

Youth, labour market insecurity and institutions

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Abstract:

In the last decades, we have witnessed changes in society that can be in some respects individually both beneficial and demanding for young people. The situation of young people seems dependent on their initial position and economic situation during their crucial transition from school to work. Part of young people is unable to tackle their situation, and they find themselves in an insecure position. I want to know what happens to young people and how they reflect these processes in their life stories – how young people themselves perceive their situation. The book's goal is to get insight into the critical moments and places in the life stories of young people so that an understanding of how (if at all) their behaviour in interactions with structural conditions allowed them to live a preferred kind of life. Following stories by more than 70 young people is the way to reach this goal. I address the following questions reading these stories:

- What strategies young people used to tackle their situation?
- What key aspects were in the concrete cases relevant for their situation?
- How key institutions (including education, employment protection, unemployment protection, and active labour market policy) play a role in the life situation of young people?

The presented mostly qualitative study is limited to one single country (the Czech Republic). The book is rooted in the work done during my participation on EU projects CYTISPYCE (7th framework) and NEGOTIATE (Horizon 2020). In these projects, the team members investigated the life situation of young people who lived in deprived neighbourhoods or who perceived their lives to be insecure. To follow the aforementioned goal and questions I use an approach inspired by cultural studies (Saukko 2003, 2005) in combination with the narrative approach and structural reflection of key aspects.

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Contents:

Abstract:	2
Contents:	4
Introduction.....	10
Chapter 1: Methodological remarks on our research of young people.....	13
The influence of cultural studies on the framework of our analysis	14
Contextual dimension	15
Dialogic dimension.....	17
Self-reflexive dimension.....	19
Narrative approach to data analysis	21
Young people as our communication partners	25
Chapter 2: Transitions and position of young people in the labour market.....	28
Transitions and their role in the life of young people.....	28
Situation of young people on the labour market.....	31
Chance to find work and unemployment	33
Living in different times	36
Employability.....	37
Story of Sabina	38
Theory of dualization in the labour market.....	40
Aspects of marginalisation and precarity	41
Scarring effect	42
Reflecting on general patterns of marginalization of young people	44
Understanding insecurity	45
Story of Tony	48
Legitimacy of focus on insecurity.....	52
Conclusion of the chapter.....	53
Chapter 3: Strategies of tackling with insecurity	54
Theory of individual behaviour and choice at micro- and meso- level.....	54
Capability perspective.....	56
Story of Herbert.....	57
Strategies to tackle insecure trajectories.....	59
Types of strategies used during education	60

Types of strategies used during unemployment.....	61
Choices and types of activity	63
Strategies used when looking for work	66
Help of friends and relatives in bridging/matching during the job search	70
Strategy of self-employment	71
Working without work contract.....	72
Need of change and engagement	72
Motivation and willingness to work/study	73
Story of Bonny	73
Story of Pablo	78
Alternative motivations	79
Story of Sophie	79
Engagement and limits of engagement.....	82
Story of Doris.....	83
Orientation in the system and in the opportunities	86
Orientation and career choices in education	87
Story of Lampert.....	88
Story of Janine	89
Story of Fred	91
Orientation during unemployment.....	97
Story of Violet.....	98
Influence of relatives on the orientation and strategy	100
Story of Rudy	101
Story of Leo.....	102
Story of Bob	103
Difficulty of decision and theory of intuitive judgements and choice.....	105
Story of Nancy	108
Story of Clara	109
Success and failure in the strategies.....	112
Story of Rebeca	112
Story of Philip	113
Story of Peter.....	115
Coping, resistance, and social resilience.....	117

Story of Magda	118
Story of Rachel	120
Conclusion of the chapter.....	123
Chapter 4: Factors of insecure position	125
Locality of residence	126
Story of Rupert	127
Social, economic, and spatial segregation	130
Story of Josephine	130
Discourse of Sandra.....	132
Ethnicity and ethnicity-based discrimination	134
Story of Melinda.....	135
Story of Amanda.....	137
Age of young people	140
Story of Quido	140
Story of Randolph.....	142
Health problems of young people	145
Story of Ellyn.....	145
Gender and family dimension in insecure trajectories.....	148
Family sphere of situation	149
Story of Otto.....	150
Story of Karin.....	151
Story of Greta	153
Story of Barbara	154
Help from family and friends	157
Work sphere and its influence on life situation	159
Social policy sphere	161
Role of employers: selection process and job quality	163
Story of Vendelín	165
Story of Betty.....	166
Story of Helen.....	168
Specific tale of Magda	170
Story of Ben and Ken.....	171
Other factors	176

Debts and executions	176
Story of Simon	176
Savings.....	179
Knowledge of languages, computer skills and driving licence, need of equipment..	180
Story of John.....	180
Imprisonment experience	182
Story of Harrold	182
Story of Steve	184
Drugs and gambling.....	186
Story of Mortimer.....	186
Conclusion – Concept of multiple disadvantages.....	188
Chapter 5: Personal consequences of insecure trajectories.....	191
Changed life attituded, work attitudes, and work behaviour.....	191
Consequences on the labour market, enforcement to leave the labour market and future work prospects.....	194
Lower or missing future social protection	194
Financial situation and low ability to maintain living.....	195
Story of Bruno	196
Going into debts	199
Limited housing options	200
Story of Lucy	200
Story of Maria.....	202
Leaving parent's home - delayed or reduced economic independence.....	208
Family formation, having children, family conflict or family breakdown	211
Low self-esteem, feelings of shame, inferiority, and embarrassment	217
Sadness, unpleasant feelings, and connected psychical problems	217
Influence on relationships and reduction of social contacts	221
Moving, going abroad and migration.....	224
Learning and getting experience.....	226
Conclusion of the chapter	227
Chapter 6: Institutional determinants of early job insecurity.....	228
Normative underpinnings and discourses of policies towards young people	228
Transitional labour market approach	229

Integrated transition policies approach.....	230
Flexicurity approach.....	231
Activation approach	233
Employment and transition regimes.....	236
Important institutions and their expected role in the life of young people	240
Discourse of aiming to young people.....	240
Key policies included in this book and dimensions for their assessment.....	241
Initial education and lifelong learning	243
Structure of the education system and education attained by respondents.....	243
Quality of the education system	246
Story of Ron.....	249
Ability to use attained education on the labour market.....	252
Story of Laura	252
Story of Vanda	253
Anti-education discourse	256
Drop out from education to low qualified job/unemployment.....	257
Story of Roman.....	257
Story of Derek.....	259
Prevention and second chance measures.....	263
Further education and informal learning.....	265
My final reflection on education.....	266
Employment protection.....	267
Reasons to accept low employment protection	273
Unemployment protection and social assistance.....	275
Eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance, and social assistance	276
Benefit generosity/level of protection	281
Unemployment trap and poverty trap discourse	283
Discourse of claiming Roma	285
Active labour market policies	286
Characterisation (picture) of the system and the relationship among the four types of measures.....	292
3.4 Interaction between young people and policies addressing their problems	293
Ability and willingness of street level workers at Employment office to help	297

Ability and willingness of street level workers at Social Assistance to help	301
Story of Eugenie	303
Job offers provided by Employment Office.....	304
Story of Alice	309
Active labour market policy offers	311
Enabling and restrictive behaviour of street level workers	314
Reflecting the work of NGOs.....	318
Conclusion of the chapter.....	321
Conclusion	322
Literature:.....	326
Annex:.....	342

Introduction

In the last decades, we have witnessed a demographic change which, although it seems to be demanding for the whole society, can be in some respects individually beneficial for young people. Competitive effect in the education system and the labour market is somehow lessened by the fact that less numerous cohorts are entering the labour market. Still, the position of young people can be dependent on their initial position and economic situation during their 'great transition' (from school to work). This transition seems to be essential for their future lives. Demanding are the formal as well as less formal changes of the labour market including technological changes, qualification-labour market mismatch, and pressure for greater adaptability and flexibilization of the labour force (see O'Reilly et al. 2015 for a discussion of some of those aspects). Part of young people is unable to tackle these changes.

We assume that the transitions' character is changing, which may lead to a more pronounced marginalisation of young people in the labour market and to the situation when they are in more marginalised and insecure positions than people in the older cohorts. Due to changes in social policy, their citizen rights may be reduced (see Chevalier 2016). Instead of 'normal transitions', providing stability and career development, a part of young people is pushed to unstable and reversed (yo-yo) transitions. They are challenged by unforeseen problems and they are at risk of scarring effects and permanent marginalisation. Institutions are key for the success or failure of their strategies. This is a great policy challenge which is not always successfully addressed, because changing structural conditions as well as changing life goals of young people are in interactions. Some authors argue that employment policy changed to provide standardised output rather than tailor-made solutions. The needs of young people are not well addressed or met in the employment policies (see Sirovátka and Spies 2018).

We want to know what happens to young people and how these processes are reflected in life stories. Walther proposes taking young peoples' voices more seriously:

"This means that peoples' biographical perspectives – their subjective appropriation of their own life courses – have to be taken more seriously into account" (Walther 2006: 120).

We want to know also how young people themselves perceive their situation. The symbolic goal of this study is not only to understand young people lives and perspectives but also to find assumptions for changes in critical structural conditions that would help young people to be change agents in their lives and act as full citizens (and not to be neglected nor chained in conditions that cannot be changed from their perspective). The goal of the book was to get insight into the critical moments and places in the life stories of young people by both following their stories and understanding how their behaviour in interactions with structural conditions allowed them to live a preferred kind of life (addressing their ability to get valuable functionings). We addressed the following main questions:

- What strategies young people use to tackle their situation?

- What key aspects are in concrete cases relevant for their situation? (including various drivers and barriers for achieving their life goals as well as concrete, specific consequences of their situation)
- How key institutions (including education, employment protection, unemployment protection, and active labour market policy) play a role in the life situation of young people?

