear	linear	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear
age	20	16	19	19	20
gender	f	f	m	m	f
residence	Vilnius	Vilnius	Vilnius	Vilnius	village
ethnicity	LT	LT	PL	LT	LT
education	student 2nd year	pupil grade 11	second. edu. completed	second. edu. completed (external)	comp. edu. completed
dropout	no	no	no	yes	unclear
school change	yes	no	yes	yes	unclear
parents	divorced (19 years ago). mother divorced 3x now alone. father has new family and started to communicate only after 16 years. good relationship to parents and half-siblings	married	father died when he was 13, before: married	married	married but separated, father hit mother (some 15years ago) => mother disabled; spent most of childhood with father and lives now with mother at grandmother's (if not at school)
father education	higher education	higher education	higher education. unspecified	prof. edu., metalworker	prof. edu.
father job	policeman	university	used to be company director. technical drafting (does not know exactly)	something with electricity	unemployed. helps in farm. before: woodworker, decorator, machinist, welder, mechanic
mother education	higher education	higher education	higher education. unspecified	prof. edu.	no information
mother job	manager	publishing house, before in travel agency	invalidity and widow's pension. before: product manager, (commodities provider, buying agent)	nurse	disabled (mvalid first group) due to father's aggression
siblings	sister, 6, same mother; brother, 13, same father	no	sister, 29, higher education, accountant, packer, 1 child	elder sister, higher education, teacher, living and working in London; edler brother, teacher, own family; elder brother, student; younger brother, pupil 2nd grade	3 to 4 (two brothers with mother, 1 brother with her, 1 sister with her)
housing	with boyfriend and his sister and her baby, flat, 2 rooms. present from her grandfather	with parents, flat, 3 rooms, own room	with mother sister and nephew in flat, 3 room, own room	with parents: flat, 3 rooms, own room; with brother: unclear	brother, 22, problems with police; brother, 19, compulsory education completed, works in forest; sister, 14, pupil

	Karolina	Karolis	Kira	Lialia	Luka
transition	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear	linear	linear
age	20	18	18	19	17
gender	f	m	f	f	f
residence	village	village	Vilnius	town	reg. centre
ethnicity	LT	LT	RU	LT	LT
education	comp. edu. not completed	comp. edu. completed	second. edu. completed	student 1st year	pupil grade 11
dropout	yes	yes	yes (university)	no	no
school change	yes	no	no	no	no
parents	divorced when she was 10/11; mother with stepfather (conflicts, alcoholism, violence); father 2 years in jail, now with other family (alcoholic)	divorced, father died 8 years ago (no information)	married, mother 56	married	married, father over 50, mother 53
father education	comp. edu.	no information	higher education, engineer	prof. educ. at Russian railway school (engine driver, railway worker)	professional college
father job	unemployed for 10 years, before woodworker	-	works in telecommunication company	railway company	unemployed, disability, pension (asthma) before: <b>electrician</b>
mother education	comp. edu.	no information	higher education, mathematics teacher	sec. edu. completed	professional college
mother job	farm worker	unemployed for 6 years, used to be farm worker	unemployed ('soon pensioner'), before: accountant, cleaning lady; from interview: works (18.44)	local culture centre	in hospital, before: nurse
siblings	brother, 19, complete 9 grades, real brother, problems with police, also abused by stepfather; brother, 6, halfbrother (mother); brother, 4, halfbrother (mother); does not mention real father's children	older sister, bartender, vocational school completed; older sister, pupil; older brother, bartender, vocational school completed; older brother, does nothing, works in sawmill, drinks very much; younger brother, no information	sister, 13, pupil; brother, 15, pupil	brother, 15, pupil	no
housing	with boyfriend in 1 room flat, family had house with 3 rooms, shared with brother	with mother, house, 4 rooms, own room, with 2 brothers	with parents, flat, 3 rooms, also grandmother, shares room with 2 siblings	with parents, flat, 2 rooms, shares room with brother	with parents and grandmother, flat, 2 rooms, sleeps in the kitchen on matress put for the <b>night</b>

	Magdalena	Marius	Mustafa	Natalija	Rimas
transition	linear	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear
age	18	17	22	17	24
gender	f	m	m	f	m
residence	town	village	Vilnius	reg. centre	Vilnius
ethnicity	LT	LT	mixed	LT	open
education	student 1st year	comp. edu. not completed	special second. completed	second. edu. not completed	second. edu. not completed
dropout	no	yes	unclear	yes	yes (several times expelled 25.2)
school change	no	yes	unclear	no	yes
parents	married	married. mother 52, father 49	married	married	married
father education	higher education	no information	higher education	unclear	prof. edu.
father job	pensioner, before policeman	unemployed. ex-collective farm-worker	veterinarian. restorer, tinsmith. sawyer, machinist. maybe not employed at all	unemployed, before: geodesist. lifeguard. taxi driver	works with books' (librarian). does not earn anything
mother education	professional college	prof. edu.	unclear	unclear	prof. edu.
mother job	civil servant	unemployed. ex-collective farm-worker. agronomist	unemployed. stayed home to care for sister's son. found no job afterwards (3 years), before: kindergarten teacher	unemployed. disabled. disability pension. before: waitress, bartender	accountant
siblings	sister, 20, psychology student. Vilnius	2 older sisters. both dressmakers. one has twins	2 (younger and older sister)	brother, 19, student. 2 half-brothers from father's first marriage	brother, 21, student
housing	dormitory in X (city). shared room (6 girls). in Vilnius with whole family	with parents. flat. own room	younger sister. secondary education. saleswoman; older sister. secondary education. does not work, has baby	with parents. small house. 4 rooms, parents. grandmother. brother, shared room with brother	flat. with girlfriend



