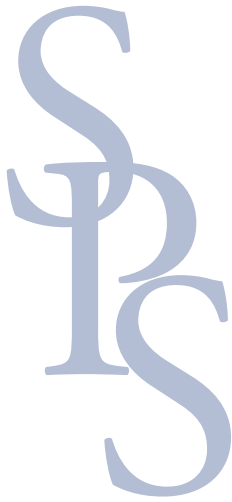


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## **The Missing Link The Transition from Education to Labour in the Soviet Union Revisited**

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*The Missing Link*  
*The Transition from Education to Labour in the Soviet Union Revisited*

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## **Abstract**

The post-communist assessment of communist youth transitions to work is at risk of exaggerating the assumption of previously existing predefined and predictable channels into work. In order to allow a somewhat refined picture of the Soviet case the paper reviews the main ways, in which the Soviet system tried to take hold of young people as a human resource. They were subject to labour planning and job placement as well as education for labour. The meeting point of these two mechanisms, i.e. the intersection of labour planning and educational transitions, left considerable space for informal job matching. After introducing and discussing early roots and main institutions of Soviet labour planning, the Soviet version of educating for labour including its institutional backbone, the three-track system of education and its main destinations, is reviewed. Finally, the mechanisms and shortcomings of post-educational youth placement in the USSR are discussed. The evidence indicates that, on the one hand, educational determinism is untenable - first, due to the relative status of education within the whole complex of transition arrangements, and second due to the fact that outcome assumptions and expectations attached to the idealised internal and external 'role' of certain tracks were thwarted by its incompatibility with the economy's actual manpower needs. On the other hand, institutional determinism is untenable because the reality of matching processes obviously involved a considerable degree of agency on the part of individuals. The concluding remarks plea for a reassessment of youth transitions also in market contexts.

## **Keywords**

USSR, Soviet Union, education, school, labour, work, unemployment, transition, youth, young people.

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## Introduction

The institutional establishment of predictable links between young people's education and their labour market entry has never been complete - neither in 'welfare capitalist countries' where the state generally controls education but employment is allocated according to market mechanisms, nor in communist countries where it was through central planning that the 'close functional fit between labour demand and labour supply' was expected (Wallace/Kovatcheva 1998: 85-86). While it seems easy to accept shortcomings of matching mechanisms in the context of market democracies, it is more difficult to associate them with the general image of socialism.<sup>1</sup> One source of possible misunderstanding with regard to the latter is the relationship between ideological underpinning and organisational features as well as actual behaviour. Different from democratic societies this dual relationship has been *explicit* in socialist societies, but, as I argue in this paper, far from flawless. Refined knowledge of the shape this relationship assumed is crucial for an understanding of where it will possibly develop.

Also the post-communist assessment of communist youth transitions to work is at risk of exaggerating the assumption of previously existing predefined and predictable channels into work. The directions of potential misconception are manifold; I restrict myself here to two variations of such an idealisation. First, the significance or primacy of education in the Soviet context tends to be neither questioned nor relativised (*'educational fallacy'*). Second, the stereotypical image of (young) people under socialism tends to assume their passivity and heteronomy vis-à-vis institutional arrangements (*'institutional fallacy'*). Obviously these two strands of argumentation that are exemplified in the following can go hand in hand.<sup>2</sup>

First, the study of youth transitions into the world of work in Western market-based economies is characterised by a strong assumption of a primacy of education over labour market outcomes. It is believed, and empirically substantiated, 'that educational *systems* define occupational opportunities for individuals at entry into the labour market' (Allmendinger (1989: 232; original emphasis).<sup>3</sup> Yet, this postulate, a good hypothesis usually, seems to narrow down the ex-post perspective on the Soviet case. For the sake of hypothesis formulation in the context of quantitative post-communist youth transition research as it were, the usually brief and formulaic reviews of the former Soviet educational system and the mechanisms of allocation emphasise their strongly deterministic character (Toomse 2003: 271-272; Kogan/Unt 2005: 225; Saar 2005: 519). Where the discussion of the education system is granted more space these features are exaggerated and variations in outcome are attributed to differences in the organisation of education in the Soviet republics (Titma/Saar 1995, Saar 1997). Alternatively, as it seems difficult to acknowledge effects of meritocratic features in the context of a command economy sometimes despite clues in the data, education has the status of an important but essentially empty label in a society where job assignments are considered comprehensive and mobility state-sponsored and, thus, subjected to the arbitrariness of the party and its agents (Titma et al. 2003). Gerber

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<sup>1</sup> I use of the terms 'socialist/socialism' respectively 'communist/communism' somewhat arbitrarily and without referring to distinctions that are relevant for certain academic discourses (e.g. Kornai 1992: 9-11).

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, the first is a special case of the second.

<sup>3</sup> Many references could be listed here to exemplify this approach; for one recent and indicative article see Müller (2005).

(2003), on the other hand, prefers to additionally emphasise the effects of a 'credential-based labour market' in the Soviet Union (ibid: 245-246) – with markets requiring the changeable weight of some kind of utility value attached to individuals. Studying the link between educational attainment and first occupational class in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia he cannot, within the limits of his approach, find evidence of dramatically different transition patterns despite institutional change. In view of this persistence of stratification patterns throughout the societal and institutional transformation he finally recommends the consideration of 'noninstitutional factors' like 'specific policies shaping the structure of incentives for different courses of action' (ibid. 270). From my point of view all these examples of assessing the Soviet context suffer from an inadequate universalisation of the time line (of the individual transition) implicit in the notion 'school-to-work'. What constitutes an '*educational fallacy*' is exactly the premature and retrospective inference of causal relations from the standpoint of currently fruitful 'Western' hypotheses with regard to the education-employment association to Soviet contexts.<sup>4</sup>

A second form of misconception in post-communism research apparently consists in mistaking the institutional arrangements as defining individual action. In general this question addresses the dualism of structure and agency that is at the core of sociological research. For instance, Goffman (1990) writes programmatically about 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' (210) and to make 'secondary adjustments' (189). Without necessarily equating the socialist, or here: Soviet system with a total institution it is obvious that the systemic inconsistency between ideological as well as organisational superstructure and the sphere of experiences needs to be taken into consideration - an omnipresent phenomenon that could be called 'duality of socialist reality'. The common tendency to consider institutions and ideologies as omnipotent explanatory factors of the functionality of the socialist system and the action of its people, readily reproduces the 'normative-ideological semantics' of a socialist society itself, as Wingens (1999: 274) puts it in his review of the GDR case; yet, it falls short in describing socialist realities. Contrasting the job allocation guidelines with realities of job transitions in the GDR on the basis of a longitudinal study of graduates from university and apprenticeship of the year 1985, Wingens (ibid.) finds that there were many ways of circumventing the straitjacket of official allocation mechanisms. Qualitative material shows that people knew well how to make use of networks, informal contacts etc. in order to get closer to their own ideas of what, how, and where they wanted to work. Despite the factual validity and relevance of the 'semantics of command economy' for both action and reflection upon society, people were by no means passive, heteronomous or incompetent to take action. Even if it were common to rationalise one's own experiences as exceptions to the rule, it would be erroneous to assume individual transitions to have followed the logic of predictability only. This rare example of methodically innovative post-communist research into communism<sup>5</sup> confronts idealised transition structures with actual

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<sup>4</sup> I included here only references that deal with post-Soviet countries. Research covering other post-communist countries includes, for instance, Bynner/Koklyagina (1995), Roberts (1998), Roberts/Fagan (1999), Sackmann et al. (2000), Kovacheva (2001), Matthes (2002), Robert/Bukodi (2002), Katus et al. (2002). Some of the arguments would apply also to these contributions.