This book is mostly about social policy and written from the perspective of social policy. The role of institutions is highlighted. However, we cannot understand the role of the institutions without deeper insight into the development of the life situation of young people. For example, having a child as a single parent may have tremendous relevance for strategies of the mother to participate in the labour market and in her perception of her needs and interactions with institutions. We based the book on two main strands of literature: literature about macro-level theories, trajectories, and institutional determinants and the literature about the individual agency of young people who are unemployed or who are in an insecure position on the labour market. The presented empirical, mostly qualitative study is limited to one single country (the Czech Republic). However, the theoretical background for our research is international, with studies from various countries, mostly from Europe, but also from United States and Australia. This is important for both broadening theoretical perspectives (the research community in social policy in the Czech Republic is very small) and for understanding of the presented results in a wider social policy context. Even the country (especially a postcommunist country like the Czech Republic) is in some process of transformation related to the need to further develop its institutions and to get inspiration in other countries.

The book is rooted in my previous research during my dissertation thesis (published as Hora 2008a, Hora 2008b) and my latter work during my participation on EU projects CYTISPYCE (7th framework) and NEGOTIATE (Horizon 2020). In these projects, we investigated the life situation of young people who lived in deprived neighbourhoods or who perceived their lives to be insecure. I thank once again for financial support of this research. I would like to thank also all my colleagues both from my department and from partners' institutions (for their sincere cooperation during many common publications) as well as all our respondents (for their honesty and willingness to share their stories) and my beloved family (for all understanding and help without which this book could not be written).

Our study follows a specific design (inspired by Cultural studies) which led us to a very unusual presentation of information. Theory is in this book usually presented as close to the data as possible. In addition, thorough the book, we tried to keep the theory and results of previous research, original live stories of the respondents, and my interpretations partially separated until conclusions. When we present the stories of the respondents, they are most often included in the text of the book according to the most important or relevant topic within the interview, although sometimes there are more than one key relevant topics in one story. We also wanted to present stories and discourses together and we only rarely separated them if there was a specific reason for doing so (e.g., there were several particularly important

discourses or stories presented in one interview). See the methodological chapter for more discussion about our approach.

The book is structured as follows. In the next chapter, we present our research approach. In the following second chapter, we first define the social problem in focus (position of young people in the labour market and insecurity) and its key aspects. Third chapter is dedicated to the discussion of individual strategies of young people. The fourth chapter is about the discussion of key aspects of the living situation that may influence situation of young people. The fifth chapter is about the potential consequences of an insecure position. The sixth chapter presents the role of institutional determinants including education system, unemployment and employment protection, and active labour market policies. The last chapter concludes the book.

Chapter 1: Methodological remarks on our research of young people

In this introductory chapter, we define some basic principles of our research approach. Every researcher in our opinion should provide some insights into his/her stance, own place in the analysis, ideas about research work, and the subject(s) he/she focuses on. Our analysis is built around a concrete view of the social and research problems which we have to define, as plenty of approaches are possible. Denzin and Lincoln noted:

"There have never been so many paradigms, strategies of inquire, or methods of analysis for researchers to draw upon and utilize....Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretative community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act...This perspective leads the researcher to adopt particular views of the 'other' who is studied." (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 29-30).

The paradigm of qualitative research encompasses, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), four terms: axiology (ethics), epistemology (nature of knowledge and position of the researcher), ontology (nature of the world) and methodology (means of acquiring knowledge). Qualitative inquire movement is built on a profound concern with understanding what other human beings are doing or saying. Knowledge what others are doing and saying always depends upon some background or context of other meanings, beliefs, practices, and so forth (Schwandt 2003).

When we started to write our study, we reflected that there are already many qualitative studies about the transitions of young people and about unemployment realised during national and international projects (Evans and Heinz 1994a, Kieselbach 2003, Hussain et al. 2016, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018) and some specific studies realised in the Czech Republic (Hora 2008a, Hora 2008b, Formáneková and Křížková 2010, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Dvořák et al. 2016, Trhlíková 2017). These studies are for us both sources of inspiration as well as they helped us to define our own position.

The basic question sometimes is whether the research can produce (communicate) something meaningful about the world (Vidich and Lyman 2003). Lincoln and Guba (2003) argued that criteria for judging 'reality' are derived from community consensus regarding 'what' is real, what is useful, and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps). The meaning making is not solely done by authors of the text but 'important others' are involved. Qualitative investigators think that they can get closer to the actor's perspective (definition of situation) through detailed interviewing and observation (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, Schwandt 2003). The primary field of interest is the subjective and intersubjective social knowledge and the active construction and cocreation of such knowledge by human agents that is produced by human consciousness (Lincoln and Guba 2003).

However, we reflect that our research is done with the aim to find both 'laws' and 'meanings'. In other words, we believe that we do not have to fully abandon the logic of finding specific

structures within the data and incorporate quantitative information to our research (see Murdock 1997, Saukko 2018). Research cannot be limited to reflecting on a specific experience, it has to be set into the wider context of structures. This is well reflected in the cultural studies approach to analysis which we have chosen to adapt for our work.

The influence of cultural studies on the framework of our analysis

Authors from the group of cultural studies greatly influenced our approach to analysis. Here we refer to cultural studies more as to a specific theoretical and methodological approach to address social reality (and especially the works of Saukko 2003, 2005) than to an academic field of study (discipline) that is itself somehow fragmented (Ang 2008) and in many aspects quite far from our own background in social policy. Theoretical and methodological approach of cultural studies is relevant here because it is:

- Particular (and unique),
- It seems to be appropriate to help define and answer our questions,
- It helps us to define the outer borders of our analysis,
- It helps us to focus on specific concrete aspects of social reality.

Culture in cultural studies is defined as a network of embedded practices and representations that shapes every aspect of social life (Frow and Morris 2003). According to Frow and Morris (2003: 491)

“culture is thought of as directly bound up with work and its organisation; with relations of power and gender in the workplace, the home, the neighbourhood, and the street; with the pleasures and pressures of the consumption; with the complex relations of class and kith and kin through which a sense of self and belonging is formed; and with the fantasies and desires through which social relations are carried and actively shaped”.

Ang (2008) wrote that culture is invoked as the ground for the negotiation and contestation of meanings, values, and identities. This perspective of culture gives emphasis on agency and contestation – (sites of) struggle of interests, allowing for the role of discourse and power (see Frow and Morris 2003, Pickering 2008a, Keightley 2008, Ang 2008). Saukko (2005) further characterised cultural studies:

“The distinctive feature of cultural studies is the way in which it combines a hermeneutic focus on lived realities, a (post)structuralist critical analysis of discourses that mediate our experiences and realities, and a contextualist/realist investigation of historical, social and political structures of power.” (Saukko 2005: 343).

The subject of the research is described as complex – context-specific, multidimensional, and contingent (Ang 2008). In the cultural studies approach, the gist of the qualitative research process is a case analysis of a locally bounded system, contextualised within a larger historical and cultural framework (Alasutari 1996). It can be studied at any level, allowing cultures to

divide as well as unify (see Frow and Morris 2003). It shows how each instance of a phenomenon is embedded in its historical space, a space marked by politics, culture, and biography (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Cultural studies often focus on the studying of specific individuals or groups (see Alasuutari 1996, Frow and Morris 2003). In our case, this means studying the life of young people without a priori expectation that they are a homogenous group and that they are in all aspects different from other (not studied) people.

Cultural studies are interested in the interplay between lived experience, texts or discourses and the social context. Lived experience is shaped by social discourses and by the historical and social context, in which it is located (Saukko 2003). Quality of the research is evaluated in terms of *how well (truthfully) it manages to capture the lived experience of others, it is able to unravel the discourses that mediate the way in which we and they perceive social reality and how well it understands the social, economic and political context it is studying* (Saukko 2003). However, we need different methods to cover different parts of the problem (to provide a more complex and nuanced picture and dialogue between the methods) or we can choose to study only a smaller part of the problem (Saukko 2003). According to Saukko (2005), three dimensions are involved:

- Contextual – aimed at structures, processes (and discourses)
- Dialogic – being sensitive to local realities
- Self-reflexive – aimed to the inner stance of the author and the ways of conducting research used by the author

We can see the relationship among these three levels as hierarchical (Saukko 2005) or we can see it as an hourglass focused on the hearth, which is within the local explanation of the middle level (Alasuutari 1996). In this case, the dialogic dimension is in the hearth of our analysis. Next, we will discuss all three dimensions in more detail.

Contextual dimension

Contextual analysis (see Saukko 2005) refers to the analysis of social (gender), political, economic, and historical processes. These can be seen as more or less determining structural elements which can be used to integrate lived experience within a wider context (see Gray 1997, Saukko 2018). Analysis is started with a rather broad theoretical and structural framework that places a research in the large context and validates the choice of that particular case (Alasuutari 1996). Contextualist analysis of social structures and processes may focus on what these structures ‘are’ (Saukko 2003). In this aspect, the analysis can work with quantitative data, institutional characteristics of the systems, and discourses. The question is how accurately or truthfully research is aware and makes sense of the historical and social reality. Spatial and temporal framings of experience are important for contextual analysis that seeks to grasp the complexity of mundane processes, events, and occasions in which ‘identities’ are formed and transformed (Frow and Morris 2003). According to Saukko (2003: 26):

"Yes, there is stubbornly 'real' dimension to global structures that is similar everywhere; even if economic and political processes are experienced in perhaps highly different ways by different people and in different places, they still affect all of us, binding our realities and fates together".

Later (2003: 28) she adds:

"Research is both enabled and constrained by a host of intertwined cultural/political/economic/ecological processes, and we need to understand these processes, if we are to intervene in them".

Contextualisation of the phenomenon may give a richer and more multidimensional understanding of it (Saukko 2003). As such, it can also have the power to establish the correspondence or noncorrespondence between a particular person and data about wider structures (see Riessman 2008). It helps to respond to the political and intellectual requirements of the time and reflect the fact that arenas of social life have become politicised (Ang 2008).