	Saullus	Sergey	Vytas	Wizard	XXX
<b>transition</b>	linear	non-linear	non-linear	linear	linear
<b>age</b>	16	17	17	18	19
<b>gender</b>	m	m	m	m	m
<b>residence</b>	reg. centre	Vilnius	Vilnius	town	Vilnius
<b>ethnicity</b>	mixed	RU	RU	LT	LT
<b>education</b>	pupil grade 10	comp. edu. not completed	comp. edu. not completed	pupil grade 12	student 2nd year
<b>dropout</b>	no	yes	yes	no	no
<b>school change</b>	yes	yes	no	no	no
<b>parents</b>	divorced when he was 8 years old. in touch with both parents. good relationship. father has new family	divorced. father lives in Russia	married. father disabled (amputated legs)	married	married
<b>father education</b>	higher education	secondary education	professional school	higher education	higher education
<b>father job</b>	bookbinder	no information	disabled. before: work in stadium and factory	accountant	medical doctor
<b>mother education</b>	higher education	secondary education	professional. waitress	higher education	higher education
<b>mother job</b>	publicity agent. waitress. restaurant manager on cruise ship in USA	sewer. dressmaker	waitress-administrator	civil servant	medical doctor
<b>siblings</b>	no	no information	no	sister, 21, student	brother, 13, pupil
<b>housing</b>	since parent's divorce with grandparents (and now with uncle. 26), flat, 3 rooms, own room	with mother and her sister. flat. own room	with parents. flat. 2 rooms, own room	with parents. house, at least 6 rooms. own room	dormitory; home: house. six rooms. own room

### 13.3 Appendix 3 - Case classification and sampling in anchor case analysis

This appendix introduces two different 'empirical' classifications which prepared, informed and accompanied the process of data analysis. It can be read as an introduction to the cases and their differences. The first classification was discursively produced with the interviewers during the final completion workshop. The second classification is based on a numerical solution resulting from a cluster analysis of the respondents according to their answers to the brief questionnaire issued at the end of the interviews. Finally, this is translated into the sampling of anchor cases in a contrastive analysis .

#### 13.3.1 Case classification I – based on case discussion

The first classification is the result of intensive case discussions between the interviewers and myself, at the end of which an (intersubjective) agreement was reached about a possible grouping of cases and the membership of each single case in a certain group. The main criteria for this classification were the (institutional) context of each interview, whether the subject was interviewed during the first or the second round, whether the interview was with a young person in a linear or a non-linear transition, their place of residence, and the peculiarities of the cases. Gender and ethnicity were not considered in this first classification, although they proved to be important features of the group profiles (Table 1). Altogether six groups were identified. Groups one to four consist of young people from the first round of interviews; and groups five and six of young people from the second round, with one exception of a female student.

**Table 1 - Case classification I - case discussion**

Urban dropouts (UD)		Rural dropouts (RD)		Rural reha students (RR)		Alternative career (AC)		Pupils (PU)		Students (ST)	
1		2		3		4		5		6	
Hapanga	1 f	Aurimas	1 m	Agne	1 f	Face	1 m	Deida	2 f	Gabija	2 f
Sergey	1 m	Karolis	1 m	Gabriele	1 f			Drakula	2 m	Ineta	2 f
Vytas	1 m	Marius	1 m	Jurga	1 f	Mustafa	1 m	Ismintinoji	2 f	Lialia	2 f
								Luka	2 f	Magdalena	2 f
Anita	1 f	Natalija	1 f	Karolina	1 f	Juozas	1 m	Saulius	2 m	XXX	2 m
Jan	1 m							Wizard	2 m		
Dizainers	1 m					Rimas	1 m			Kira	1 f

1 - non-linear transition

2 - linear transition

f - female

m - male

The first group of 'urban dropouts (UD)' contains the two subgroups of those who did not complete compulsory education (HAPARIGA, SERGEY, VYTAS), those who dropped out at a later stage because they were 'forced to leave' (ANITA), could not continue because of health reasons (DIZAINERIS), or because of barriers to higher education (JAN). Five

changed school at least once; three changed to a Lithuanian school. All, with the exception of HAPARIGA, are ethnically Russian, Polish, or mixed. These young people are between 17 and 20 years old.

The second group of 'rural dropouts (RD)' consists of three young men from a village. All of them dropped out of vocational school; two of them at the basic level of vocational education without having completed compulsory education (AURIMAS, MARIUS). NATALJA, the fourth member of this group, is, as the interviewers insisted, different as she finished compulsory education but was later dismissed from an upper secondary school in a regional capital. These young people are all Lithuanian and between 15 and 18 years old.

All of the young women in the third group, the 'rural Reha-students (RR)', attend a 'rehabilitation school', a three-year vocational training school for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities. They are 19 and 20 years old and Lithuanian. Three of them can be characterised as coming from 'broken families', one has foster parents (GABRIELE). None of them has education beyond the compulsory level. KAROLINA differs from the others as she entered the school on her own initiative and is altogether described as being the most self-confident of this group.

The four male members of the fourth group, labelled 'alternative career (AC)' do not fit in any other group; they seem to be highly individualistic and this is reflected in their accounts. The 16-year-old FACE describes himself as a voluntary dropout. JUOZAS, 19 years old, attended evening school to take his final exams and earns his living by piercing, a passion clearly manifested in his appearance. MUSTAFA, 22 and of mixed ethnic background, has a lot of 'work experience' including criminal activities as a smuggler. RIMAS, at 24 years the oldest of the sample, advocates an alternative lifestyle, was a drug dealer for several years and is suffering the aftermath of his own addiction.

The fifth group consists of six 'pupils (PU)' aged between 16 and 18. At first glance all of them appear to be carefree teenagers with 'unproblematic' social backgrounds. All are Lithuanian with the exception of SAULIUS who comes from a Lithuanian family with some Russian heritage.