<sup>5</sup> Methodological alternatives for a possible refinement of research in order to overcome fallacies like these are discussed in Kelle (2001).

transition experiences and convincingly exposes potential pitfalls of disregarding unintended and 'non-institutional' features on the level of biographical action. What constitutes an '*institutional fallacy*', to use a term introduced by Allport (1927), is the reproduction of ideologically suggested features of the former system by stressing the primacy of institutional arrangements over individual action.

These two potential modes of misconception of the socialist past of societies in transformation and its significance for the ongoing transformation indicate a grey area of research. There is no doubt that the command economy incorporated a comprehensive system of planning and administrative placement. Yet its factual overall relevance is contested and the control of the allocation of labour would never reach the rigour of the system of planning in the area of industrial production. Many work relations were constituted by 'hirings at the gate' and therefore beyond direct state control, which accounted for a comparatively small share of job allocations. On the other hand, the assignment system *did* have importance for school to work transitions of young people because direct influence was applied by placing graduates from educational establishments. But also here, the impact of institutional arrangements remains largely undetermined in its scope and unreflected in its significance for the current transformation. Simplifying assumptions about the features of the system ultimately feed into hypothesis of current research into post-communist youth transitions and run risk of doing a disservice to both research and subjects.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the closing of this knowledge gap by re-assessing the particular transitions of Soviet youths. An analysis of the issue for the Soviet case along hypotheses derived from the two dimensions indicated above is impossible due to lack of appropriate data. Instead, I want to present, discuss and evaluate available evidence along these two lines. In this way the evidence remains open, invites for alternative interpretation and should allow the refinement of starting points for research and the generation of alternative hypothesis. Arguments referring to each of the two dimensions are not presented separately; obvious institutional as well as educational shortcomings contrast the alleged features of the system at all levels. In this sense, the paper reviews the main ways, in which the Soviet system tried to take hold of young people as a human resource. They were subject to labour planning and job placement as well as – subsidiarily I would argue – education for labour. The meeting point of these two mechanisms, i.e. the intersection of labour planning and educational preparation, established a space for youth transitions where considerable informal ways of job matching are evident.

The argument is organised into three steps: First, 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 are discussed. In a second step, the Soviet version of educating for labour including its institutional backbone, the three-track system of education and its main destinations, is reviewed. In a third and final step I discuss the mechanisms and shortcomings of post-educational youth placement in the USSR. The tentative conclusion assesses the evidence presented against the background of the two potential fallacies indicated. On the one hand, I argue that educational determinism is unsustainable - first, due to the relative status of education within the whole complex of transition arrangements, and second due to the fact that outcome assumptions and expectations attached to the idealised internal and external 'role' of certain tracks were thwarted by its incompatibility with the economy's actual manpower needs. On the other hand,



institutional determinism is unsustainable because the reality of matching processes obviously involved considerable activity on the part of individuals. Yet, the assessment of the scope of agency is more difficult as original (qualitative) empirical evidence is not available here.

Two qualifications need to be made. First, I depend on work done 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, the argument sometimes needs to generalise 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 made have general validity, most refer to the time of the 1970s to the mid 1980s. Besides, the late educational reforms adopted in 1984 and 1988 have never been fully implemented.

## **Labour planning in the USSR – its early roots and its short breath**

### *Early roots and main institutions*

Unemployment that had accompanied the 'New Economic Policy' was a massive problem in Soviet Russia during the 1920s, both socially and politically. Its eradication in the first year of the succeeding decade, which had consequently been exploited as an intended political success and future key feature of Soviet society, actually came as a 'surprise' and side product of other measures introduced earlier to tighten the labour discipline, especially the abolition of unemployment benefits (Christian 1985). In the official discourse, however, it was during the autumn of the year 1930 when the final steps towards the 'complete elimination of unemployment' were taken by Soviet leaders. Key officials of the (supposedly unsuccessful) the People's Commissariat of labour, were removed from their positions and unemployed persons refusing to take any job offer 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). Already at the end of the year 1930 the labour exchanges were turned into institutions of labour administration; '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*) covering rural areas was taken in 1931. From that time on the idea of controlled labour allocation was institutionalised and the moment of planning labour remained central to both the Soviet economy as well as the self-understanding of socialism as a superior form of economic organisation.<sup>6</sup>

Issues of labour mobility were subject to a changeful development in the history of the USSR. Without being able to go into detail here some rough indication shall be given: In the 1940s the level of restrictions applied on labour mobility was at its peak. In view of the coming war (in the USSR from 1941) labour legislation got more and more restrictive and quitting a job without the employer's permission was denied and,

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<sup>6</sup> Despite the questionable success of planned recruitment and the unbroken importance of traditional forms of hiring, the superiority of the system was maintained ideologically. As Manevich (1982: 248) writes in his article on 'labor' for the 'Great Soviet Encyclopedia': 'The planned nature of labor organization is the most important feature of socialist labor and its great advantage over capitalist labor.'

for the first time, criminalised.<sup>7</sup> Only in the mid-1950s (under Khrushchev) labour relations were liberalised to an extent that (voluntary) mobility between jobs could be initiated individually and transfers to another job needed the worker's approval. This was the beginning of labour turnover in the Soviet Union. A rather incentive-based but finally not successful labour policy was maintained from the mid-1960s (under Brezhnev). Only at the end of the 1970s the administrative control was tightened and labour quotas were reintroduced. In the 1980s attempts were made to raise the working morals and labour mobility was again restricted; the complex and multi-dimensional problem of labour shortage remained subject to many different and even competing policies depending on which kind of causal attribution for shortage was favoured (Oxenstierna 1990, Malle 1987).<sup>8</sup>

Once unemployment had been abolished full employment started to have 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 in his study of socialist Hungary. A 'communist taboo against unemployment' in ideological, economic and political terms was a derivative of rational choices that kept the full employment strategy alive. Officials, leaders and workers could equally support the norm against unemployment because they all profited from its maintenance and none of them had an interest in abandoning full employment commonly defined as 'success'. Consequently, the sphere of work was, beside its ideological weight, institutionally central to socialist societies. The right *and* obligation (later: duty)<sup>9</sup> to labour for both men and women - the latter additionally having the family responsibilities - was explicit in the constitutions of the USSR. Employment of any kind was guaranteed by the Soviet regime, both ideologically and practically.

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 ideologically suggested dimensions of work and its factual importance as the main institution for 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

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<sup>7</sup> For an account of pre-war Soviet employment and labour policy of the first five-year plans see Barber (1986). See Filtzer (1986: chapter 9) for the 'Edict of 26 June 1940' attaching sanctions of criminal law to labour violations as well for responses to restrictive labour law. For an account of the even more restrictive labour force policy under Stalin after the war involving all sorts of forced labour including teenagers in labour-training schools see Filtzer (2002).

<sup>8</sup> It is important to emphasise that gender was a crucial category in Soviet labour management. Without being able to address this issue here it should just be noted that the status of women as a resource of labour was variable and depended, perhaps more strongly than that of men, on the economic situation. The basic distinction between male and female 'tasks' in economy and family was made in the course of the first five-year plans and the 'double-burden' of women in work and household was notorious. Throughout the whole Soviet history women were forced into a multiple set of roles including that of the worker/breadwinner, mother, childrearer, and housewife (e.g. Christian 1985, Buckley 1988, Sacks 1988, Ashwin 2000, Goldman 2002).

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

(Piiirainen 1997: 88-93).<sup>10</sup> Also the socialising capacity of work and work organisation under socialism needs to be assessed carefully; it is at least ambivalent. Romanticising notions of responsible work communities are contrasted by the instrumental character of the cohesion within workers' collectives and the dissociation and alienation from the actual work activities (for the GDR see: Kohli 1994: 49-51).