Still, we reflect that the context of the lived experience may change in time and is dependent upon the moment of doing the interview. For young people there are 'bright days' and 'dark days' (Alasuutari 1996). Some young people are in the middle of storytelling and their stories are unfinished. This also somehow neglects that data about the structures are themselves artefacts manufactured by humans for a certain purpose, and their interpretation depends on the (in)ability of the researcher to provide 'unbiased' results and reflect on the ideas leading the data and the possible consequences of the research (see Saukko 2003: 164). In her later chapter, Saukko (2018) proposed that there are structural elements such as artefacts, infrastructures, technologies, and regulations that *are relevant for the research*. Thus, this later turn adds more concrete shape to the research of structures.

Special attention in this book is focused on the role of the discourse, both those shared among young people and those created as part of the political and academic process (which we conduct mainly in chapter six). We understand the discourse here as:

- A set of statements,
- Circulated around a specific issue,
- That have broader meaning and sense,
- Those are backed by a wider philosophical position (Barker 2008),
- That are widely distributed and presented for a specific audience (Barker 2008).

Emergence of discourse is rooted in a specific historical context. The texts codify patterns of belief and structures of feelings (Murdock 1997)¹. The role of discourse can be identified in

¹ Riessman (2008) quotes the previous work of Bakhtin and points to several specific aspects relevant for the understanding of discourse: any text is multivoiced (includes hidden voices other than voice of the author); a

changes, both symbolic and concrete, that are initiated by using concrete discourse and are intertwined with events and processes in other places (see Saukko 2003). In this respect, discourses are more or less powerful and authoritative, repeating, dominating, or empowering (Saukko 2003). Analysis of discourse may include both structuralist elements (constituting key parts of the text and setting them in context) and interpretative elements (looking at the meaning from different angles and politics included in them).

There is a question proposed by Barker (2008): “What standards of evidence are required to name something as a coherent discourse?” We reflect that even academic texts can be seen as both a source of knowledge and a specific type of discourse (see Hartley 2006), reflecting that within academic texts facts are often rather freely mixed with ideas about flexicurity, insecurity etc.

Critical for any discourse analysis is sample selection, which depends on the number of analysed texts, their theoretical representativeness, and quality of the texts (Davis 2008, Barker 2008). We look at the texts in a qualitative way – we want to look at the meanings. We can, e.g., consider who authors of the texts are (what is their relationship to the discussed discourse²) and whether there are any hidden assumptions embedded in the text (Davis 2008, Barker 2008). Our own claims about discourse are provisional (not ultimate) and they should be somehow testable (Barker 2008).

In our analysis, we looked for ‘personal discourses’ presented in the main, often repeated ideas and types of reasoning. Often in the interview there was one prevailing discourse. Quite surprisingly, there was a really a great variety of such discourses. There were also other types of discourses (minor discourses) which were often mentioned ‘by the way’, but they were often presented in many interviews. They represented reference frames – common truths widely shared among the respondents. We also separately reflected on some of the typical discourses presented in the public space of academic arguments and politics, although such discourses were much less presented in the reasoning of respondents than we initially expected.

Dialogic dimension

Structures are always structures-in-use, and these uses cannot be contained in advance (Frow and Morris 2003). Contextual analysis will be enriched by paying attention to the way in which these social processes may be experienced very differently in particular local and historical contexts, i.e., benefiting from the dialogic principle of ‘being sensitive to local realities’ (Saukko 2003, 2005). Researcher analyses in detail a very specific, closely defined object of study as a world of its own (Alasuutari 1996). Cultural studies focus on the everyday life of the

given word is saturated with ideology and meanings from previous usage; social scientists can identify the hidden discourses speakers take for granted.

² The specific issue is the sidedness of the author – he/she is often for or against the discourse, however sometimes his/her position is hidden.

chosen group, trying to understand its significance from the point of view of the people involved as well as its relation to the wider social context.

"One of distinguishing features is focus on the subjective dimension of social relations, on how particular social arrangements and configurations are lived and made sense of, so highlighting the complex intersections between public culture and private subjectivity... vital for our changing identities and changing conceptions of the social worlds we live in." (Pickering 2008b: 18).

People cannot be presumed to be 'dopes' or unaware of their relationship with the wider system. On the contrary, they actively engage with it (see Ang 2008). Frow and Morris (2003) argue that historically cultural studies were concerned with examining the political conflicts at stake in concrete contexts and for particular groups.

Saukko (2005) referring to Lincoln (1995) and Denzin (1997) quoted that research participants are 'involved in the project of capturing or constructing their reality', sharing 'lived experiences within a specific social context' and giving 'emphasis also on emotional and embodiment forms of knowledge and understanding'. They may speak for wider social issues (Saukko 2003). Presentation has to be approached carefully because it is not equivalent to what happens to us (Pickering 2008b).

Frow and Morris (2003) explained that cultural studies often start with a particular, a detail, the scrap of ordinary or banal existence, and then work to unpack the density of relations and of the intersecting social domains that inform it. By systematically working and toying with concrete examples of everyday life and culture, one can often realise such aspects of our mundane self-evident reality as we have this far failed to see (Alasuutari 1996).

Among the building blocks (methodological touchstones) of cultural analysis is 'lived experience' (Alasuutari 1996, Gray 1997, Saukko 2005, Pickering 2008b). Pickering (2008b) distinguishes between experience as a process and experience as product. We want to know how people understand their experience (what has happened and what is made of it). Experience involves the interpretation of what happens in life (events), of what makes our perceptions, feelings, and actions meaningful, and what is distinctive in our way of knowing the social world (Pickering 2008b)³. We can see how 'meanings' and 'meaning structures' in different aspects of life are related (Alasuutari 1996). People may (or may not) be aware of the social frames – discourses that underline their lives (Saukko 2003). Research respects that there are different meanings among young people and other groups, being both truthful to the ideas presented by young people and pluralistic (contrasting their stories) at the same

³ Similarly, Gray (1997) defined experience as representations and expressions of: a) direct personal participation in the observation of events, b) accumulated knowledge of the world in particular sets of circumstances, c) what is it to live in these circumstances and the personal feelings and emotions which are engendered.

time (see Saukko 2003)⁴. There is only a finite group of possible meanings (Lawler 2008). These meanings are influenced by life orientation, frames of reference, and social discourses (Alasutari 1996). In other words, the exploration of the struggle for meaning is in connection with the construction of social and cultural identity (see Gray 1997, Murdock 1997). Identity (understanding themselves as living through time) in post-modern conception is relational, continually produced, and defined within specific historical and discursive contexts (Elliott 2006, Riessman 2008). Bamberg (2012) identified three realms, dilemmatic spaces of identity construction.

- Realm of positioning: marking ourselves as similar, the same (being just like them) or different (being special) with respect to others. Dilemma of sameness or difference.
- Realm of agency: direction of fit from world to person (acted on by the world) and from person to world (acting on the world). Dilemma between agency and passivity/recipency.
- Realm of time, change and development: the dilemma between constancy and change.

Although these meanings presented by young people may look nonrational from a researcher perspective, they may have its logic in the perspective of these people. People are facing the same dilemmas yet arriving at different solutions (Murdock 1997).

Self-reflexive dimension

An in-depth analysis of the cultural world of a group or an individual helps in grasping a more general picture. At the final stage, case analysis is broadened through the search of contrary and parallel cases, into the example of a broader entity (Alasutari 1996). It is focused on both agency and ideology. Walther and McNeish (2003) argued that young people constitute a strategic group that can be analysed to understand the broader trends of contemporary social and economic change due to the coincidence of their biological transition from education to employment with a historical shift of societal constellations referred to as late modernity. Our analysis goes beyond individuals without the ambition to refer to a general (e.g., national) level but allows discussion with reference to general structural processes. However, it can be compared with knowledge from elsewhere. Alasutari (1996) argued that it is possible to indirectly (e.g., by referring to other research) conclude in which respects and how exceptional the living styles of people are, in which respects they are comparable to solutions typical for other social groups and what sorts of different solutions exists. In this book, the results of two quite different researchers with a bit different target groups are presented (see below).

It also will benefit from thinking through how the research itself, for its small or big part, influences the processes it is studying (Saukko 2003). Both our understanding of other people as well as their understanding of themselves is mediated by social discourses. We are

⁴ At the same time, we can reflect the possible importance of the discrepancy between structural inequality illustrated by 'hard data' and its perception by teachers, as it was well illustrated, e.g., by the analysis of Roma children by GAC (2009).

positioned in institutional contexts that include both academic and intellectual discourses (Gray 1997). There is a need to be *self-reflexively aware* of the political commitments embedded in the concepts and categories that drive one's work and also in addressing someone's experience (Saukko 2003)⁵ and to discuss how our own theoretical and biographical perspectives might impact on our relationships with research subjects, the interpretation of research evidence and form research is presented (Elliott 2006).

We expect to present information about young people in a way that respects the integrity of their stance and [we hope] that they can in main agree with it (Saukko 2003)⁶. Pickering (2008b) calls for balancing what is said by research subjects with a critical regard for what it might mean and how it relates to the structural location of research subjects. At the end, there may be three different interpretations: one by the author of the narrative, one by the researcher, and one by the reader of the completed research (Lawler 2008). When we assess concrete ideas (lived experience) or discourse, we expect that they may be in some aspects both right and wrong, reducing our tendency to one-sided judgements and reflecting the political underpinnings of our own knowledge and our own feelings (e.g. discomfort) about the presented stories (see Saukko 2003).

Researcher is not neutral. Our analysis is not free from values and action. We understand and propose that we did our analysis while having in mind the need to help young people to live 'better lives'. We see the action on research results as a meaningful and important outcome of inquiring processes (see Lincoln and Guba 2003). Research is viewed as being not above or below but in the middle, as one among many actors that forges connections between different institutions, people, and things, creating, fomenting, and halting social processes (Saukko 2005).

We also believe that young people should have a voice in that process (see Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018 for a discussion of this issue). Nevertheless, interpretation of the data is inevitable. We do not believe that the meaning that we give to things around us *has to be always* the original meaning intended by young people. Our own addition to the research is driven by our own history, a bag of knowledge, ideas, and 'prejudices'. We hope to show sufficiently our own voice and to clearly distinguish our own ideas. This is the reason why we put our interpretation to clearly distinguished parts of the text, which are usually introduced by heading "My reflection of". We also at least *tried* on be self-reflexive to the extend allowing not to use our research for purposeful, one-sided and selective interpretation of social reality leading to concealing (silencing) or proposedly manipulated results. We know, as

⁵ The research work is integrative "*bringing together a variety of perspectives to draw out the multifaceted complexity of a particular issue or problem rather than working towards a singular, definite explanation*" (Ang 2008: 4).