Finally, the six 'students (ST)' of the last group, aged between 18 and 20, are in their first years of higher or college education. Those studying at college have not been accepted to university because their grades are not high enough, such as GABJA; INETA studies at a private, fee-paying, prestigious college. LIALIA was accepted to study university but not at Vilnius, her first choice - she had to stay in her home town and attend university there. KIRA

is the only respondent interviewed during the first round of young people in non-linear transitions who was placed in this group. The interviewer maintained that she fits better in this group because she gave up her studies voluntarily after realising that she had chosen the wrong subject. Besides she expresses her determination to continue studying another subject.

### 13.3.2 Case classification II – clustering

The six groups distinguished above provide a very different picture of the sample compared to that obtained from the original sampling criteria (i.e. male/female, urban/rural, linear/non-linear). Yet another classification, which takes this initial sorting further and directly informs the initial case analysis, can be made on the basis of the work- and uncertainty-related items included in the brief questionnaire. Five of the total of 15 items are excluded from the analysis because they explicitly refer to unemployment and do not apply to the young people of the second round (or to some from the first round). Ten items are included in the cluster analysis – six are related to work (1 to 9), three to 'uncertainty' (12 to 14) and one to the Soviet Union (15) (Table 2). For the purpose of the classification, the items are summarised into four scores defining the positions of single cases. The grouping of items into scores was first of all carried out on the basis of the contents of each single item; it is supported by item-correlations (see Appendix 3).

**Table 2 – Items for classification**<sup>285</sup>

*I - Importance of work*

- (1) It is very important for me to have a job.
- (2) If I won lots of money I would still want to work.
- (5) Work is one of the most important things in life.

*II - Work and accomplishment*

- (7) If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself.
- (8) It is the duty of a good citizen to have a job and to work.
- (9) Having a job means having achieved something in life.

*III - Uncertainty*

- (12) Life is very difficult; I do not know what to do.
- (13) Life is becoming more and more difficult.
- (14) It is very difficult for young people today because nobody knows how life will be.

*IV - USSR nostalgia*

- (15) I agree with what some people say that life was easier when LT was in the Soviet Union.

The first score reflects the intrinsic importance of work. The second score refers to categories that are (possibly) associated with work, i.e. its motivation, and its 'external status' (i.e. a good life, duty, achievement). The third score tries to grasp uncertainties related to life

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<sup>285</sup> For the full list of items cf. Appendix 1. Those finally used for the cluster analysis are marked with a star (\*). The items were 'turned' and recoded in a way that, on the one hand, (strong) disagreement got the values -2 and -1, on the other hand, (strong) agreement was recoded into the values 1 and 2; the neutral category was recoded from the value 3 into 0.

in the present, as well as to change over time and in the future. The last item provokes an assessment of the new institutions as compared to the former Soviet Union.

The classification of cases according to their answer patterns is carried out in four steps. After the recoding of the original values (i), scores are produced by calculating the sum of the values for the single items (ii). The three composite scores ('raw scores') with values ranging from -6 to +6 are divided by three in order to break down the range of values to that arrived at with the single item referring to USSR nostalgia (i.e. from -2 to +2) (iii).<sup>286</sup> The cases are then classified using cluster analysis on the basis of these four scores (iv).<sup>287</sup>

The classification exercise divides the 30 cases into four clusters - two big, two small (Table 3). Five cases are identified as outliers that cannot easily be included in any of the clusters. It should be emphasised that this classification is based on the *numerical* proximity of the cases within a multi-dimensional space of possible positions defined by the four dimensions.

Cluster 1, consisting of eight respondents, includes all those who agreed or strongly agreed that life was easier when Lithuania was in the USSR. They also strongly acknowledge the importance of both work and accomplishment. Many of the members of this group indicate some uncertainty about life; KAROLINA is the exception. All respondents in this cluster, with the exception of GABJA, were interviewed during the first round and belong to the group of young people in non-linear transitions. In terms of ethnicity this group is rather homogenous; only two do not have Lithuanian background.

Cluster 2, consisting of eleven respondents, combines, on the whole, a high level of importance attached to both work and accomplishment with almost no uncertainty and an overall neutral or negative attitude towards the Soviet Union. KIRA, MUSTAFA and SAULIUS, all three with mixed or Russian backgrounds, could be considered outliers within this group as they score well below others with regard to the importance of work. The group has equal shares of respondents with linear and non-linear transitions.

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<sup>286</sup> Although the range of all scores now has the same boundaries the scale of the composite scores is more differentiated.

<sup>287</sup> The 'standard combination' for hierarchical clustering, i.e. Ward's method and squared Euclidian distance, was used (Backhaus 1996, Bortz 1999, Reiter 1999). Appendix 4 summarises the steps of data modification and classification, allowing single cases to be traced from their original answers to their membership in a certain cluster. Appendix 5 includes the dendrogram for the final solution.

**Table 3 – Case classification II – case clustering**

	CLUSTERS				OUTLIERS				
	1	2	3	4	Juozas	Vytas	Rimas	Jan	Lialia
<b>n</b>	8	11	3	3					
<b>Importance of work</b>	+/+	+/+	+/+	++	-/+	-/+	--	0/++	++
<b>Importance of accomplishment</b>	+/+	+/+	++	0	0/--	0/+	-/+	0/--	0/-
<b>Uncertainty</b>	0/+	-/-	--	+	-	+	-/+	-/+	-
<b>USSR nostalgia</b>	+/+	0/-	--	-	-	0	0	0	0
<b>Gender (f:m)</b>	5:3	6:5	1:2	2:1	m	m	m	m	f
<b>Transition (non-linear:linear)</b>	7:1	6:5	0:3	2:1	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear	non-linear	linear
<b>Age</b>	15-20	17-22	18-20	16-17	19	17	24	19	19
<b>Ethnicity</b>	6 LT, 1 RU, 1 PL	7 LT, 2 RU, 2 MIX	LT	LT	LT	RU	OPEN	PL	LT
<b>Members</b>	Agne Jurga Aurimas Gabija Karolina Sergey Marius Anita	Magdalena Drakula Dizaineris Deida Gabriele Karolis, Kira Mustafa Saulius Natalija, Luka	Wizard XXX Ineta	Face Isimintinoji Hapariga					

The three respondents in cluster 3, all in linear transitions and interviewed during the second round, share a high importance attached to both work and accomplishment through work and a strong negative attitude towards the USSR, along with no indications of uncertainty. All three have Lithuanian backgrounds.