Full employment and efficient allocation of labour according to economic needs were the overall goals of Soviet employment policy.<sup>11</sup> At least according to the ideal of 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>12</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 so-called 'labour balances', which estimated the relationship between labour supply, demand and sectoral distribution. On the level of 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 subordinate to different departments and institutions. Organised recruitment, agricultural 'resettlement', youth employment and organised job placement service were subordinate to 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 and 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 bureaux (JPB), 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>13</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). First they operated only in bigger cities of Soviet Russia, but were subsequently established in almost half of the cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants, approaching a number of 2000 by the end of the 1980s. JPB were important especially because of their monopoly of information and placement.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</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).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Kotliar (1984: 20) legitimises the job placement system with reference to the solidary alliance between labour force (i.e. citizens) and owners of means of production (i.e. state) with the necessary pathos: 'The functioning of socialist production presupposes the planned assignment of the able-bodied members of society to various types of activity and the coupling of labour power to the means of production on the basis of the comradely cooperation and reciprocal aid of associated owners of the means of production. Therein lies the economic content of the distribution of manpower within the system of socialist reproduction.'

<sup>12</sup> Two other important institutions involved were the State Committees for Statistics (*Goskomstat*) and for Labour and Social Questions (*Goskomtrud*).

<sup>13</sup> Services with similar tasks were abolished together with unemployment in the 1930s.

<sup>14</sup> The status of JPBs in the literature is not consolidated. While Oxenstierna (1990: 97-98 and 114-116) prefers to take JPBs for a form of employment services outside organised allocation, Malle's (1987: 358-360) assessment is more ambivalent; she tends to include them into forms of organised allocation because of their selective function.

In practice, they assisted first of all blue collar workers and offered mostly jobs with high turnover and in less popular regions and sectors.<sup>15</sup>

These institutions applying to the mass of Soviet workers were complemented by the second system of executive job placement, which shall just be mentioned here. The alternative system of executive job placement was under the control of the Party organisations and partly followed secret regulations. Access to certain high as well as comparatively low rank positions on a special list ('*nomenklatura*') - an estimated number of four million jobs including managers or 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 the Party rationale (Ioffe/Maggs 1983: 254-259).

**Limited scope**

Different (Western) authors agree that in the everyday practice of job changes and job search the overall relevance of state-controlled labour allocation should not be overestimated. Malle (1987) reviews available evidence of labour mobility in the Soviet Union and estimates the significance of the manifold institutions of job allocation in the later years of Soviet communism. Focusing on industrial labour she distinguishes mechanisms of organised and unplanned mobility into and out of jobs (see Table 1).

**Table 1 – Mechanisms of organised and unplanned labour mobility**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| STRUCTURE OF TOTAL INDUSTRIAL MOBILITY   |  |
| <i>Organised mobility</i>  |  |
| <i>Accession</i>   | <i>Separations</i>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Placements of graduates of higher and specialized secondary education upon contract with the teaching institutions</li> <li>- Distribution of vocational school diploma students</li> <li>- Organized placement (<i>Orgnabor</i>)</li> <li>- Collective recruitment</li> <li>- Transfer from other enterprises</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transfer to educational institutions on leave from production</li> <li>- Dismissal upon the terms of a temporary contract</li> <li>- Recruitment by the Army</li> <li>- Retirement, invalidity, death</li> <li>- Curtailment of staff</li> <li>- Transfer to other enterprises</li> </ul> |
| <i>Unplanned mobility</i>  |  |
| Hiring by the enterprise:<br>a) at the gate<br>b) through the Job Placement Bureaux  | Turnover:<br>a) Voluntary quits<br>b) Dismissal for disciplinary reasons   |

Adapted from Malle (1987: 358; original emphasis)

The quantification of the relevance of placement mechanisms shows that the significance of organised forms was altogether limited (see Table 2). Malle (ibid.) estimates that in 1981 two third of all job placements were actually 'hirings at the gate' and therefore beyond direct state control, while organised allocation accounted for the remaining maximum of about only one third in the same year. The quantitatively most

<sup>15</sup> Figures for their regionally different importance can be found in Malle (1987). For an assessment of the Soviet state employment service in a comparative perspective see Marnie (1992: chapter 4).

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 not more than about 23% of all allocations. *Orgnabor*, finally, had little relevance; less than 6% of job placements were attributed to it in 1981.

**Table 2 – Relevance of mechanisms of job placement**

JOB PLACEMENT BY SOURCES (IN % 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)

Discussing evidence of regional and sectoral differences in labour turnover, changes in policies, the impact of technological change, and the relative status of the various segments of the labour force, Malle's (ibid.) final assessment of Soviet (industrial) labour turnover points to directional changes within 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' (381). At the same time, compulsory forms of labour planning, especially job placement bureaux, gained in importance from the late 1970s onwards, as did the implementation of first job assignments of graduates.

Young people have been a particularly important target group already of early forms of labour planning. Institutionally mediated by the *Komsomol*, youth was a central resource in the context of the 'physical construction of communism' already in the frame of the first five-year plan (Pilkington 1994: 56-60); in order to meet labour demands of the economy within a short period, young people were channelled through short training measures to become semi-skilled workers for jobs in 'mass trades'. For instance, Barber (1986: 57; also Blumenthal/Benson 1978: 37-38) describes the mass mobilisation of young male teenagers into vocational training in the year 1940 and the associated development of training infra-structure as 'major innovation in recruitment policy'.<sup>16</sup> Another form of utilisation of young people as ad hoc labour force associated with *Komsomol* is reported by Lane (1987: 49): especially from the mid 1950s to the mid 1960s the Communist Union of Youth was involved in organising young people's participation in employment mainly in construction projects and in enterprises in the northern and eastern areas of the country. First of all, 18 to 25 year-old school or college graduates enrolled for some years following a recruitment device known as 'social appeals'.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, a record of *Komsomol* work usually positively affected access to better jobs and might well have resulted in entering the alternative route of job allocation towards, for instance, a party career.

<sup>16</sup> See Matthews (1982: 67-79) for the early development of vocational schools out of the need to mobilise the 'state labour reserve'; in Nozhko et al. (1968: 44-45) even referred to as 'labour reserve schools'. Some attention to gender differences in earlier labour resource policy is given by Kahan (1960).

<sup>17</sup> Other forms of youth labour organised by the *Komsomol* included construction work during the summer (Moskoff 1984: chapter 2).

Another important institution relevant for the transition experiences of young males was the Soviet Army with its compulsory service of two years beginning at age 18. Deferments were granted only on special grounds (family, hardship, health) but generally to full-time students of higher education. For all the other young men military service implied a potential interruption of vocational training, and there were complaints that they did not return to professions they had acquired before the military service but instead changed to their qualification 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 was among the common ways of avoiding the service.<sup>18</sup>

The significance of informal aspects of job mobility is substantiated by a survey among (mostly Jewish) Soviet immigrants living in the United States about their unemployment experiences in the USSR – the so-called 'Soviet Interview Project' conducted in 1983 (Gregory/Kohlhase 1988; Gregory/Collier 1988). It allows a comparative evaluation of actual job search methods of young and old ('mature') workers in the Soviet Union (see Table 3).

**Table 3 – Job search methods used by young and mature workers of the Soviet Interview Project (SIP) (%)**

| Age   | young workers | mature workers |
|---|---------------|----------------|
|   | 19-24<br>%    | 34-54<br>%     |
| Respondent inquired at enterprise/institution | 11            | 15             |
| Told about vacancy by friend/relative/teacher | 52            | 63             |
| Public announcement or advertised at school   | 10            | 14             |
| Official placement                            | 26            | 7              |
| Other   | 1             | 1              |
| Total   | 100           | 100            |

Adapted from Gregory/Collier (1988: 622; Table 5); Note: 'Official placement' includes the responses 'did practicum/special training there', 'komsomol placement', 'was invited/recruited', and 'military commission'.