⁶ Saukko (2003) argues that being true to the lived experience of people may be difficult to combine with a critical analysis of discourses and global structures. Often, e.g., people reject the discourses presented to them, leading to somehow less useful discussion about knowing or not knowing about themselves (see Saukko 2003).

people who do research in social policy for a long time, that we as well as others (users of text) very often are prone to one-sidedly interpret the results of research.

Narrative approach to data analysis

There is not a fully established method of data analysis in cultural studies. Rather, cultural studies have preferred to borrow methods and techniques from established disciplines without subscribing to any disciplinary credentials itself and without confining research activity to any single avenue of investigation (Pickering 2008a, Ang 2008). Some of the authors connect cultural studies with life story research (e.g., Gray 1997). There are several reasons why we propose that the life story and narrative approach is relevant for our analysis. First, the interviews done during both projects that we used in this book were done partially in a life course perspective and we consider it foolish to deny or hide it. Second, when reading Elliott (2006: 6, 129, 153) or Chase (2018), we can see that there are many similarities in the way that specific aspects are defined in cultural studies and in the narrative approach to data analysis: especially focus on experience, retrospective meaning making, dialogic character, trying to understand each other and ‘institutional narratives’ and author’s reflexivity.

Young people are influenced by specific factors such as scope of the cohort entering the labour market or events such as economic recession. Other factors seem to be fixed or changed only very slowly (such as education system, employment protection system, unemployment protection system, and active labour market policies). Anxo and Erhel (2006) defined an analytical framework for life-course perspective. This framework includes cohort, age, and gender dimensions. They argue that such dimensions are in interaction with critical events and they are embedded in social policy and labour market structures. They propose a dynamic perspective that includes institutions and individual trajectories over time. We have decided to dedicate specific chapters of the book to discussion of the factors in the life of young people from the theory-based (non-statistical) perspective. This includes both structural (contextual) and individual determinants.

“Young people’s transition from school to work, and the achievement of an occupational and personal identity, may be a short or long-drawn-out process. Whatever its length, it can be conceived as a process of making choices of, of taking or failing to take opportunities, in the context of set of environmental conditions: local labour markets, national educational and welfare institutions, family and social networks, as well as past educational achievements or failures” (Clark and Kupka 1994b: 162).

Biographical construction includes youth adults’ subjectivity in constructing their biographies (Stauber and Walther 2002, Walther 2006). This may include personal interpretations of past events and making sense of it as well as their own definitions of the living situation (Evans and Heinz 1994c, Walther 2006), role expectations (Wallace 1994), subjective risks (Biggart et al. 2002) and personal views on future, expected events, wanted lifestyle, etc. Analysis of individual lives should be contextual (EGRIS 2002). According to EGRIS (2002), we should ask how individual’s life plans of young adults relate to socio-economic and institutional

constraints with respect to the opportunities for integration and self-fulfilment or risk of marginalisation. Development of personal sense of identity is regarded as central to the process of youth transition (Evans and Heinz 1994b). Transition experiences and identity formation seem to influence each other in a reciprocal process (Clark and Kupka 1994b). We reflect that Behrens and Brown (1994b) rightly see particular opportunities and barriers as time and place dependent. Some aspects of the situation that are described by young people are no longer relevant, they refer to past events, no longer existing policies, etc.

Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco (2003) defined ‘normal biography’ as a biography where there are clear gender and class roles and perspectives. Many authors (e.g., Walther 2003) refer to normal biography as a relic of past times that are harder to achieve, or they are definitely gone. We believe that normal biography is context dependent (dependent on structural as well as cultural factors). Rather than expect that there is one ‘miracle’ of a normal biography for all, we seek for various normal biographies (see also Mørch and Stadler 2003). We additionally reflect that while such normal biography may be available for some young people, it is less probable that it is available for all young people and that all young people, we focused our research to, are among those who live according to normal biography. Rather, we expect that (as quoted by Burgess 2003) ‘they may feel that they do not fit in’.

We should respect that there is a narrative perspective inherently included in the data. This is a specific functional form of communication with a specific (sometimes strategic) purpose (Riessman 2008). The first form of narrative is first-order narrative – the stories that individuals tell about themselves (Elliott 2006). Stories are central to the way in which people make sense of their experiences and interpret the social world (Pickering 2008a). Memories are repositories of accounts of the past that we call up when we desire, or sometimes involuntarily in response to a contemporary trigger in a concrete social context (Keightley 2008). Stories are not simple reflections of a set of facts, rather they are organising devices through which we interpret and constitute the world (Lawler 2008). Some stories are told and retold, and often honed and polished in the retelling, and how they are heard and understood depends on the social location and historicity of their auditors (Pickering 2008b: 29). Narrative has at least three elements: character(s), action, and plot. It uses memory and experience to tell the story. Some of the key elements of the narrative were mentioned in Elliott (2006) and Riessman (2008):

- Narrative provides an account of how one event followed another under a specific set of circumstances,
- Experience is mediated,
- We try to understand how the subjects of our research make sense of the events and experiences,
- The task of making sense of experiences is an intrinsic part of the research process,
- Can indicate which elements of these experiences are most significant,
- ‘Evaluation’ is about providing specific meaning to the story,
- ‘Coda’: is the presentation of relevance for the present time.

Sharing of meaning and coherence of the story are important but not guaranteed parts of telling the story (see Chase 2018). Audience has also to consider whether the story is in accordance with his/her own knowledge and experience as well as whether to bother if the story is actually true (see Lawler 2008).

We also used the '*portraiture*' as a form of textual representation of some young people (see Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018), describing key past events in the lives of young people, dominant themes and their perspectives. The difference here is that portraits are usually done by authors of the text (author) to retell the story shattered in various parts of the text in a more meaningful (and hopefully more coherent?) way (i.e., this is a specific form of the second-order narrative). Situation can be sometimes better explained by combining information about various aspects of the life of young people (see Kieselbach 2003). We reflect that the life of young people is often complex, and it is not possible to explain it without reflecting the context of a decision or situation. The line between text and the context of the situation is blurred (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). However, we did not want to have general universal portraits reflecting the whole lives of young people, including all aspects in detail. Rather, we built portraits around specific problems and situations. Evan and Heinz (1994a) and Bøhler et al. (2019) previously used a similar approach.

Among the advantages of using stories is that respondents have space to set the agenda, we can learn a lot about the communication of the story to others and the generally less fragmented character of the information (see Elliott 2006). However, we also agree with Bamberg (2012) that the story is something mundane that should not be glorified with special or exceptional status. In other words, we would like to use stories, but not only stories in our analysis, reflecting that there are other types of exchanges (Riessman 2008), including arguments, questioning, and answering. Stories are welcomed but not necessarily required, nor enforced. We are interested in both holistic and categorical analysis (see Elliott 2006 for distinction). We also apply a comparative perspective to highlight similarities and differences among individuals and groups and compare various contexts influencing their situation (see Evans and Heinz 1994b). We reflect that some aspects of the life situations of young people tend to be similar, perhaps mirroring the underpinning structural, economic, institutional, and cultural patterns. This is another form of second-order narrative – the collective story. Although narrative analysis is 'case-centred', it can generate 'categories', or put it differently, general concepts, as other case-based methods do (Riessman 2008).

Our analysis is not without theory. Instead, we want to use the theory as both a vessel and outcome of our analysis. Silverman (2000) argued that any scientific finding is usually to be assessed in relation to the theoretical perspective from which it derives and to which it may contribute. Alasuutari (1996) stated that if a researcher is not informed about theories and different perspectives on qualitative data, he or she will not be able to see many things in the data. We did a literature review and reflected it before we started to conduct our analysis of qualitative material. However, as Saukko (2005) argued, there is a danger that a strong commitment to a particular theory may carry the analyst away to see what he or she wants to see in the data. Exploring several perspectives in an open fashion may enrich systemic analysis

by focusing attention on developments that do not fit the initial framework. Pickering (2008b) argued that we should not use our positionality to displace other people's accounts of experience. Experience always has the potential to offer empirical exceptions that do not fit the theoretical rule.

"Experience seems at some points to confirm what we know, and at others to pull us up short, surprise us into rethinking, make us reassess what we have previously accepted or taken for granted." (Pickering 2008b: 29).

Alasuutari (1996) wrote that the main function of data collection and analysis is to make one's underlying premises as visible as possible and to challenge and develop the initial framework. Theoretical idea may be based on a single empirical observation or event in the field (Alasuutari 1996). We need to look for new (novelty value of data) and not to only confirm what was found in other studies. We would like to include new perspectives, meanings, and unanticipated stories. In other words, we look for new insights into the world of young people.

During our work, we gradually concluded that all levels of our work concerning concrete aspects, e.g., family, or concrete type of policy (including both reflections of previous research and our data) should lie as close to each other as possible. This means bringing the theory closer to the data. There are two main reasons for this approach. First, in a situation of rather high complexity of the topics covered in this book, it allows the reader to have information on one topic in one place/space without the need to constantly list the book from the first half to the second half. Second, this approach allows for easier reflection of the relations between various dimensions of the cultural approach (and the specific cultural approach 'the hourglass' model) as the data can be directly interlinked. Therefore, we rebuilt the theoretical part to be directly in the relevant chapters and put it as close to the concrete data as possible.