The three respondents of cluster 4 combine a negative attitude towards the USSR and a high level of importance invested in work, on the one hand, with a rather ambivalent attitude towards achievement through work and considerable levels of uncertainty. This group includes one respondent in a linear transition (ISIMINTINOJI).

With one exception, the five outliers identified by the numerical classification are all young men in non-linear transitions. LIALIA is the only female outlier and is also in a linear transition; on a numerical basis she could not easily be attributed to one of the four groups. However, according to her profile – high level of importance attached to work, rather low importance attached to accomplishment, no uncertainty, and a neutral attitude towards the USSR – LIALIA is at the intersection of clusters 2 and 4 and has consistent attitudes within each single dimension.

JAN, an 'urban dropout' with a Polish background, has a consistently positive attitude towards work, and a consistently negative attitude towards accomplishment. He is ambivalent

in terms of uncertainty, and has a neutral attitude towards the former Soviet Union. According to his profile he would be closest to cluster 4.

RIMAS stands out because of his uniquely negative attitude towards work. On the other hand, his attitude towards accomplishment is ambivalent. This also holds for his replies to items on the uncertainty dimension. His attitude towards the Soviet Union is neutral. Following the case discussions RIMAS was classified as one of the respondents representing an 'alternative career'. At the age of twenty four he is the oldest respondent included in the sample and, according to the interview, also one of the most bitter.

VYTAS, an 'urban dropout' with a Russian background, is the other respondent with a negative score on the work importance dimension. The single answers to the three related items, however, indicate that he is in fact ambivalent. Nevertheless, as with RIMAS, this is what makes him (numerically) an outlier. VYTAS scores comparatively high on uncertainty. His attitude towards accomplishment through work is positive, and towards the USSR neutral.

JUOZAS is exceptional because he combines a strong rejection of nostalgia for the USSR and no indication of uncertainty, both common for group three, with an altogether negative score on accomplishment and an ambivalent attitude towards work. He was also considered one of the respondents representing an 'alternative career' as both his story and appearance are exceptional.

### 13.3.3 Case classification and sampling for case analysis

This second classification provides an advanced starting point for the contrastive analysis of cases, which takes the classification further and into dialogue between the cases. Altogether, it becomes evident from the classification exercise that, while the criteria for initial sampling (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> round, gender, urban/rural) were important in terms of introducing some contrast at an early stage, they do not necessarily result in consistent groups. Instead, they indicate alternative ways of organising the comparative case analysis. The advanced classification, on the other hand, can, by revealing similarities and differences, provide the starting point for selecting and 'sampling' cases in the process of a contrastive and comparative analysis aiming for the construction of 'types'.

For this first step of contrasting cases during the sampling procedure Kelle/Kluge (1999: 38-53) distinguish three different strategies, all of which provide alternative solutions to the major requirement of qualitative samples, i.e. the selection of *relevant* cases. A first strategy, the permanent and systematic search for counter-examples and counter-evidence, allows the development and modification of hypotheses. A second strategy, 'theoretical

sampling', consists in the stepwise selection of cases in accordance with hypotheses and theories developed as the research progresses. Finally, a third option is the *a priori* establishment of a qualitative sampling plan, which should guarantee the availability of a broad and diverse range of cases from which interviews are then sampled for analysis.

Each of the three strategies comes with advantages and disadvantages and are equally not suitable for all research questions. For instance, the first strategy of systematically using counter-evidence for falsification requires empirically substantive, explanatory hypotheses. It implies the difficulty of mediating between the stepwise re-formulation of 'thick' and refined hypotheses with the danger of 'hypothesis bending'. Furthermore, it seems difficult to identify criteria for concluding the consideration of evidence. The latter problem of defining an appropriate level for the saturation and internal consistency of the hypotheses, concepts and theories developed is also found with the second strategy of theoretical sampling. However, the emphasis on relevance, as well as the (minimal or maximal) difference of cases, facilitates the unfolding of an original 'empirical space' throughout the research process. Finally, the third option of operating with a sampling plan includes the advantages of pre-defining the sample's coverage as well as the easier organisation of the research process, but also entails the possible disadvantage of neglecting alternative research paths. This disadvantage can, however, be compensated for by using the final selection of cases in analyses following the logic of the other two strategies.

Considering these sampling options for the present study, the selection of cases for analysis is divided into three steps. In a first step, the cases are empirically classified according to their characteristics; this follows the idea of providing a structured overview and uncovering the boundaries of the space of the cases. This is shown above (i.e. classifications I + II). In a second step single members of the identified groups are selected as 'anchor-cases' for a contrastive and comparative analysis. Here, doing justice to the breadth of the empirical space (un)covered by the original sample is crucial; the initial sampling criteria (i.e. non/linear transition, gender, residence) remain relevant. On this level a more pragmatic selection criterion is the somewhat humble priority of sufficiently 'rich' cases. The contrastive sampling plan for the initial analysis of anchor-cases in each group is presented below (Table 4).



**Table 4 – Sample of anchor cases for initial contrastive analysis**

<i>cluster</i>	<i>linear transition</i>			<i>non-linear transition</i>				<i>cluster</i>	
	<i>residence</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>residence</i>			
1	Vilnius	f	19	GABIJA	AURIMAS	15	m	village	1
2	reg. centre	m	16	SAULIUS	NATALIJA	17	f	reg. centre	2
3	Vilnius	m	19	XXX	JUOZAS	19	m	Vilnius	outlier
4	Vilnius	f	16	ISIMINTINOJI	FACE	16	m	town	4

Finally, as analysis and interpretation progress, additional cases are considered for detailed analysis in order to thicken or challenge the results. Outliers have a particularly important role in this process. Again, the above classification provides only road signs for this journey of interpretation.