The survey underlines, on the one hand, 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 forms of official placement among youth. Obviously the two institutions of the army and the *Komsomol*, both targeted towards young people, contribute significantly to this difference. Altogether official placement is relevant for 26% of young workers compared to only 7% among older workers. 11% of the young workers 'inquired at enterprise/institution', 10% reacted to a public announcement or and advertisement at school, but the majority of 52% of young workers were told about the vacancy by friends, relatives or teachers. Among older workers this share amounts to 63%.

Even if such a survey of former Soviet citizens might, for many reasons, suffer from a significant bias, the results seem plausible against the background of the above findings and indicate that there was both considerable space and need for labour mobility outside the institutional frame of reference also among young people.

<sup>18</sup> I cannot go into detail here but the equally unpopular military service would be another opportunity to discuss forms of 'underliving' Soviet institutions. For more detailed accounts see Solnick (1998: chapter 6) and Gross (1990). For a discussion of the role of organisations like the Red Army in the political socialisation of young adults on the basis of a fascinating 'clandestine sociological study' see Zaslavsky (1982: chapter 2).

Additional forms of youth job placement, that were more directly linked to the education system but partly overlapping with those already introduced, are discussed in the following part.

## **Soviet Education for labour**

'The institutionalisation of individual lives in the Soviet Union began with the educational structure', maintain Titma/Saar (1995: 38) in their ex-post assessment of regional differences of Soviet secondary education.<sup>19</sup> With its ideological claim to create equality and to be indifferent to the social origins of students, the Soviet educational system appears uniform only at its surface. Apart from having gone through 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 upper grades of secondary education (see Titma 1993; Titma/Saar 1995).

Yet, the degree of systematisation and control of the Soviet system of education was unequalled in the West. The link between education and work was more immediate, or, to put it differently, one main goal of education in a centrally planned economy was the availability of an educated 'general' labour force beside a pool of highly trained specialists. But educational credits did not necessarily translate into predefined 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', Grant (1970: 23) writes about the factual 'secondary importance' of purely educational purposes and effects within the Soviet ideology. Due to the ideology's obsession with control the education system was embedded within the primary concern about labour force planning (Lauglo 1988; Kaser 1986; Sowtis 1991).

Work was guaranteed at the end of the transition, not the kind of work; and organisational insufficiencies facilitated the non-arrival at suitable jobs. Therefore, beside general and vocational education students needed to be prepared for jobs they might not like. 'Vocational guidance' and other forms of labour socialisation have been important, if not the only tools that Soviet authorities would consider publicly in order to counteract the persistent dissatisfaction of graduates with job assignments. I start 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 need to restrict myself to the three main tracks of secondary education, i.e. general, vocational, and specialised. Finally, the main destinations of students after compulsory and after upper secondary education are discussed.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> To be precise, early forms of 'institutionalisation' (now in the sense of 'being in institutions') were available before compulsory education and were strongly motivated by the work ideology. In order to 'free working mothers' pre-school institutions like nurseries and kindergartens with boarding facilities were established. Already there, work-activities for children were an integral element (O'Dell 1983: 110-112). As soon as children started to attend schools, many of them participated in extend day programmes, or they were supervised till the end of the working day. Leisure activities and other forms of out-of-school education also in summer (e.g. in clubs, 'hobby schools', camps), were mostly organised by Young pioneers, the communist youth organisation for children from 9 to 14 years (Blumenthal/Benson 1978: 26-30; O'Dell 1983: 117-120).

<sup>20</sup> The issue of education and social mobility in the USSR would go beyond the scope of this paper and is not covered here. But it is evident from research that the Soviet education system *did* produce and

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

A moment of creativity and individual freedom within the 'polytechnical vision' of integrating education and productive work rooted in Marx's criticism of alienation was central to early post-revolutionary educational philosophy. But already before 1920 first steps towards an instrumentalisation of education for ideological indoctrination were made. Activities labelled '*socially useful labour*' were considered crucial for 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).<sup>21</sup> The emancipatory dimension of learning to work was abandoned and elements of centralist control were strengthened both on the level of state administration as well as 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; original emphasis); this trend would be liberalised in the USSR only during the reforms of the 1980s.

'The Soviet Union is one of the few countries in the world where education is 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', Zajda (1979: 288) writes about the education for labour in the USSR. The gap between the human resource demands of the Soviet economy, the '*socially available work*' and the local needs, on the one hand, and the career aspirations of young people (last but not least facilitated by the 'democratisation' of general education), on the other hand, made it necessary to ensure that young people would not leave education after one decade without having been equipped with the 'correct' (i.e. communist) attitude to labour. Marxism-Leninism provided a useful philosophy for the re-valuation of all sorts of work activities according to the slogan 'all jobs are equal'. This should facilitate the necessary 'cooling out' of the previously raised ambitions of youths.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, compulsory polytechnical preparation of secondary school pupils by integrating of practical elements at all levels of schooling, which did meet the resistance of school authorities, should guarantee that early school leavers could be employed as workers. O'Dell/Lane (1976).

Education of character, rather than skills development, was the main aspect 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 integral element of political socialisation towards Soviet patriotism.

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reproduce social inequalities along this three track system. See for instance Poignant (1969); Dobson (1977); Yanowitch (1977, 1981, 1986); Zajda (1980); Dobson/Swafford (1980); Meier (1989); Connor (1991); Gerber/Hout (1995); Titma/Saar (1995); Saar (1997); Ganzeboom/Nieuwebeerta (1999). For a rare, empirically substantiated comparison of variations in educational opportunities in different socialist countries see Peschar/Popping (1991).

<sup>21</sup> The process of planning education is not reviewed here as it was largely a technical exercise. For a detailed description see Nozhko et al. (1968).

<sup>22</sup> O'Dell/Lane (1976: 424) illustrate the custom of somewhat inflated praises of manual labour with 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.'



The 'correct' attitude had to recognise work of any kind as a form of fulfilment and expression of one's love for the country. Needless to say, not all Soviet citizens shared this enthusiasm and the antagonism between individual and societal interests was a persistent problematic feature of youth job placement (see below). In order to bring children's interests closer to locally needed and available jobs, professional orientation, so-called 'vocational guidance' was introduced at school and institutionalised in the late 1960s (Matthews 1982: 60). First of all in the sense of 'corrective education' it should 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 integrated at all levels of education, but could take different forms in urban and rural areas.

The educational reform of the 1980s again stressed the vocational moment in general education – this time vocational qualification rather than orientation - by, for instance adding compulsory labour practice during the summer holidays to the educational programme. Additionally, many other forms of moral education and 'voluntary' work throughout the year (as well as paid work in summer) were organised by the *Komsomol*. Depending on the grade, it consisted of 10 to 20 days (of three to six hours) of work activity for the community. While the aim continued to be the development of the 'right' attitude to work, 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).<sup>23</sup>

Despite all 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 be targeted towards higher education. Their actual work experiences, on the other hand, were a major source contributing to youth dissatisfaction with Soviet society (Riordan 1986).