Definition of initial categories in the research before the analysis

KEY CATEGORIES

Lived experience

Biography/live events

Story

Discourse (internalization)

Structures

Structurally embedded constraints

TOPIC CATEGORIES

Perceptions of insecurity: job insecurity, employment insecurity, income insecurity, combination insecurity

Previous work career

Transitions:

- from work to the labour market
- other transitions

Employers (role, experience)

Work intensity

Resistance / resilience / acceptance

Structurally embedded opportunities support	Health
Meaning	Centrality of employment
Agency (freedom of choice, autonomy, orientation, dependability, and types of activity)	Unemployment
Identity (conformity, belonging)	Chance to find work
Sameness/change	Aspects of quality of work
Functioning (valued)	Scarring effect
Outcomes (success, survival/ individual, family)	Employability
	Motivation, ambition, engagement
	Orientation
	Decision making and judgement
	Locality of residence
	Ethnicity
	Family, partner, children
	Imprisonment

We also used purposeful coding for the analysis. Key categories are mainly driven by this methodological chapter, while topic categories are mainly driven by previous research. We looked further for subthemes in the data, and we organized the data according to corresponding and conflicting information on patterns of similar (different) life stories (experiences, events), life situations, and opinions. This book combines both a ‘wide’ and ‘across’ approach to data analysis.

Young people as our communication partners

This book is based on interviews from two international projects: CITISPYCE and NEGOTIATE. In both these projects, we did interviews with the aim to map the life of young people, including both past events and future wishes and expectations. See the data table in the annex for an overview of the respondents. At the time of most interviews, most young people were still in the forming phase of their lives, although we did also 15 interviews with older people who had the possibility to reflect on past events during their youth adulthood. From other analysis (Evans and Heinz 1994a), we know that for young people such ‘snapshots’ from interviews are not definite, as trajectories can change, and sudden disasters and upward shifts can completely change the original picture found at the time of the interview. This may be especially true for CITISPYCE respondents. However, using data about younger respondents

has also a substantial advantage because we can more closely witness their situation during years of education.

During the NEGOTIATE project, together we (in the Czech team) made interviews with 33 people; about half of them were males and half were females. Substantial group of respondents (about one-third) were people who considered themselves to be ethnic Roma (or rather Czech Roma)⁷. We did interviews with people from only two cohorts in the Czech Republic – middle cohort (1970-1975) and the youngest cohort (1990-1995). Interviews with the oldest cohort realised in other countries participating in the NEGOTIATE project were not realised in the Czech Republic. The situation of the oldest cohort (1950-1955) is very specific in the Czech Republic as well as in other post-communist countries and doing interviews with this people who were young in a very different setting would have only limited value for the research in focus. This expectation was rather confirmed in one sample interview we did with a person from this cohort. This one interview is not included in this analysis.

During the CITISPYCE project, we did forty interviews with young people living in two deprived localities within the same city. In local discourse, these localities have an unofficial status of ‘ghetto’ where mostly Roma and poor people live. The young people we spoke with were generally younger than the people involved in the NEGOTIATE project. Most of the respondents were aged 15-24 and most of them were Roma (in the sense that they often themselves mentioned their Roma origin during the interviews).

Further information about the respondents is provided in the enclosed tables in the appendix of this book.

We know that in both project cases (CITISPYCE and NEGOTIATE) we selected our respondents on criteria that lead to some specific selection of informants; i.e., we have chosen the respondents because they believed to live or lived in the situations, context and problems we wanted to study. After a lengthy discussion about our respondents, we concluded that most of them were in a marginalised position in the labour market (as it was intended). We do not have interviewed young people who would represent all groups of young people and types of transition in the Czech Republic. This is necessary to focus our study to specific topics but it has substantial drawbacks. First, it may somehow limit the scope of various life experiences. Second, we cannot completely reject the risk of dependability of the results on our choice. May be their problems are not typical for other young people living in the Czech Republic. One must be cautious not to use anecdotal evidence of specific or even deviant cases as proof of main societal trends or developments. When we reflected about respondents from the older cohort, we noticed several times that the policy has changed/developed since their youth

⁷ Roma constitute an important ethnic minority in the Czech Republic. Although no official statistics are available, there is a widely accepted estimate that Roma are to great extend overrepresented among people who are marginalised on the labour market, among long-term unemployed, and among social assistance claimants.

(including specific measures for young people). This is reflected especially in the chapter about policies.

Advantages and limits of our analysis

The main advantage we believe our research has brought to us is within the kind of details and insight from various stories. This can help to uncover unusual cases and show how something known from theory and macro-level data occurs in real life (see Riessman 2008: 194).

We also reflect some substantial limits of our analysis. Most importantly, we reflect that there is no supremacy universal methodology that would be accepted as deliverance for all. While mixed methodologies, ‘providing varying optics for the same phenomenon’ (di Leonardo 2006) are useful in enriching our view of the phenomenon of the study, we do not share the assumption that it provides us with the same miracle always better option to research. Contextualization of the phenomena through structural data is vulnerable to the researcher’s error when dealing with all these data in a secondary manner (see di Leonardo 2006, Neuman 2007). We were part of the research team but not the leaders who defined the questions used in the interviews, sampling strategies, etc. In this respect, our secondary use of these data in our book brought substantial limits which could be overcome in the original research.

Next, an important limit of our work is that it was written as a monograph by one author, while it would be much better to write it as a collective work or an edited volume. It is always more difficult when the ideas and means of work are confronted during the feedback and not during setting objectives and work in progress. The reason is simple. It was written as my qualification work and thus other authors could not be easily involved.

Chapter 2: Transitions and position of young people in the labour market

In this introductory chapter of our analysis, we discuss position of young people in the labour market, including here some basic concepts and theories that are relevant for setting our research problem. This sets the arena for more inmate information presented in the next chapters. This chapter is also more focused on the macro perspective and related theoretical concepts that next chapters which are even more data driven and combine various perspectives. First, we will focus on the concept of transitions, the first cornerstone of our analysis.

Transitions and their role in the life of young people

Young people are subject to various transitions typical for a period of young adulthood. The notion of transition is dynamic. Often the transition is defined as a sequence (of intermediary statuses) leading to the change from one initial position to another well-defined position, including, e.g., preparation and stabilization (Anxo and Erhel 2006, Gazier and Schmid 2002, Gazier and Gautié 2009). The youth are the ones who have the highest probability of making transitions whatever their nature (Anxo and Erhel 2006). Points of entry – situations where young people first enter the labour market – seems to be important. Some of the transitions are preferred while others may be inevitable. There may be atypical pathways leading to problems during transitions including, e.g., reduced earning capacity due to disability or illness at the youth age. Following transitions can be typical for young people (Stauber and Walther 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Anxo and Erhel 2006, Schmid 2002b, Schmid 2006, Walther 2006, Dingeldey et al. 2015):

- From youth (adolescence) to adulthood,
- From child status to young adult citizenship,
- Finishing education and transition from school to work,
- From dependence on parents to at least relative independence,
- From living in the parents' household to living in their own household,
- From being part of their parents' family to finding a suitable partner, having their own family and children,
- From working part-time (and occasionally) to working full-time,
- From private life (e.g., when children are young) to work,

These transitions are interlinked in the life stories of young people (see Stauber and Walther 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003). Schmid (2006) writes about compressed work careers, where people need to fulfil several social roles simultaneously. Some authors (Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Walther 2006) point out that the period of transition from youth to adulthood, including above-mentioned transitions, is becoming more prolonged.

There are some further particular characteristics of the transitions that may form the overall character of the transition (Stauber and Walther 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Serrano Pascual 2003, Walther 2006, Gazier and Gautié 2009):

- Complexity/fragmentation: there may be many rather unstable states during the transition.
- Reversibility: the situation when the step is taken back by personal choice or forcibly.
- Blurred character and hybridization of the transitions: a) simultaneous existence of various states, b) existence of intermediate positions such as various internships and public schemes of subsidies enabling employment.
- Changing character and incidence of the states: e.g., stable internal careers are less available, contracts are less predictable, or they are replaced by treaties.
- Changing of transition from normal to uncertain: less reliable, which cannot be foreseen, etc.

The perception of transition is normative in the sense that the outcomes of the transition are perceived by people often as good (e.g., stable jobs), neutral or bad (e.g. precarious jobs, informal work, long-term unemployment) (Gazier and Gautié 2009). Many authors (Stauber and Walther 2002, Du Bois-Reymond et al. 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Walther 2006) used the ‘yo-yo transitions’ metaphor to address the fragmented and reversible character of transitions from youth to adulthood. Unqualified young people are particularly affected. Many authors showed that only a certain part of the transitions is connected to employment and unemployment and this may be valid also for marginalized groups (Kruppe 2002, Hora and Žižlavský 2009). Van Lieshout and Wilthagen (2003) argue that critical transitions occur when events result in the change in assumptions about oneself and the world, and thus require a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships. O'Reilly et al. (2000) distinguished three types of transitions: maintenance transitions, integrative transitions, and exclusionary transitions. Integrative transitions were transitions from nonemployment to employment. Maintenance transitions allowed people to continue working by changing work conditions. Exclusionary transitions were connected to shorter periods of temporary employment, interrupting longer periods of unemployment or nonemployment without longer integration into the labour market.

During our analyses, we focused on transitions which showed to be critical moments often influencing the situation of young people for a longer time. Young people provided often their stories including explanations, why some transitions happened, and what were the roles of key people in the story. Transitions are a natural part of the story. They were typically the places where the story moved on. Applying the perspective of O'Reilly et al. (2000), we saw many exclusionary transitions and transitional and maintenance transitions which were not often so successful.

Transitions are key constituting elements of the theory of transitional labour markets (TLM). TLM analytical perception of the labour market puts the emphasis on the important role played by public policies and on the plurality of existing institutional arrangements (Schmid and Gazier 2002, Gazier and Gautié 2009). Among these policies, labour market policies,

employment protection legislation, income unemployment protection, and education policies (incl. stratification and rules defining certification and transferability of skills) are important (Walther 2006, Gazier and Gautié 2009). Such arrangements are defined at the national level, can be influenced by societal rules and expectations, and they may (slowly) develop over time. Some authors point out that sets of such rules create specific arenas or models for the realization of individual and collective strategies (see Walther 2006). Others believe that these all together constitute a specific employment, welfare, or transition regime (Gazier and Gautié 2009). The other (more policy-oriented) perspective presented in TLM approach is that policies can be used to help people secure important transitions (Gazier and Gautié 2009)⁸. The question of institutional determinants and youth transition regimes will be further discussed in one of the next chapters.