13.4 Appendix 4 – Case classification with cluster analysis

Part 1/2

	STEP I										STEP II			
	Original items recoded values from 1 to 5 (strong disagreement to strong agreement) into -2 to +2 for item text see below										Adding values into raw scores except item 15 into user_x values from -6 to +6			
	Work importance			Work and accomplishment			Uncertainty			USSR nostalgia	Work import.	Work accompl.	Uncertainty	USSR nostalgia
	r_job5	r_cash5	r_work5	r_hard5	r_duty5	r_ach5	r_life5	r_diff5	r_you5	r_lsu5	w_temp5 (1+2+5)	a_temp5 (7+8+9)	u_temp5 (12+13+14)	user_x 15
8 Agne	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	-1	0	1	5	4	0	1
10 Jurga	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	-1	1	1	5	5	1	1
5 Aurimas	2	1	2	-1	1	2	-1	1	1	1	5	2	1	1
29 Gabija	2	1	1	0	1	2	-1	0	2	1	4	3	1	1
9 Karolina	2	2	2	-1	2	2	-1	-1	-1	2	6	3	-3	2
14 Sergej	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	3	2	3	2
18 Markus	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	4	3	4	2
16 Anita	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	6	6	5	1
21 Magdalena	2	2	1	1	1	1	-2	-2	1	0	5	3	-3	0
25 Drakula	2	1	0	2	1	1	-2	-1	0	0	3	4	-3	0
4 Dizalneris	1	1	2	0	2	2	-2	-2	-1	0	4	4	-5	0
23 Deida	2	2	2	2	1	2	-2	0	-1	0	6	5	-3	0
7 Gabriela	2	2	-1	1	1	1	-1	-1	1	-1	3	3	-1	-1
19 Karolis	1	1	1	1	-1	1	-2	-1	0	-1	3	1	-3	-1
12 Kira	1	0	-1	-1	1	2	-2	1	0	-1	0	2	-1	-1
2 Mustata	1	0	-1	1	2	1	-2	0	0	0	0	4	-2	0
24 Saulius	2	-1	0	2	2	1	-2	-1	-1	0	1	5	-4	0
15 Natalija	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
22 Luka	2	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	5	0	0
27 Wizard	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	-1	-1	-2	5	4	-2	-2
30 xxx	1	1	1	2	2	0	-2	-2	-1	-2	3	4	-5	-2
20 Ineta	2	2	1	2	2	2	-1	-1	-1	-1	5	6	-3	-1
17 Juozas	1	2	-2	0	-2	0	-2	-2	-2	-2	1	-2	-6	-2
6 Vyta	1	0	-2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	-1	2	3	0
13 Rimas	-2	-2	-2	0	2	-1	-1	0	2	0	-6	1	1	0
11 Face	2	0	2	-1	2	-1	-1	2	2	-2	4	0	3	-2
28 Iamintinovi	2	2	2	0	-1	1	0	1	1	-2	6	0	2	-2
3 Hagariga	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	-1	5	2	3	-1
1 Jan	2	1	0	-2	0	-1	0	-1	2	0	3	-3	1	0
26 Laila	2	2	2	-1	0	0	-2	-1	0	0	6	-1	-3	0

Work importance

- (1) It is very important for me to have a job
- (2) If I won lots of money I would still want to work
- (5) Work is one of the most important things in life.

Work - accomplishment

- (7) If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself
- (8) It is the duty of a good citizen to have a job and to work.
- (9) Having a job means having achieved something in life.

Uncertainty

- (12) Life is very difficult; I do not know what to do.
- (13) Life is becoming more and more difficult.
- (14) It is very difficult for young people today because nobody knows how life will be.

USSR nostalgia

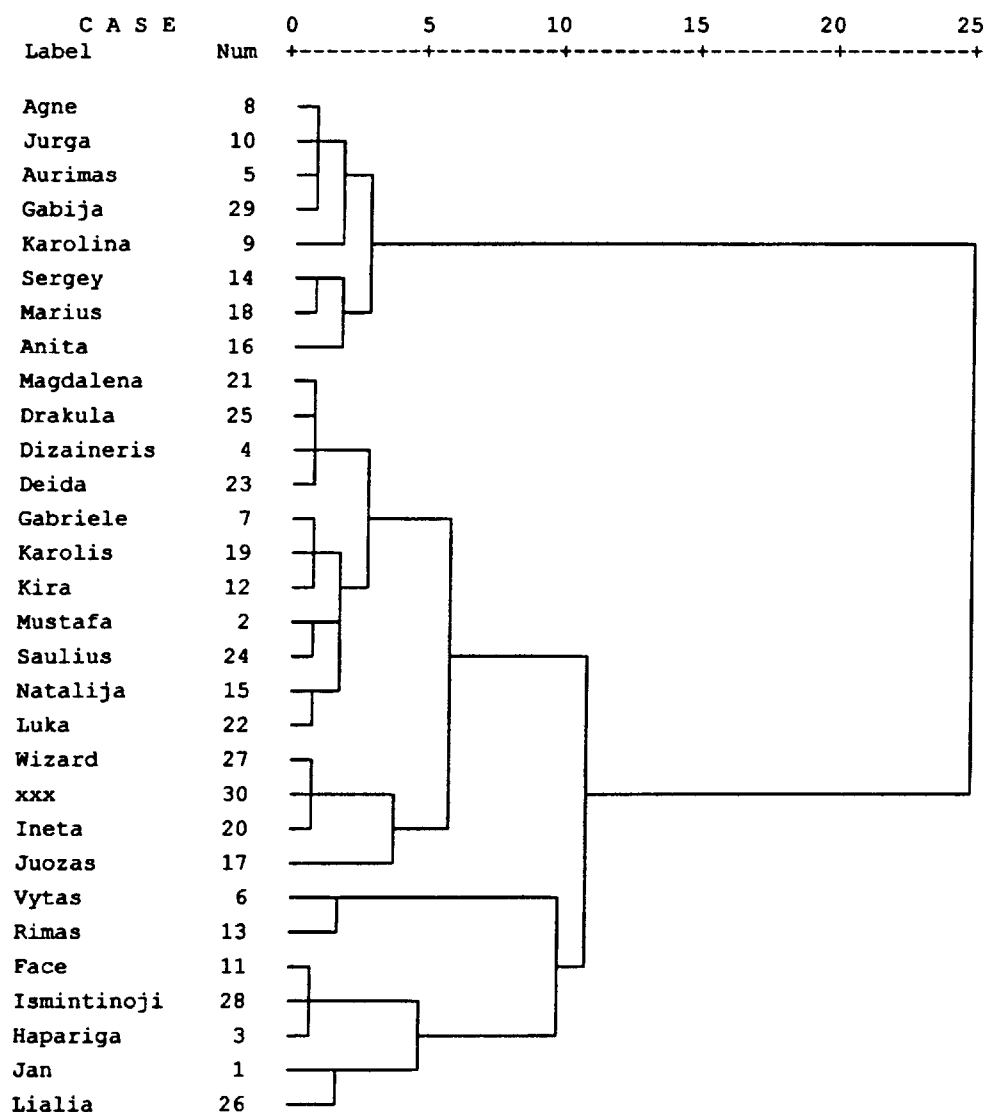
- (15) I agree with what some people say, that life of people was easier when LT was in the USSR