### **Three main tracks of Soviet upper secondary education**

The structure of the Soviet educational system has changed over the years according to the emphasis of different regimes; reforms were often accompanied by lively processes of interest negotiation involving also various 'publics' like media, parents' groups or the silent resistance of factory managers (e.g. Schwartz/Keech 1968). One of the longer periods of stability lasted for about two decades from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s. In my brief review of the three main tracks after lower secondary education I refer mainly to this period as it is best documented. Besides, the succeeding reforms of 1984 and 1988, which introduced, for instance, a programme of

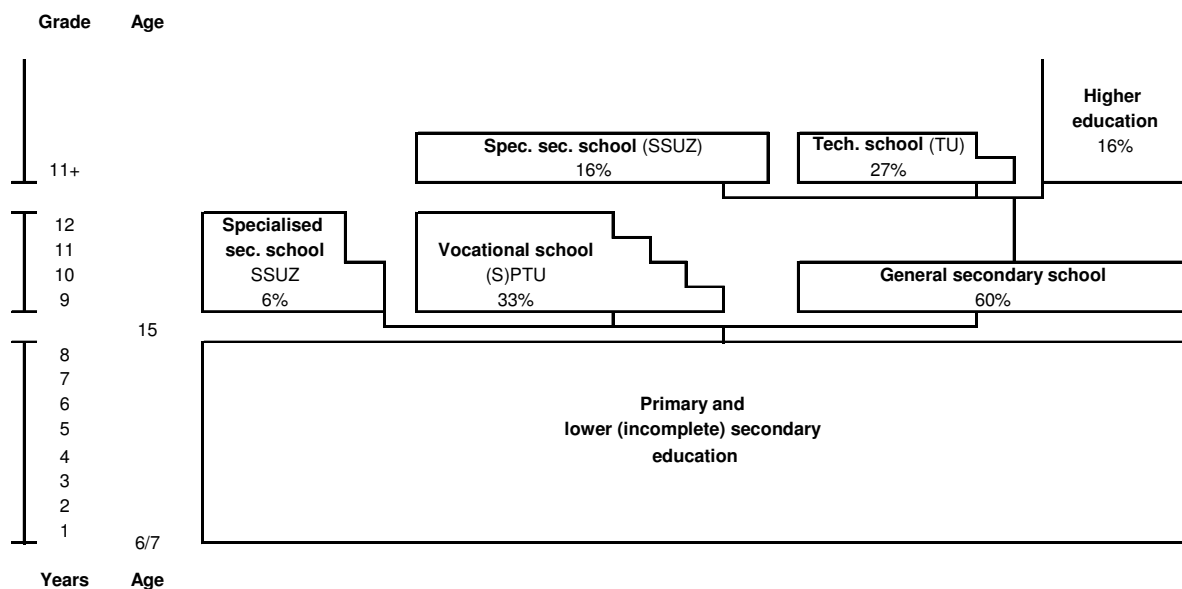
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<sup>23</sup> Anisimov (1972) illustrates what 'work education' in the context of polytechnical education finally was about; and what the differences were at educational levels and with regard to urban and rural contexts. Some of the skills that should be acquired were: Using the most important tools, being able to 'read a drawing, or make a sketch', to operate the 'most common machine tools', starting up 'an internal combustion engine, an electric motor, a pump, compressor', to carry out the 'main types of electrical assembly repair work' (8). Programmes for rural schools paid more attention to the 'most general principles of basic agricultural techniques and production'. This included, for instance, work on 'experimental plots of land attached to the schools', where agricultural products were grown and basic skills of husbandry acquired. During summer students had to work in 'pupils production brigades'. At higher educational levels students were 'trained to work on tractors, combines and other agricultural machines'; and they were introduced to the 'basics of agrotechnic and animal husbandry' (10).

11 years of compulsory education by adding one year at the bottom of the educational ladder,<sup>24</sup> maintained the crucial trifurcation at the age of about 15 years; however, they have never been fully implemented.<sup>25</sup>

Typically, after eight years of comprehensive primary and lower secondary education, young people entered one of the three different tracks of upper secondary education – further general secondary education, vocational secondary education or specialised secondary education (see Figure 1). These tracks were associated with clearly defined future roles of its graduates and decisions taken at this crucial selection point of the system were largely irreversible. In fact, this usually delicate moment of educational choice among students and parents suffered from additional uncertainty and potential injustice due to arbitrariness in the placement of students into one of the tracks.<sup>26</sup> The option of entering enter work immediately after finishing eight years of education (the 'fourth track') had virtually disappeared as further education was encouraged and compulsory upper secondary education introduced in the 1980s (see Table 4 below).

**Figure 1 – Transitions in the Soviet educational system, 1980<sup>27</sup>**



Numbers for 1980 taken from Marnie (1986: 212); see below Tables 4 and 5

<sup>24</sup> In the year 1958 a compulsory education of 8 years was established. From 1979 it was extended to 10 years and finally to 11 years from 1984. Compulsory education was not standardised across all Soviet Republics; for instance, in the Baltic republics it used to be one year longer and was correspondingly extended to 12 years in the mid 1980s.

<sup>25</sup> A comprehensive overview of the Soviet educational system would go beyond the scope of this paper. The monographs referred to are Grant (1970) and Matthews (1982). For an assessment of the educational reform adopted in 1984 see Szekely (1986), Kaser (1986), Kuebart (1987), Kerr (1988), and Sowitz (1991).

<sup>26</sup> Titma/Saar (1995: 40) comment the allocation of students in the 1980s: 'In the last years of the Soviet Union conflicts of interest between the three main types of secondary schools were strong and led to very subjective methods of allocating students to different schools after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. (School vocational counsellors could allocate students on particularistic grounds because there were no common exams or guidelines.)'

<sup>27</sup> This is a simplified representation of the Soviet educational system for the purpose of illustrating the three main tracks. Special schools and institutions of adult or evening education are not included; also part time schooling in prolonged courses was possible. For a comparison of the educational structure at four different moments in history as well as a discussion of the reforms after World War II see Jakir (2003).

The majority of young people finished their secondary education in the upper level of general secondary schools (full name: secondary general educational labour polytechnical schools). They were the main entrance points to the academic track and prepared, in theory, mainly for higher education and university. The (political) problem was that, along the way, many students dropped out of this most popular form of education or completed it and went to work without acquiring utilisable qualifications. Repeated attempts to incorporate elements of vocational training into the curricula of general education contributed little to the mismatch of labour supply and actual labour demand. According to the Soviet population census in 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). About one out of 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 - *vysshee uchebnoe zavedenie*) - were graduates from general secondary education. Higher education included, apart from universities, numerous institutions and colleges, all of which were involved in research and awarded diploma (Matthews 1982: chapter 4; Grant 1970: chapter 5).

Vocational or technical schools recruited less gifted students or dropouts from other tracks and prepared manual workers and future peasants; for them, continuation in higher education was effectively impossible. In the beginning of the 1960s the former state labour reserve schools, which, after the war, used to recruit masses of students mostly involuntarily into ordinary training, were turned into vocational and technical schools (PTU - *professionalno-tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) (Matthews 1982: chapter 3). PTUs 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 the worst reputation and were considered 'schools for the "failed"' (Marnie 1986: 211).<sup>28</sup> 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 general education. Due to the additionally offered general education they transcended the dead-end character of regular vocational schools, and became increasingly popular in the 1970s. SPTUs qualified for higher education and had the status of an alternative to general upper secondary education; nevertheless, most of the graduates from these schools started to work. A variation of the SPTU existed for graduates from 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 entered work.

Institutions of specialised secondary education including technical schools (SSUZ - *srednee spetsialnoe uchebnoe zavedenie*, or *tekhnikum*)<sup>29</sup> trained semi-professionals for non-manual jobs like technicians, nurses, primary school teachers, librarians etc.

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<sup>28</sup> Dunstan (1987: 58-60) illustrates the problematic setting as well as 'clientele' of vocational schools and concludes that this was ultimately reinforced by 'teachers who divide 11-year-olds into the excellent, the good and the "PTU candidates", treating them accordingly' (ibid: 58). For the bad image of PTUs as reflected in young people's letters to the editor see Eggeling (1999: 136-138). Altogether, the low status of vocational schools seems to reflect a constant in human value systems across ideological contexts; despite the strong emphasis on manual work within the Soviet ideology, the devaluation-spell on skilled and wage labour, deeply rooted in history (Conze 1972: 155), could never be broken.

<sup>29</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*).