The transitions can be connected to life-course perspective including age, gender, and household dimensions (Anxo and Erhel 2006). In life-course perspective past matters. 'Trajectory' based on individual decisions (embedded in social structural conditions) is important (Anxo and Erhel 2006, Gazier and Gautié 2009). Trajectories include the entire life of individual or (when not possible) at least substantial part of his/her life course which has happened in a specific historical period with important events (such as wars) and is embedded in specific social structures, norms and values (Anxo and Erhel 2006). These periods, events, and structures may influence people in different age groups differently. Major institutions (e.g., education and active labour market policies) are formally organized by age (*ibid.*). Transitions are corner stones of such trajectories. Still looking only at transitions may neglect the important dimension of stability in the states. Trajectory may include various combinations and sequences of transitions and stable positions. According to Gazier and Gautié (2009) the aim of TLM is in securing the trajectory and not only some concrete state. This perspective is most relevant when we want to present the life of a young person as one coherent story, reflecting not only the key moments of his/her life but also the key historical moments and economic turns that influenced their lives. Only looking at the whole trajectory allows in some cases to see dramatic changes in the life course of young people.

Stauber and Walther (2002) and Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco (2003) defined *misleading trajectories* as trajectories that despite the goal of social integration and active policy involvement end up in some unwanted outcome (such as failed promise of decent jobs and lives or social exclusion). We can include here also trajectories that lead to a situation when young people are stuck in a certain unwanted position for several years (see, e.g., Biggart et al. 2002). Trajectories are interpreted as misleading when they are unsatisfactory for young people or when they are unsuccessful from a society perspective (EGRIS 2002).

There are various pathways described in the previous literature (Řezníček and Sirovátka 1994, Clasen, Gould and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008a, 2008b) including:

⁸ There are four normative management principles connected to TLM: empowerment, solidarity, co-financing, and management by objectives (Gazier and Gautié 2009).

- People without (substantial) work experience (school leavers) – with problems to get their first or second employment, people who never worked,
- People out of the labour market for a long time (mothers, disabled)
- People with sudden loss of work – when a previous work career could be characterized by stable employment) but it was interrupted by a longer spell of unemployment.
- Degrading career – when originally stable employment is gradually changed to less stable employment,
- Jumping but stable career – when respondents changed many various professions without any substantial unemployment,
- Fragmentized work career – with many previous jobs and spells of unemployment, including people with only occasional work, work without work contract, and seasonal workers.
- Marginalized (former) entrepreneurs – people who for a substantial part of their work career were self-employed,

Hora (2008b) argued that work paths are important due to health aspects and potential influence on social contacts, perceptions of people by employers, and self-perceptions. We can relate both above-mentioned perspectives. E.g., health problems often lead to sudden loss of work. Gallie and Vogler (1994) have found that the relationship between previous work, career, and chance to find a job is rather complicated with several conflicting explanations. Most of the young people that we have spoken with came through some of above-mentioned types of trajectories. This is not a direct result of the purposeful choice of such respondents in both CITISPYCE and NEGOTIATE projects. Young people sometimes themselves reflect the relationship between key life points and the whole story:

„...it was everything so hectically lately that I was unable to tackle it. The transition from elementary school to high school was my first problem and the second problem was the transition from high school to supplementary studies. This was my life's biggest turnaround, and the problems in family. When my mother became ill, and I realised that I have to care for myself to stay on my own legs.” (R13: 95)

Situation of young people on the labour market

In our book, we work with the thesis about the centrality of employment. According to Böhnisch et al. (2002) and Kieselbach (2003) employment represents the central dimension of social integration within all European societies. It serves as a medium of social status assignment, social distinction, and stratification. Recognition and self-esteem are highly dependent on the individual's personal activity. Thus, traditionally, gainful employment forms the normative horizon of standard biography (Böhnisch et al. 2002). Walther (2003) concluded that previous research had proved the centrality of employment for young people and their

identities. However, we still reflect that there is a strong normative aspect in this approach⁹ and that there can be a substantial difference between systemic risks and subjective risks as defined by young people, which should be subject to our research. This is further discussed in the chapter about strategies of young people where we show more concrete examples.

Literature about the labour market situation of young people is often concerned with the ‘great transition’ from education to work (Detzel and Rubery 2002). According to Evans and Heinz (1994a), this transition is either accelerated (when transition to the labour market is relatively early) or extended (when transition to the labour market is latter)¹⁰. Evans and Heinz (1994b) and Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco (2003) distinguished four specific trajectories from school to work:

- Academic mainstream leading towards higher education and highly skilled professional positions.
- Usually postcompulsory training and education leading to skilled vocational qualifications and employment in the skilled occupations sector.
- Education and training leading to semiskilled employment (with lower value for the labour market but can be a steppingstone to skilled employment),
- Education drops after compulsory education, early labour market experience of unskilled jobs, unemployment, and remedial schemes. Their situation is highly dependent on the local labour market (Brown and Roberts 1994).

Before the full transition from school to work, young people often try to combine studying with some paid work or voluntary activities in hope to gain work experience (Plug et al. 2002, Walther 2006). Other transitions in youth’s lives mentioned above have to be somehow in congruence with the great transition (EGRIS 2002). Institutions should be functioning in a way ‘to provide an effective pathway’. These include, e.g., education system, counselling services, and active labour market policies. In some countries, internships, public works, or subsidised workplaces constitute a specific kind of labour market (Walther 2006).

However, ‘systemic risks’ that are inherent in particular pathways can influence the transitions and trajectories of young people (Biggart et al. 2002, EGRIS 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003)¹¹. These may include, e.g., situations of low education, ‘wrong type’ of education, early employment, early pregnancy, misjudged entrepreneurship, illegal work in a grey economy, and criminal activities (see Plug et al. 2002). There is a heterogeneous category of

⁹ E.g., being employed does not necessarily mean to be socially integrated (see EGRIS 2002, Serrano Pascual 2003, Walther 2003).

¹⁰ This is relevant for the period that young people have to prepare for the labour market and explore their interests and skills. While some young people are optimistic about early labour market entry and are able to earn more money, for some of them, it can have detrimental effects on their future employment prospects (Evans and Heinz 1994b, Brown and Roberts 1994). Extended transitions allow for slower mature and repair of wrong steps (Evans and Heinz 1994c).

¹¹ Systemic risks point to overall structures, which exist independently of individual choices and conditions (EGRIS 2002).

young people who have not managed (or who actively have decided not) to stay in touch with the recognized transition for various reasons (EGRIS 2002). Often these people are in the status of NEET (not in education, employment, or training). This group includes young people who are not participating in the labour market (at least not officially). While useful for the problem, there are also some criticisms of the NEET concept for being stereotypical and masking the complexity of problems and the diversity of young people (see Hussain et al. 2018). Karamessini et al. (2019b), e.g., points out that a substantial part of NEET are young females, who are more voluntarily inactive because of family responsibilities.

Zimmermann et al. (2013) state that young people are generally in a more vulnerable position than prime age members of the labour force and are more severely affected by economic fluctuations. Evans and Heinz (1994b) argue that young people often experience an uncertain status and are more dependent upon state and parental support that would have been the case in the previous generation.

Chance to find work and unemployment

Low chance to find work and scope/duration of unemployment are the most common evidence of problems with the labour market. We interpret spells of unemployment as 'hard evidence' of employment insecurity. For some, unemployment relates to structural changes in the labour market (Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003). This includes both economy and institutions. The level of unemployment is highly interconnected with the tightness of the concrete labour market (jobs offered) and the conditions of the jobs offered on the official labour market and other opportunities (see, e.g. Hussain et al. 2016). This means that when opportunities are scarce, young people have to take anything offered or they may wait for a better offer.

Michón (2019) points out the size of young cohorts entering the labour market is relevant for the development of some key indicators of insecurity. Particularly, demographic decline means fewer young people entering the labour market and may reduce competition for jobs in the Czech Republic and some other Eastern European countries. This is accompanied by emigration of young people in some of these countries (but not much in the Czech Republic). The situation of young people should be better than the situation of older cohorts because their education and training is usually more recent. However, we have found that in many cases young people were not able to get a relevant qualification or we noted a mismatch between the outputs of the education system and needs and conditions of the labour market.

Plasová and Válková (2009) declared that the marginalisation of some groups on the labour market may be evidenced by the great difference between their specific level of unemployment and the general the level of unemployment or level of unemployment of other reference groups. De Koning and Mosley (2002) showed that younger generations experienced during their lives more unemployment than older generations. Sirovátka (2009) connects the marginalized position of people with two aspects. First, there are spells of (repeated) unemployment in their previous work careers. Second, there are workers working in jobs of subjectively insufficient job quality without a chance to move to a better job.

Frequent loss of work leads to frequent looking for another job. Some authors believe that the more frequent change in the jobs of young people when compared to older cohorts is related to their unsettled preferences and stepping character of first jobs. Other authors relate it to the lower value of short-term jobs when faced with job insecurity and lower external demands (see Cheng and Chan 2008). Unemployment is explained also as a consequence of an imperfect, costly, and long-term contract search process on both sides of the potential work contract (see Brožová 2016).

My reflection of the chance to get work

The concept of giving a chance to work is usually resonating in the perception of young people, not in the statistical sense of the probability of finding work but as part of the individual relationship between the unemployed and the concrete employer. Ellyn spoke about getting a chance despite being a person with health problems:

"I would appeal to employers to give people a chance, to employ people who they do not believe much in, or similar. Therefore, that these people can show what is within them. My boss helped me a lot. At the beginning, he was very strict on me. He took us to feedback, and he told us what we did wrong, etc. It should be that [employers] give a chance to handicapped people, but it is upon employers. To employ people with handicaps, etc. to give a chance to normal people." (R20: 237)

Melinda spoke about employers giving low chances to some young people, because they are not willing to try them.