Part 2/2

STEP III				STEP IV																		
Raw scores divided by 3 except user_x values from -2 to +2				Clusteranalysis																		
Work import.	Work accompl.	Uncertainty	USSR nostalgia	Level of merging and number of clusters											Cluster	key features (see below)						
work_x	acc_x	uncert_x	user_x	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th		1	2	3	4	5		
			15	15	9	7	6	5	4					3	2							
1,67	1,33	0	1													Agne	1	1	f	20	LT	RR
1,67	1,67	0,33	1													Jurga	1	1	f	20	LT	RR
1,67	0,67	0,33	1													Aurimas	1	1	m	15	LT	RD
1,33	1	0,33	1													Gabija	1	2	f	19	LT	ST
2	1	-1	2													Karolina	1	1	f	20	LT	RR
1	0,67	1	2													Sergey	1	1	m	17	RU	UD
1,33	1	1,33	2													Marius	1	1	m	17	LT	RD
2	2	1,67	1													Anita	1	1	f	20	PL	UD
1,67	1	-1	0													Magdalena	2	2	f	18	LT	ST
1	1,33	-1	0													Drakula	2	2	m	17	LT	PU
1,33	1,33	-1,67	0													Dizainaris	2	1	m	17	RU	UD
2	1,67	-1	0													Deida	2	2	f	17	LT	PU
1	1	-0,33	-1													Gabriele	2	1	f	19	LT	RR
1	0,33	-1	-1													Karolis	2	1	m	18	LT	RD
0	0,67	-0,33	-1													Kira	2	1	f	18	RU	ST
0	1,33	-0,67	0													Mustafa	2	1	m	22	MIX	AC
0,33	1,67	-1,33	0													Saulius	2	2	m	16	MIX	PU
1	0,67	0	0													Natalija	2	1	f	17	LT	RD
1	1,67	0	0													Lulca	2	2	f	17	LT	PU
1,67	1,33	-0,67	-2													Wizard	3	2	m	18	LT	PU
1	1,33	-1,67	-2													xxx	3	2	m	19	LT	ST
1,67	2	-1	-1													Ineta	3	2	f	20	LT	ST
0,33	-0,67	-2	-2													Juozas	Outlier	1	m	19	LT	AC
-0,33	0,67	1	0													Vytas	Outlier	1	m	17	RU	UD
-2	0,33	0,33	0													Rimas	Outlier	1	m	24	OPEN	AC
1,33	0	1	-2													Face	4	1	m	16	LT	AC
2	0	0,67	-2													lemintinoji	4	2	f	16	LT	PU
1,67	0,67	1	-1													Haperiga	4	1	f	17	LT	UD
1	-1	0,33	0													Jen	Outlier	1	m	19	PL	UD
2	-0,33	-1	0													Lialie	Outlier	2	f	19	LT	ST

- 1 - 1st or 2nd round
- 2 - female/male
- 3 - age
- 4 - ethnicity
- 5 - category
  - UD - Urban dropout
  - RD - Rural Dropout
  - RR - Rural Rehs student
  - AC - Alternative career
  - PU - Pupil
  - ST - Student