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, which were not admitted to higher education. This track was strictly committed to the outcome of skilled professionals; in principle, the passage to higher education (usually after a few years of work) was possible but highly restricted. Like the low-grade vocational schools also specialised secondary schools generally suffered from 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 the students for the work they would have to perform in their specialisation. A large part of what would be called 'vocational training' outside school in a Western context took the form of training on-the-job within enterprises (Matthews 1982: 178-182; Kahan 1960).

### ***Main destinations of graduates***

In the 1980s about 4 million young people per year finished basic education and moved into one of the three main tracks of further education. About 2 million young people graduated from 10 or 11 years of secondary education. Tables 4 and 5 show the transition patterns of school leavers at these two thresholds.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</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 that allowed them to get a job.

**Table 4 - Destinations of school children after the 8<sup>th</sup> 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 - Destinations of school children after the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> 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 from work 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. At that time, 60% of the students continued in the first track of general upper secondary education, 33% entered the vocational track (PTU and SPTU) and some 6% into the specialised secondary track (SSUZ). Within the vocational track the SPTUs additionally providing general education overtook the PTUs in popularity and became the second most important option for completing education. The share of graduates staying for specialised secondary education more or less remained on the same level over the years.

The majority, about 40%, of young people leaving secondary education at the second threshold after 10 or 11 years entered straight to work largely without additional vocational training; in 1975 this share even amounted to 55%. This group also included graduates from general education that had failed to continue with higher education and were therefore least interested in the mainly blue-collar job opportunities waiting for them.<sup>31</sup> One out of four continued within the vocational track (PU), and about one out of six in specialised secondary (SSUZ) or higher education (VUZ) respectively. The proportions had changed dramatically since the 1960s, when specialised and higher educational tracks still were the two main routes for those who completed upper secondary education. The tertiary sector did not keep up with the expansion of general education and access to higher education became more and more competitive. Only a rather small proportion of young people in the academic track via upper secondary education actually entered higher education; and, considering an estimated dropout rate of one out of 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.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> This unresolved problem has been at the centre of the reform of vocational training in the 1980s (Kuebart 1987).

<sup>32</sup> Dropouts were an important but largely undocumented problem at all levels and in all tracks. For instance Titma (1993: 161) writes about dropouts from lower secondary education: 'In practice, dropouts before eighth grade were quite numerous but went unnoticed because local authorities in charge of education were not at all interested in counting them, fearing punishment for poor work. Even in Estonia, local authorities produced statistics that were total nonsense, indicating that 103

The age of entering the world of work increased due to 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 down to 30% at the end of the 1980s (see Table 6). The activity rate still used to be about 40% in the year 1970 and dropped to about 30% by the end of the 1980s.

**Table 6 – Activity rates of the youth population in the USSR, 1959 to 1989<sup>33</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)<sup>34</sup> 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 degree of variation within 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 regionally unequal because of differences in emphasis on these three tracks and the actual availability of certain school types. The more expensive schools offering vocational training were rather established in industrial areas. In Lithuania, for instance, about half of 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 insufficient resources did not allow for the fulfilment of ideological directives concerning successful delivery of schooling, they were followed only formally. It was common that certificates were faked and numbers of graduates manipulated. While the selection process into vocational schools was guided by similar rules across regions, the patterns of recruitment of students to the other two more advanced tracks was associated with the regional social differences in a reinforcing way. 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. Little surprisingly, these studies confirmed the low prestige of manual work irrespective of (material) incentives attached or counteracting indoctrination in form of vocational guidance (e.g. Shlapentokh 1989: chapter 2). Contrary to the societal need for trained workers,

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percent of their students graduated from the eighth grade. The actual number of dropouts in different regions is a real puzzle and can only be roughly estimated.'

<sup>33</sup> The ILO 'activity rate' refers to the sum of employed and unemployed persons as a percentage of the total population.

<sup>34</sup> For earlier, more descriptive information on regional differences see Titma (1993).

young people continued aspiring to higher education, which pointed to the unresolved systemic problem of the asynchronous evolution of the three structural dimensions of career-choice attitudes, the educational system and the system of production as well as their different responsiveness to administrative control (Shubkin 1985; Schubkin 1991).<sup>35</sup> Politically uncomfortable research results like these were suppressed, as Solnick (1998: 150-152) reports from an interview with a leading sociologist; and, usually without entering controversy, researchers contended themselves with suggesting ever more sophisticated ways of manipulating student's preferences.<sup>36</sup>

Evidence for 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 made it. The group of school-leavers from general education going directly to work consisted mostly of those who had failed to pass the highly competitive entrance exams for higher education.<sup>37</sup> Instead of the anticipated continuation towards an intellectual career, they were expected by mainly unskilled jobs in industry and agriculture. The relatively low level of barriers to upward social mobility in terms of young people's education compared to their parents, which Peschar/Popping (1991) find for one city in the USSR, might have only contributed to the frustration about the low quality of available jobs. Another large group among early job entrants facing similar disappointments consisted of graduates from rural schools directly entering into unqualified agricultural work. There is indication that being a young woman further aggravated disadvantage.<sup>38</sup>

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

From the early 1930s onwards the Soviet authorities had the legal possibility to place graduates for a certain time at their first job. Systematic recruitment of young people, mostly from rural areas, directly into labour, low-quality training, or the first job had become coercive during the 1940s in the context of the introduction of the country-

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<sup>35</sup> There is good reason to assume that 'Shubkin' and 'Schubkin' refers to the same person.

<sup>36</sup> The internal quarrel about the, as it appears, extraordinarily 'hot topic' of aspirations of young people among Soviet sociologists with a more or less strong bias towards the regime becomes evident from a statement by Michael Rutkevitch, former president of the Soviet Sociological Association and director of the Institute of Sociological Research of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In a reply to a brief and comment on Soviet sociology criticising its openly political orientation (Kolaja 1978), Rutkevitch (1978) insists on the misrepresentation of pupils' aspirations by the author. He then underlines his firm conviction of the benefits of a 'union of policy and sociology' for the sake of the 'control of society' (ibid.). For a review of the apologetic character status of sociology in the Soviet Union, implicitly including sociological youth research, and the apparent co-evolution of some careers in both science and party see e.g. Shalin (1978, 1990), Beliaev/Burtorin (1982), Greenfeld (1988), and Weinberg (1992).

<sup>37</sup> Matthews (1982: 131), for example, presents figures from Leningrad University going up to 12 applications per place in 1974.

<sup>38</sup> The relatively greater disadvantage of young women in this respect can be noted here only as a suspicion arising from remarks made by Riordan (1986: 151-152). He quotes Soviet sources being concerned about the 'feminisation' of certain unpopular jobs and mentions that in the course of the depopulation of rural areas it is mostly women who stay behind to do farm work. Also Kahan (1960:78-79) mentions the disadvantage of women with regard to the recruitment into vocational training as well as wages. Blumenthal/Benson (1978: 91) report figures concerning the composition of students accepted into vocational schools; in 1970 the relationship between girls and boys was approximately 1 to 3.

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, minors especially, were among those social groups, which 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 the employment of 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 economic reform granting some autonomy to the management of labour force in enterprises, the maximum youth quota was doubled and school leavers were channelled into local enterprises pressured to meet the established quota (Cook 1993: 54-58). Youth placement commissions, already established earlier were revaluated on a national level and became attached to local soviets. Additionally, the above-mentioned system of 'vocational guidance' was set up first of all 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. Placement of graduates differed by educational level but usually followed the same logic including the essential elements of planning, fulfilling targets and meeting certain obligations involved on both sides of the (prospective) labour contract. The most important institutions in the background were the Youth Placement Commissions attached to local soviets. They operated on the basis of annual plan assignments and were made up of representatives from the local labour section, the schools, the Party, the Komsomol, the Trade Unions, local enterprises and local Soviet delegates. The local labour section, a local 'outlet' of the *Goskomtrud* system, prepared preliminary recommendations to the Commission based on their information about available jobs and graduates. 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 over to the 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).