"How you recognise [quality of the person]? You cannot. When the person [employer] will give you a chance. Concerning work and everything. I think that they should give a chance...to see him at least for a month to see whether this person is able to handle it or whether he is worth it. When not, then he can be punished. However, when he is worthy, he deserves a good life." (R30: 77)

These perceptions are probably based on personal experience. Alan spoke about his experience with long-term unemployment and looking for work, and how he finally found work.

"I felt awfully. I was very angered that people put us into one sack. They do not recognise each person but act on their previous experience and they expect me to be the same [as the previous person]. I do not like it. Someone may be hardworking, want to work, to earn money, to live decent life but they [employers] are not giving him a chance." (R72: 55)

"I always tried to find something and then my girlfriend had an internship in [name of the hotel] and there was working one my acquaintance who was also Roma and he worked there already for six years. And they saw from my CV and from experience with him that we are working. They considered it, called me and accepted me to work...It is a problem when you do not have acquaintances, it is not easy to find work." (R72: 69)

Another approach to work chances comes from a more general perspective. People from the middle cohort in NEGOTIATE interviews reflected how the transition to the labour market were difficult for them. Respondents described how during the socialist period there was a mandatory workforce placement system. It also meant that young people were promised jobs in the fields which they had studied. However, after 'Velvet revolution', most of these jobs ceased to exist, lasted only for a short time (due to privatisation), or they were never realised (Magda, Otto, Sabina, Tony, Herbert, Violet, Eugenie). Some young people just left these jobs because they believed that they would find something better (Simon, Violet).

Respondents (Alice, Simon, Melinda, Violet) reflected that in the transitional period shortly after 1989 no one had experience with capitalism (this was limiting), they did not understand what was happening, and there were not much job offers. Respondents like Sabina explicitly mentioned that this period was highly insecure because young people did not have clear expectations and orientation in the capitalist system and many things were changing rapidly. Alice described that it was not possible to find work during transition times because of the great uncertainty during those times ('it was the end of the world'). Simon commented on this:

"When I was twenty, I knew nothing about the world. We went immediately to some democracy and everything related, and everyone understood it differently then." (R15: 199)

Sabina also thought that the period when she entered the labour market was important:

"It was crucial because Employment office was recently open, it was all starting, no one knew what will happen to him, what will be and what will be not. The support [unemployed insurance] was for one year, but it was hardly for survival." (R25: 95)

Some respondents also spoke about a specific situation in the early nineties – in the first years of early capitalism in the Czech Republic. Lucy spoke about her first employers:

"My first employer had a small bakery and then 200 metres from him a supermarket was built and only a few people stayed loyal to us but 90 percent started to go to the supermarket, because there was vegetable and everything in one place... and when I was working in making plastic windows....the big firms gradually bought the small ones and abolished them. I do not know if this happened only to me, but always something big shallowed that small firms and I was forced to go to another place. And then in the past when you immediately went to work and you did not do higher school, you had a bad luck. Care about yourself how you can." (R29: 55)

From this rather extreme example, it is apparent that the period when you enter the labour market after graduation does matter highly. NEGOTIATE respondents who graduated in time of transition from socialist to capitalist regime perceived it as a serious obstacle in their lives.

Living in different times

Some respondents compared various periods of their lives or lives of their families, comparing living in different times (in NEGOTIATE interviews they were also asked about comparing with their parents). Some respondents mentioned that it is now more difficult to live decently when comparing the times of their young adulthood (Vendelín, Bruno, Simon, Herbert). For some respondents (or the people they know), communism was seen as 'golden age' when prices were low compared to wages, there was more security and stability, specific support for families (e.g. state-provided housing) and work was available for everyone (Melinda, Vendelín, Otto, Roman, Tony, Herbert). This perspective relates to prices, low level of wages, and purchasing power of concrete families.

Older respondents mentioned that it is now more difficult to find a job than it was before, e.g., in the 1990s (Vendelín, Otto, Magda, Bruno, John, Fred, Herbert). For the middle cohort it may mean also that they were younger (Fred, John). There are less job offers, more demands, many candidates and demanding testing of candidates, etc. (Magda, Vendelín). John mentioned that in some fields it was easier to find jobs in the past because most of heavy industry was abolished.

According to most respondents, 'great recession' called sometimes also 'Economic crisis' (cca 2008-2013) did not have much influence on their chances on the labour market (Jake, Peter, Derek, Ron, Janine, Vanda, Tony). We noticed several arguments in the reasoning of respondents:

- during the economic crisis, some people from the youngest cohort were still in school (Roman, Quido, Ron).
- some people had jobs before that period and stayed to work there (Peter).
- people who thought that there was no influence of the economic crisis on them because they worked in the fields that were not hit by the crisis (Peter, Tony)
- people were in the same bad situation as in other times,
- people were individually better than in other periods (Peter),
- their bad situation was caused by other more important factors (Jake, Derek)

Some respondents mentioned that the years of economic crisis were bad/worst for finding a job due to the high level of unemployment and reduced number of jobs offers (Karin, Bruno, Clara, Sophie, Ellyn, Betty, Sabina). Betty provided a specific reflection on the restaurant sector.

"It was much better before in the restaurants. More money and more people used it. It was completely different. It is worse and worse every month and all bankrupt." (R22: 204)

Sabina said that she lost her stable job during the year 2008.

"It was a nice, stable job, mainly it was full-time job...and then that crisis came which hit the whole world, and the magazine bankrupted. Because the people [customers]

stopped to pay, and even when they paid, they thought about stopping advertising, because they did not know what is going to happen...I would say it hit all [employers] hardly that worldwide crisis during 2007 or 2008." (R25: 79)

Some respondents used opposite logic and they said that finding jobs at the time of the interview was easier than before in the times of crisis (Quido, Karin). Karin, for example, reflected that nowadays the chances to get an occasional job are better than during the economic crisis.

Some of the respondents noted that also the attitudes of the people have changed for the worse (more individualism and less cohesion, more neglect, violence, bragging, and jealousy) and there are also more cheats and discrimination (Vendelín, Otto, Bruno, Roman, Simon, Melinda, Herbert, Violet, Rupert). Bruno said that discrimination was not so apparent in the past, because employers could not afford it. Melinda spoke about her perception of the change of close relationships:

"We loved each other, but after that the revolution all changed. Everyone expected to be a millionaire, to be rich, and suddenly he looked at himself. We were not any longer that family fellowship. We were... 'I am not going there because they will neglect me'. We felt that everyone wants to keep all, and he/she does not want to spare or help. That revolution did not merge us, it divided us...Well fed do not believe to one who is hungry. And this is the case in our family up to now, that falsity and no longer honesty. Before we loved each other, and we feared about each other. Today you listen, you ask and that is all. However, the will to help, the love and security I feel only in my family." (R30: 67)

Otto reflected on the lowered interest of society to help:

"Today, when you see someone lying on the ground, do you help him to stand or do you let him lie?...I want to help you to stand or find if you are drunk, and here you are bleeding, I will call police or emergency...but nowadays every common person will walk around you and go his way." (R6: 342)

Three main aspects are notable in this for the book. First, some of the periods did have a profound influence on the life of the respondents. Second, we noted changed positions of some families due to the change of regime. This was often noted by people who felt most excluded from the society. Third, the respondents did not mention so much being hit by the last great economic recession, but we also note here that the level of unemployment during the economic crisis was by no means exceptional from long-term perspective.

Employability

We discuss how the chance to find work may be linked to other circumstances using the concept of employability. 'Employability' is defined as a supply side a concept as well as concept that integrates structural dimensions (Walther 2003, Kuchař 2007). Mørch and Stadler (2003) defined employability as 'being useful or valuable to the labour market', 'how

'we are able to engage in labour market'. Gazier (2002) defined employability quantitatively as the probability of being employed during a specified period x length of working time x hourly earnings. Another perspective defines it as the ability to escape unemployment. Mørch and Stadler (2003) linked employability with competence. They perceive employability and competences as the same issue seen from a different perspective. They also argued that in modern societies employability should not be only defined according to immediate job demands, but it must include a broader understanding of personal competencies. However, there is also a fear that competences and employability will move away from each other (see Mørch and Stadler 2003). For some authors, employability may also include the ability to look for work: to write CV, phone to employers, work with the internet (Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a) or the ability of time management (Hajdinjak 2018a). Dimensions of employability by Schmid (2006) includes the dimensions of sustainability, functioning (realisation of life plans) and embeddedness (interplay of actors mediated by proper institutions and laws).

Story of Sabina

Sabina is a woman in middle age. She studied vocational training for a cook. After completing school and a half year of working as a cook, she found that she has health problems. Later, these problems were diagnosed as atopic eczema. She realised that she could work in the kitchen any longer. She reflected 'They will never employ you with this' and 'I have problems with dust and pollen, and you have to work with meat and vegetables'. She said that when she ended with kitchen work, she did not know what to do and what was going to be with her. She had no plans. She now thinks that she should have returned to school when she was young. Her health problems put her out of normal life. Later also other health problems came (spine problems, allergy). Although she has these health problems, they are according to the authorities, not severe enough for her to have some formally recognised special health status.

Sabina is married for a second time and she has a child from the second marriage. Child is her topmost priority (both financially and in care). In the past, it was more difficult for her both financially (during periods of unemployment) and emotionally (she divorced). Family has financial problems even now. Their parents supported the family with food and money. Still she has to economise, and working is necessary.

„Work is the security that you bring some money home, you pay your bills and have something to eat. It is dull but it is this way. Nowadays, without work, thinking about paying fees, rent, bills, it is increasing, I feel. In school, they also do not know what to want. Sometimes mother-in-law helps us. Because we are unable to handle it". (R25: 119)

Sabina did several rather different professions (stall seller, shop assistant, storage worker, newspaper assistant, candle maker, in a call centre) and had several periods of unemployment. She also did retrain in accounting, but she did not work in that field. When Sabina reflects on her situation, she identifies several factors influencing her chance to get work: health limits, not having an abitur, low knowledge of languages, and limits emerging

from the need to care for the child while her husband works on shifts (she cannot work on shifts).

The main personal discourse in Sabina's story is 'employability'. She is unemployed again now. She says that she 'is unable to find any work', she is 'useless for employers', 'long-term unemployed and unemployable', 'person who is written off'. Sabina reflected that her problems are multiple ('it is one and one more').