**13.5 Appendix 5 – Qualitative sample - dendrogram using Ward method**



### 13.6 Appendix 6 – Codes and code families

Code families	Number of single codes	[GENERAL CODE], [specific codes]	Number of quotations
F_ABROAD	12	[ABROAD] [abroad_country] [abroad_experience] [abroad_proxy] [abroad_source] [EU] [eu_advantages] [eu_country] [eu_disadvantages] [eu_life] [eu_source] [eu_work]	146
F_ADVICE	1	[ADVICE]	119
F_AGE	3	[AGE] [age_duty] [age_work]	194
F_ALCOHO	1	[ALCOHOL]	74
F_BAD	1	[BAD]	12
F_BEF_AFT	7	[BEFORE_AFTER] [before_after_life] [before_after_LT] [before_after_people] [before_after_source] [before_after_USSR] [before_after_work]	83
F_CRIME	7	[CRIME] [crime_drugs] [crime_experience] [crime_income] [crime_proxy] [crime_source] [crime_violence]	75
F_DUTY_CIT	4	[DUTY_CIT] [duty_cit_family] [duty_cit_source] [duty_cit_work]	92
F_DUTY_STAT	6	[DUTY_STATE] [duty_state_age] [duty_state_education] [duty_state_family] [duty_state_source] [duty_state_work]	69
F_ETHNIC	7	[ETHNIC] [ethnic_discrimination] [ethnic_experience] [ethnic_language] [ethnic_looks] [ethnic_source] [ethnic_who]	29
F_FAMILY	7	[FAMILY] [family_2nd] [family_foster] [family_grandparents] [family_parents] [family_relatives] [family_siblings]	506
F_FRIENDS	4	[FRIENDS] [friends_noschool] [friends_older] [friends_school]	228
F_FUTURE	8	[FUTURE] [future_05] [future_10] [future_20] [future_family] [future_job] [future_plans] [future_work]	456
F_GENDER	6	[GENDER] [gender_family] [gender_man] [gender_source] [gender_woman] [gender_work]	139
F_GOOD	4	[GOOD] [good_job] [good_life] [good_people]	40
F_IDEAL	4	[IDEAL] [ideal_idea] [ideal_person] [ideal_source]	24
F_INSTIT	6	[INSTIT] [instit_A centre] [instit_labour exch] [instit_M centre] [instit_Reha] [instit_school]	40
F_JOB1	5	[JOB1] [job1changes] [job1 features] [job1source] [job1steps]	47
F_JOB2GET	7	[JOB2GET] [job2get_abroad] [job2get_family] [job2get_friends] [job2get_labour exch] [job2get_rural/urban] [job2get_source]	142
F_JOB3REQ	3	[JOB3REQU] [job3requ_external] [job3requ_internal]	297
F_JOB4SEAR	5	[JOB4SEAR] [job4sear_family] [job4sear_friends] [job4sear_labourexch] [job4sear_source]	60
F_JUSTICE	4	[JUSTICE] [justice_comparison] [justice_example] [justice_source]	10
F_LAB_EXCH	6	[LABOUR_EXCH] [labour_exch_atmosphere] [labour_exch_control] [labour_exch_initiator] [labour_exch_registration] [labour_exch_source]	49
F_LAST5	1	[LAST5years]	37

F_LEISURE	1	[LEISURE]	61
F_LIFE_normal_typical	10	[NORMAL] [normal_family] [normal_life] [normal_people] [normal_source] [normal_work] [TYP_LIFE] [typ_life_family] [typ_life_source] [typ_life_work]	203
F_LT	3	[LT] [LT_life] [LT_postcomm]	136
F_MEDIA	4	[MEDIA] [media_internet] [media_newspapers] [media_TV]	44
F_MONEY	4	[MONEY] [money_consumption] [money_source] [money_work]	303
F_PARTNER	1	[PARTNER]	61
F_RECOGNITION	1	[RECOGNITION]	86
F_RESID	5	[RESID] [resid_moving] [resid_place] [resid_rural] [resid_urban]	143
F_SCHOOL	9	[SCHOOL] [school_change] [school_classmate] [school_closing] [school_dropout] [school_school] [school_teacher] [school_transition] [school_university]	351
F_SELF	3	[SELF] [self_depression] [self_life]	250
F_SOVIET	11	[BEFORE_AFTER] [before_after_life] [before_after_LT] [before_after_people] [before_after_source] [before_after_USSR] [before_after_work] [USSR] [ussr_life] [ussr_source] [ussr_work]	101
F_STATE	1	[STATE]	91
F_UNCERT	9	[UNCERT] [uncert_education] [uncert_external] [uncert_future] [uncert_internal] [uncert_knowledge] [uncert_reflexive] [uncert_transition] [uncert_unemployment]	309
F_UNEM1	3	[UNEM1] [unem1_reason] [unem1_source]	137
F_UNEM2BEN	1	[UNEM2_BEN]	66
F_UNEM3_POP	12	[UNEM3_POP] [unem3_pop_age] [unem3_pop_feature] [unem3_pop_friends] [unem3_pop_grandparents] [unem3_pop_idea] [unem3_pop_neighbours] [unem3_pop_parents] [unem3_pop_person] [unem3_pop_relatives] [unem3_pop_siblings] [unem3_pop_source]	210
F_USSR	4	[USSR] [ussr_life] [ussr_source] [ussr_work]	81
F_VILNIUS	1	[VILNIUS]	72
F_WORK1	10	[WORK1] [work1_activity] [work1_age] [work1_employment] [work1_ethos] [work1_experience] [work1_job] [work1_money] [work1_profession] [work1_source]	310
F_WORK2_EXP	4	[WORK2_EXP] [work2_exp_business] [work2_exp_informal] [work2_exp_summer]	87
F_YOUTH	4	[YOUTH] [youth_experience] [youth_idea] [youth_source]	85