The theory of controlled matching together with its institutional framework did not survive the practice test. The job placement system met resistance among graduates as well as 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 the matching between graduates and labour requirements was insufficient. Young people were reluctant to follow 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 the standards of the provision of living conditions, or simply changed their 'plans' and quota in the meantime. Searching for a workplace was common among graduates and different (mostly Western) scholars calculated an average period of searching for the first job (referred to as 'unemployment') of three to six months (Oxenstierna 1990: 226-227). Gregory/Collier (1988) even claim an estimated average unemployment rate of 3,5% among Soviet young 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 placement 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 and young adults were the most relevant group affected by migration programmes giving priority to eastern regions (Helgeson 1986). The link between educational institutions and enterprises varied according to level of education. In the following I distinguish two turntables of regular transition *qua* placement – i.e. the placement of graduates from vocational schools and the placement of graduates from higher and specialised education.<sup>39</sup>

### ***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 rather smoothly. Yet, this advantage comes with a considerable degree of coercion, a feature that has been part of the recruitment into vocational training ever since low-grade schools in the frame of the state labour reserve policy after the World War II (Matthews 1982: chapter 3). Furthermore, coercion contributed to the low popularity of these schools that were additionally burdened by low level of discipline (Matthews 1982: 88). Providing first of all 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.

Since 1980 the State Committee for Vocational Education was responsible for developing plan targets for the training and placement of graduates from vocational schools; and since 1982 newly established enterprises with more than 2000 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 little 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 above-indicated general problems of placement procedures applied also to this threshold. 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 the more than 2000 respondents of a survey among PTU trainees in the year 1975 intended to continue working in their acquired trade. Most of the others wanted to change their specialisation, study further or were undecided (Matthews 1982: 88). This basic dissatisfaction in the early work career could be one 'explanation' of much of the intentional job mobility that obviously occurred in the Soviet society.

Furthermore companies criticised PTU-training for neglecting practical training in favour of general education that is of little use on the job (O'Dell 1983: 134). From the perspective of labour planning, on the other hand, the training within the PTU system, and not on-the-job, was considered an advantage, for already existing associations with companies could have undermined control (Helgeson 1984: 60).

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<sup>39</sup> The treatment of specialised schools (SSUZ) together with institutions of higher education does not imply that their status was similar, only the administrative procedure (Matthews 1982: 89).

Despite the fact that most of the professional skills could actually be acquired only in the workplace and were not part of the schools' training programmes, authorities kept arguing against forms of on-the job training essentially criticising their narrow focus and the lacking possibility to exert influence (Matthews 1982: 178-182). Many of the shortcomings of professional preparation of students were finally recognised by the authorities and vocational qualification, rather than vocational orientation, was at the focus of the penultimate educational reform adopted in 1984 (Szekely 1986).

### ***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 and assignment 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.<sup>40</sup> These ministries, in turn, elaborated assignment plans and passed them on to institutions of higher education. So-called Commissions for Personal Distribution, which operated on the level of educational institutions and consisted usually of representatives of the institution itself, the *Komsomol*, and trade unions, then had to match graduates and postings available. In theory, the commission had to guarantee jobs to all graduates corresponding to their training and speciality. 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 articulate preferences or apply for being released from 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 into distant areas. The underlying philosophy was that, in this way, graduates would repay the state for their education (Matthews 1982: 169-170).

Also the placement of graduates from higher and specialised education 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 like production. Unpredictable economic development or simply changeable political priorities constituted one cluster of difficulties. Another consisted in the general anticipation of employers of being affected by labour shortage, which often lead managers to over-estimating 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) maintains. The real dimension of the gap became apparent only in the actual process of placement and the dissatisfaction of students was often doubled by the professional obligations, which they finally 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 actually been ill-required by enterprises instead of graduates from vocational schools.

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<sup>40</sup> Helgeson (1984: 60) provides a lively picture of the obviously inscrutable planning exercise: 'Gosplan comes up with a comprehensive match of jobs and graduating classes every year subdivided for over 1.000 specialities in all branches of the Soviet economy. The 1977 specialist distribution plan was 4.248 pages long. And this is only what is called the inter-ministerial and inter-republican section of the plan.'

Evidence allowing an estimation of the scope of the problem is hardly available. Oxenstierna (1990: 220-221), for instance, reports from a study conducted in the year 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 indicates that about 12% of blue collar jobs in engineering were held by graduates from university; 70% of engineers did not work in their specialisation and 22% worked in jobs not requiring higher education. This non-availability of appropriate jobs is identified by Solnick (1998: chapter 5) as one of two major problems that plagued the system of mandatory placement of university graduates ever since the 1950s until its abolition. The other problem consisted in the reluctance of graduates to assume their assigned job obligations. Both issues were hardly documented and obviously outside the reach of the authorities. Statistics available for the 1980s from *Goskomstat* and *Komsomol* (Table 14) 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 14 – Job assignment non-compliance ('no-shows') and attrition (%)**

|   |                    | 1980 | 1982 | 1985 | 1987 |
|---|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
|   | <b>data source</b> |      |      |      |      |
| <b>No-shows of VUZ graduates</b>                    | Goskomstat         | 8,9  | -    | 9,4  | 8,0  |
|   | Komsomol           | -    | 12   | -    | 12   |
| <b>Assignees no longer on 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 quite diverging official statistics underestimate the problem and indicate the misinformation within the system. Enterprises that could have identified the scope of the problem had little interest neither in revealing their miscalculation of labour force needs, nor in holding assignees back for they saved the costs of unneeded labour. Likewise, those young specialists disappointed by their assignments preferred to disappear over filing 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 much of the issue remained undiscovered, that informal ways of searching for (alternative) jobs remained important, and that the system feature of overproducing specialists never ceased to exist.

### **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 stronger impact of planning in the area of transitions to the first job 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 was closely associated with the right to choose one's profession and type of work according to preferences and society's needs.

*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 (Prokhorov 1982: 12).*

The review of the transition arrangements versus transitions realised allows a much better idea of the actual meaning of this constitutional promise and the interaction of its ingredients. All the emphasis put on vocational orientation and work, both ideologically and in terms of life organisation, the transitions of young people to work, as well as finally, the Soviet society as such, remained characterised by the basic contradiction between what its citizens had learned and what they worked. On the way to the world of work millions of (young) people experienced the immediate devaluation of years of their studies as well as the disregarding of their career aspirations. The freedom to make work-related choices, especially to choose one's first job, was strongly restricted. Where many arrived at the end of their school-to-work transitions was in stark contrast to where they wanted (and perhaps even had planned) to get. The one outcome that could be predicted, though, was that they would have work but the ideologically praised world of (mostly manual) work was finally closer to the reality of the majority of Soviet citizens. The particular form of uncertainty incorporated into the transitions of Soviet youth to labour finally consisted in the fact that the guaranteed work activity at the end of education likely turned out to be unsatisfactory and unrelated to qualifications and aspirations.

The primacy of administrative order and its bureaucratic rituals as well as the altogether widely unsuccessful attempt to appropriate and regulate the matching procedure actually thwarted both individual wishes and potential market matching. Job wishes possibly developed throughout an extensive period of education were cut off at an early age. This makes the notorious underutilisation of labour in the USSR appear as having been first of all an underutilisation of the (young) people's potential desire to do certain jobs and their striving for professionalism. The non-utilisation of specialist capacity and the low productivity of Soviet labour might have been secondary effects of unfulfilled striving on a biographical level. The universal orientation towards education, the wide access to it, 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 its 'goodness of fit' with regard to qualification or interest but also according to opportunities it offered for making money on the side (Porket 1989: chapter 8).

Altogether this phenomenon of a decoupling of education and employment and the related inflation of education is common in Western (European) countries and burdens young people's transitions to working life (Reiter/Craig 2005). Roberts (2006) identifies the USA as the trendsetting nation in this respect and contemplates the phenomenon of 'global Americanisation'. In an analogy one could ask whether Western Europe is not actually 'going East' and reproducing patterns that have been common in socialism. Even more so, as much of the more recent increase in participation in further and higher education in Europe is actually clearly policy-driven (i.e. 'Bologna process') - in the case of EU-Europe under the heading of making Europe 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' (European Commission 2002: 9). Furthermore, the indicated US-American striving for mass higher education in the 1960s certainly was one of the spin-offs of the then

major competition for superior performance by the two protagonists of the Cold War, the USA and the USSR. Much of the 'space race' triggered by the success of the Soviet Sputnik in 1957 was carried out in US-American class rooms (Jahn 1975; also Kudrov 1997). With some delay this 'race' has become global. In any case, it seems fair to claim that the world is not catching up with the USA only.<sup>41</sup>

These were more general conclusions. On the basis of the review it is now also possible to give a tentative reply to the initially outlined two-dimensional misconception of the Soviet case. First, a reply to the *educational fallacy*: The educational promise suggested by the trifurcate system of Soviet education neither fulfilled its external purpose of training skilled work force for the different layers of labour, nor did it satisfy its internal idealisation of accommodating preferences and abilities. Education was embedded within the broader framework of human resource management and, together with individual qualifications and preferences, secondary to political and economic priorities materialising in form of the overall 'plan' (Its implementation was, as I argue below, incomplete).<sup>42</sup> The emphasis on 'corrective measures' like vocational guidance in order to cushion the mismatch can be read as expressing the restriction of the structural relevance of education. While the market logic of job matching allows for considerable autonomy of the education systems in democratic countries, this appears counter-intuitive within the logic of planning. In practice, certain options of moving on within education were cut off or impossible because of bottlenecks (especially towards higher education), which pushed many prospective students into work without professional preparation.<sup>43</sup> This is not to say that education was just an appendix of the ideological manipulation of people, or that there were no links between education and work, or that education did not have effects that could be rephrased in terms of causalities. It rather means that the non-availability of matching procedures following market mechanisms prevents outcome assumptions established for Western systems (Allmendinger 1989) from being effective. On the contrary, the changeability and immanent arbitrariness of manipulated (planned, non-market) matching together with all sorts of attempts to undermine and complement allocation plans potentially neutralises educational experiences and related expectations. A great deal of what is realised by passing through education and into labour is, as one could put it in terms of an oxymoron, retroactively predetermined. Thus, strong implicit or explicit monodirectional assumptions do not necessarily hold, and probably were not developed, for the analysis of (socialist) non-market systems.

The relevance of this observation might as well go beyond the Soviet case and its consideration could improve the re-assessment of youth transitions in supposed market contexts. Education systems might provide the starting point of transitions only with regard to individual time vectors. Yet the predetermination of teleological life projects at the individual level in terms of plans and perspectives can have corresponding features at the institutional level. In order to reconstruct the actual organisation of transitions it might be useful to start at the other end of the line, i.e. at the however probable or suggested outcome. One methodological consequence could

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<sup>41</sup> For an interesting example of a direct West-East comparison instead of a West-West comparison see McLean/Voskresenskaya 1992).

<sup>42</sup> I also need to contradict Matthews (1982: 202) here who claims that 'the placement of trainees (...) is still thought of as an extended function of the educational system.'

<sup>43</sup> The probably underlying contradictions in the development of Soviet economic policy cannot be discussed here.

consist in analysing transitions by 'reading them backwards' and inverting the chain of causation together with its temporal directionality, possibly based on strongly deterministic hypotheses.<sup>44</sup>

Second, a reply to the *institutional fallacy*: As we saw, the institutional implementation of the requirements of the 'plan' was far from flawless. Despite and in addition to given institutional channels people did change jobs voluntarily and the reality of job matching involved considerable activity on the part of individuals; this applies to young people as well, though to a lesser extent. In view of these findings it seems appropriate to complement the dichotomy of institutional versus individual structuration of transitions introduced by Wingens (1999: 260) by a third option, to be precise: an alternative perspective on the status of individual action. Due to the apparent failure of the mechanisms of institutional structuration individual shares in job matching can as well be conceived of as a making up for insufficiencies of the system without necessarily questioning the system as such. To put it bluntly, the difference is one between using holes and filling gaps. Whether these forms of agency qualified as self-realisation undermining, or as substitutive action remedying the system remains to be seen as this question cannot be answered without original data. What seems crucial is to leave space to the option of interpreting individual action in totalitarian settings - 'underlife' in Goffman's terms - not automatically as self-realisation. Other interpretations may include that of temporary coalitions with institutionally suggested programmes or, alternatively, situative remedial agency in order to re-establish biographical continuity where institutions failed to provide it (Helling 1996, Mayer 2000). Altogether the findings support the call for an overcoming of the exclusive institutional focus and a stronger consideration of 'noninstitutional factors', which can include many other sociologically relevant aspects. For instance, stable social networks can establish continuous job entry patterns across the transformation (e.g. Ashwin 2006 for Russia). In order to identify such factors research needs to be closer to the every day lives of people and their biographies.

Also the findings on this level can be taken further into researching youth transitions in both post-communist and capitalist contexts. I restrict myself here to the suggestion of some possible questions in order to indicate the direction. A first set of questions addresses the latency of habitual knowledge: To what extent do attitudes of underliving survive the transformation or are they (gradually) replaced by new rationalities? Are patterns of behaviour related to the 'duality of socialist reality' disappearing, or are they transformed under the conditions of the new situation? What is the status of individual action (subversive or remedial)?<sup>45</sup> A second set of questions challenges the primacy of institutional analysis: Can we expect the link between institutions and employment to be closer when it is established through market forces? They might indeed prove more efficient in the overall outcome (i.e. degree of

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<sup>44</sup> A variation of ex-post determination of skills-formation by choice or placement (in the sense of transition chances) is presented in Estevez-Abe et al. (2001). They discuss how 'the particular combination of employment and unemployment protection determines the profile of skills that is likely to emerge in an economy. Thus employment protection increases the propensity of workers to invest in firm-specific skills, whereas unemployment protection facilitates investment in industry-specific skills. The absence of *both* gives people strong incentives to invest in general skills.' (ibid.; 181-182; original emphasis). Although I agree with the authors' assumption that individuals have anticipatory and proactive capacities, I strongly disagree with their universalisation of rationalities.

<sup>45</sup> I have discussed related issues on the basis of the example of the persistence of outdated 'knowledge' about unemployment available in a post-communist society elsewhere (Reiter 2006).

matching) but should altogether allow for even less predictability than job placement. The related policy question remains: (How) Can post-Soviet (educational) institutions anticipate market matching requirements in order to prepare for them?

### **Glossary**<sup>46</sup>

*Goskomstat* – State Statistical Committee

*Goskomtrud* – State Committee on Labour

*Gosplan* – State Planning Committee

*Komsomol* – All-Union Leninist communist League of Youth

*Nomenklatura* – 'list of names'; listing of mostly responsible state positions together with a register of candidates

*Orgnabor* – 'organised recruitment'; nation-wide network of offices for recruiting labour, primarily manual for work in distant or difficult areas.

PTU (*professionalno-tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) – Vocational or technical school.

SPTU (*srednee professionalno-tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) – Secondary technical school.

SSUZ (*srednee spetsialnoe uchebnoe zavedenie*) – Secondary special educational institutions.

*Tekhnikum* – Secondary special educational institutions offering primarily training in technical subjects.

TU (*tekhnikeskoe uchilishche*) – Technical school.

VUZ (*vysshee uchebnoe zavedenia*) – any higher educational institution recognised as such by the state.

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<sup>46</sup> Terms, abbreviations and transliteration adapted from Matthews (1982).

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