### 13.7 Appendix 7 – Interview SAULIUS, excerpt

- 129 26.28 **Interviewer:** Ok, now, look, regarding this work theme, but something a bit different, when there's no work. In fact there are many unemployed in Lithuania, unemployment is high, and what do you think, what could be the reasons for that?
- 130 **Saulius:** Hmm. (3) (These) people are lazybones [he is laughing]. This is the first reason. In fact, those who want, can surely find a job. It is not that, 'Look, there is no work and altogether what I ...', if (one is) in some village, 'I came here and cannot find a job.' You have to look for it, the one who looks for, that one does find it. If you will lie on a couch with a glass of brandy [he is laughing], life will surely not get better because of that. The state, of course, cannot create work for everybody but for many. If you cannot find a job, so what, you can go abroad. I don't think that it is absolutely impossible to get a job. Of course, it is possible. But sometimes people are very demanding and lazybones, exactly those, who do not have (work). They think that it is much easier to live on the state's pocket by making themselves lots of children, that it is much easier than to work, like all normal people.
- 131 **I:** when they get all kinds of benefits ...
- 132 **S:** Yeh, but I don't support such people. I somehow do not like such people. - the unemployed
- 133 26.29 **I:** What about the unemployed? Let's say, those benefits that they get, what do you think, there is this state support, the state benefit. What do you think?
- 134 **S:** My reaction to benefits ... Hmm, of course, benefits are necessary, because how can a person live otherwise? But, let's say, painters are people, it is difficult for them to find a job according to their qualification. To draw some posters for companies does not make sense. Then really, I do understand that such people are unemployed. Or, let's say, people without education, well, volunteers can work at the municipality. The municipality itself will help, here in X (town) it does support, for example that XXX of XXX [company of the mayor] of X (town), why not. What did you ask, what am I talking here about [he is laughing]?
- 135 **I:** Support...
- 136 **S:** Ayh, support. Well that is the state's support. 'At the municipality, go to work as, let's say, as a volunteer, they will really help you.' I don't think that the municipality would remain indifferent and wouldn't help. But benefits are too small in my opinion, a person wouldn't survive. And the pensions, altogether, are not more than mockery [he is laughing]. A person works hard for all his life and then gets some pennies, and is not able to live on them. But Lithuania is a growing state, everything will be fine in the future. - the state
- 137 26.30 **I:** What do you think the state should take care of? Could you think now, what else the state should give to a person, how should it help?
- 138 **S:** Health care, it really should ... Well health care in our state is normal, well, but regarding the compensated medicine I don't know anything in detail, but, as far as I have heard, half of the people do not get it, that is bad, because the elderly have ridiculous pensions and their medicine is not compensated, so this is a real mockery, this is terrible. I think that the state should compensate medicine for all those old, elderly people who cannot afford to buy it. And the state, in my opinion, has to take care of a young person and education has to be free for everyone. Well, let's say, not everyone, all people, but, let's say, those who are talented and those who entered universities, that they didn't have to pay all that money to get education, because it is not them who need it, but the state needs people who could work. When you think like this...
- 139 26.31 **I:** And a person, does he have any duties towards the state? What should a person...?
- 140 **S:** A person? His labour force, of course. And a person has to fulfil his duties, for example, to vote. I don't understand those who do not go to vote and then rail against the authorities: 'We elected the one who shouldn't have been elected'. 'So why do you sit on your couch then? Lift your ass and go to vote.' This is some kind of nonsense when they sit at home and laze and they shout with their mouths open wide, 'Not this one and not that one!' So this is also a duty, to vote. Then, what else, other duties? It seems to me that it is a duty to raise children for the state, because, for example, like the population is decreasing in Lithuania now. It is terrible, what may happen in many, many years. If there was no Lithuania, then all kinds of black people would

overrun it. So I think it would not be too much fun [he is laughing]. That is why I think that every person has to leave one person instead of himself, at least one. What else...? What other duties can be there? (3) To create a nice environment [he is laughing]. Not to leave untidy things around your house, so that it was nice in Lithuania, so that people came and remembered that here people live really nicely, they don't idle, but they work. For example, those unemployed, people in the country, let's say, and also some of my relatives, they do not work. But if you think about it, if you come to their (collective) garden and well, it doesn't look like he would be unemployed. Well, everything is nicely fixed, all the surroundings. So he works there. And for me it is, for example, pleasing. And sometimes there are asocial families who do not take care of anything, they do not look after their children, but some other unemployed manage very well. It means that people can live in another way. That's it. It is a duty to live tidily [he is laughing].

141 26.32 I: We also talked that your relatives do not work. So I would like to come back to the unemployed namely. Do you know any unemployed people? What kind of people are they and why don't they work?

142 S: Yes. My godfather, so he is the husband of my aunt, so he doesn't work, I think that he doesn't work. He doesn't work, because he likes drinking, that's why...and employers do not want such people. And his qualification is something like crane operator [he is laughing] or something like this. I think, people like that are not too much wanted these days. Whereas constructors, so here in X (town) and everywhere else, they are wanted, but he, somehow either he didn't know his job well or something like that, but he doesn't have a job. - the unemployed

143 I: Who else do you know, from your neighbours, or your classmates' parents or relatives?

144 S: Most of the unemployed whom I know, most of them are unemployed because they hmm... they drink alcohol, that's why, the majority... I do not know such people who do not have a job and are common people like the others, but simply without jobs. I do not know such people, I think. The majority of those who do not have jobs, drink. But there is one exception, my aunt's husband... Ayh, no, my godmother, it seems to me, she has a job, yes, she works. But anyway they do very well. - the unemployed

145 I: Ayh, the ones with the collective gardens...

146 S: Yeh. And her husband even though he drinks, anyway he does something, at least this is good. Because there are such (people) who don't do anything. It is absolutely terrible. Shabby home. These social workers, when they enter there, it makes them wrinkle their nose. It is terrible. Or like they show on TV, let's say, so many famous people are forgotten, disabled, it is terrible. The state doesn't take care properly. It is still young as a state, it doesn't take care of all yet. That is why people are cheerless and disappointed with life sometimes. - the unemployed  
- the state

147 I: And what do you think, maybe you encountered (them), how do the people around treat these unemployed?

148 S: How do they treat them? They feel pity for them. - the unemployed

149 I: Pity?

150 S: Yeh, for example, earlier, now not anymore, a woman would come to my grandma, you can see from her swollen face that she drinks a lot. She asks for two Litas (i.e. 0,6 EUR) and my grandma gives them to her, she really feels sorry for her. And especially those who haven't become unemployed recently, but those who have not found a job for a long time, so I feel pity for these people most of all, that they are not lucky in life that they cannot live well and have all that, what, let's say, I have. Other people, for example, my family members, well, I don't know ... Because I do not live with my parents, I live with my grandparents, my both grandparents are pensioners. Thanks god they get good pensions, more or less, compared to others. So, are they considered to be unemployed? But they are retired people. How do they look at them (the unemployed, H.R.)? First of all they call them lazybones, like I do, [he is laughing], I also agree with their opinion. Maybe they made us get used to the idea that they are lazybones, those people. So they think the same like I do. Always people think the same way adults do, their grandparents or parents. - the unemployed  
- the state