"When you have some health or respiration problems or some other, vocational training without abitur, without languages, one and one more, you are written off." (R25: 195).

She thinks that if she did not have health problems, she would find work easily, but in this situation, she does not know what to do. She had had problems with self-esteem.

"When I was young, I thought that people see me as less worthy, that I do not work, that I cannot find anything, I am able to do nothing, I am incapable. I thought so but now I do not think so" (R25: 157).

Minor discourses in Sabina's story are 'need of education' ('If I had education, I would be better off', 'handling', 'it was better in communism' ('they had work and did not have to fear for the future') and 'going in circles' ('it is for a long time and it has no end')).

My reflection: Sabina herself reflects on several dimensions influencing her employability. These may function as barriers for employability as well as they contribute to self-perception of Sabina, and they contribute to self-image. The first reason why she did not get stable job was that her qualification was not usable in the labour market (due to health limits although otherwise it would be), and she was not able to get any new qualifications that would help her leave the circle of unqualified jobs and unemployment.

My reflection on employability

Employability can be used to reflect on the concrete problems of young people. Some other respondents reflected on concrete circumstances in their lives that contribute to their difficult situation – both individual and structural. These are reflected in detail in the fourth and fifth chapter. From other factors – not much mentioned in the rest of the book – one interesting factor is 'to be skilled and handy'. This was mentioned by some respondents (Ellyn, Peter, Magda) considering manual professions. It could be both an advantage (when young people were skilled) or a disadvantage (if they lacked specific skills). Some people (e.g., Magda, Ellyn) complained that such skills are tested during entry exams and that this is stressful and not much relevant for the real doing of the job or that they are released after a short time trial period. In the other situation, they themselves reflected that they were skilled enough and thus not a good person for the job (Ellyn).

Theory of dualization in the labour market

Classic theory of dualization (Gazier 2002, Denzin and Rubery 2002) states that within one system exist more labour markets with different conditions and accessibility (duality/segmentation). One of the possible explanations for differences in working conditions and levels of unemployment lies in the existence of various labour markets for people with different educational achievements, skills, and levels of commitment. People in these segments have different work opportunities (Lindbeck and Snower 1988). Some people are offered good and regular jobs with on-the-job training and the possibility of promotion¹². In the other segment of the labour market are people less attached to the labour market who are offered unstable and low-paid jobs, while the jobs in the primary segment of the labour market are not offered to them (Gazier 2002, Davidsson and Naczyk 2009). The third segment consists of an irregular economy at the bottom (Gazier 2002)¹³. Labour market provides a relatively secure position for those who are in work but obstacles and prejudice for those who have been out for longer periods (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). Advantages or disadvantages in working conditions in both segments are often cumulative (Gallie 2013a). These conditions may include not only the stability of the employment relationship, but also working time conditions (Anxo and O'Reilly 2002)¹⁴.

Lindbeck and Snower (1998) and Davidsson and Naczyk (2009) argued that workers might be trapped in inferior labour market status, despite them having an initially high level of skills. The possibility of upward mobility for low skilled is very limited (Denzin and Rubery 2002). This leads to the low ability of young people to compensate for the bad start latter, and long and sharp distinction between highly and low educated (or skilled). The later development of the theory explains that the internal labour market has also changed under international pressure, less tight labour markets, and with changing practices in management, also reducing security for core workers (see Gazier 2002).

¹² Status of insiders may be protected by the following factors. They cannot be easily dismissed due to employment and union protection, their higher productivity, built work position and social relations, and high turnover costs (including, e.g., training of new employees). They are more affected by internal firm conditions than by external conditions. Firms may not be willing to offer such conditions to outsiders and to replace insiders by outsiders (see Lindbeck and Snower 1988).

¹³ Hora (2008b) found that such activities are often short-term, irregular, and low paid or paid in items or services. We concluded that some of these activities would not be done with employment and work contracts, because their only advantage for both sides of the contract is the avoidance of taxes. We found four main factors contributing to the existence of a grey economy: marginalisation and restricted opportunities, setting of registration at Employment office and social benefits, attitudes of employers, and attitudes of unemployed.

¹⁴ Davidsson and Naczyk (2009) defined dualisation by level of unemployment, level of long-term unemployment, nonstandard employment, high share of short-term jobs, size of secondary labour market and the gap between primary and secondary labour markets in wages and working conditions. Häusermann and Schwander (2009) discussed that while dualisation is for many reasons including data limits mostly captured as a snapshot, it is more appropriate to assess dualisation with focus on socio-structural groups that share similar "occupational profiles" throughout their employment and risk biographies. In qualitative research, we have a good opportunity to capture such occupational profiles, and this is a major potential improvement.

Aspects of marginalisation and precarity

Most of the young people with whom we spoke can be classified as working in the secondary labour market. In this type of market, in our perspective, dualization relates to the concept of ‘precarity’, with the concrete aspect of work trajectories typical for people in the secondary labour market. Precarious work is work a) which is uncertain, unstable, and insecure and b) in which employers bears the risk of work, c) which has low benefits, and d) which may have further consequences for their lives (see Kalleberg 2018). Their position is often temporal, it may be informal, with low and minimal trust relationships (Standing 2011) and it is linked to various types of insecurity (see Standing 2011: 12). Precarity may relate to the following concrete aspects:

- Jobs with worse (sub-standard) working conditions (Sirovátka 2009).
- Jobs with low pay, which is substantially below the wage standards in the economy and that has low prospects of job increase (Sirovátka 2009),
- Involuntary job of temporary nature (fixed-term contracts). This means frequent and persistent chaining of contracts or jobs. This is not necessarily connected to the duration of one concrete job. Many apprentice jobs or jobs of first work experience jobs are of temporary nature. Second, employers often use a temporary contract as temporary screening device for new employees¹⁵. Consequences of such jobs for the latter work careers can be both positive and negative (Denzin and Rubery 2002), depending on the concrete context of the situation.
- Temporary agency employment (Schmid 2002b). We suppose here that work agencies provide worse working conditions compared to work without agency (see the chapter about institutions).
- Involuntary using of nonemployment contracts including work contract, zero-hour contacts, teleworking and civil law contracts, etc. (Schmid 2002b, Hora et al. 2016). According to Schmid (2002b), workers prefer working on the employment contract. It is because of the need of income security and need to reduce uncertainty (especially when it is the only source of income), elimination of competition, and accumulation of experience. Interests of employers may be different (see *ibid* for details),
- Pseudo self-employment, new self-employed, and worker entrepreneurs (Meager and Bates 2002, Schmid 2002b, Sirovátka 2009). Meager and Bates (2002) pointed out that the main reason for such status is the wish of employers to lessen the burden of social costs and EPL regulations. Nevertheless, these people are because of their status often later excluded from social benefits (Meager and Bates 2002),
- Underworking, jobs of very low scope, working only a few hours a week, marginal part-time work (Denzin and Rubery 2002, Schmid 2002b),

¹⁵ Temporary contracts may have both a screening function and a mechanism to manage short-term fluctuations in demand (Paugam and Zhou 2007).

- Work in informal (grey) economy without any work contract (Sirovátka 2009, Sirovátka, Válková and Hora 2018b).

Young people are generally disproportionately more affected by above-mentioned forms of employment. Increasing share of temporary contracts is especially prevalent among young people in Europe (Schmid 2006, Stauber, Kovacheva, and van Lieshout 2003). Women and emigrants are the other two more vulnerable groups (Stauber, Kovacheva, and van Lieshout 2003). Häusermann and Schwander (2009) found that women in low service sector (personal services, restaurants...) as well as some types of socio-cultural professionals (teachers, nurses, librarians...) are outsiders in term of atypical employment, unemployment, subjective worries about their job and future pension rights.

These forms of precarious employment are extensively described in the rest of the book showing both that they are relatively common among our respondents and showing the concrete context in which these are realised. There is one important interpretation problem of nonstandard forms of work. These forms may have various concrete shapes and consequences in different countries. In other words, it may be something different to work on a fixed contract in the Czech Republic and in Spain. There is a possibility that even two situations that are very similar at first sight (e.g., a spell of self-employment) may have very different due to concrete circumstances and consequences for young people according to the concrete situation. They may be also perceived and interpreted differently. This is the reason we put special effort on reflecting situation in the Czech Republic.

The second expectation is that these forms of employment may have some negative effects on their immediate or future labour market position and living situation (e.g., through lower social protection). Argument is that a temporary contract may have other characteristics or consequences: e.g., workers who work in temporary kinds of work contracts and self-employed receive less training, have less job control, lower wages than workers working in permanent contracts (Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002, Meager and Bates 2002, Gallie 2013a, Gallie 2017). The risk is recognised in the situation when informal or part-time work does not lead to a regular labour market. Instead, there is a cycle of informal work followed by unemployment. Young people became stigmatised as unstable workers who are without the appropriate work discipline (Detzel and Rubery 2002). As a result, young people may perceive various forms of insecurity described below.

Scarring effect

Entering the labour market during a recession and being exposed to unemployment early in the working career can lead to long-lasting consequences for future job prospects and labour market integration (Hvinden et al. 2019b). This effect was documented by several studies. It was, e.g., much more difficult to get work once people had been unemployed for a long spell (Behrens and Brown 1994b), or there may be low access to high-quality jobs with good career prospects (Helbing et al. 2019). Negative effects of scarring on consequent unemployment and income were proven also by Abebe and Hyggen (2019). One explanation of scarring effects is that young people have not enough opportunity to acquire job-specific human capital

(Hvinden et al. 2019b). The other explanation of this is in the negative signal of long-term unemployment or gaps in work history and labelling as ‘long-term unemployed’ by employers (Behrens and Brown 1994b, Helbling et al. 2019). Imdorf et al. (2019) and Abebe and Hyggen (2019) have found that the scarring effect varied across countries, gender, and education levels, and for people abusing substances (see these studies for concrete results). Moreover, negative signalling is probably stronger when unemployment has been low and job demand high than when unemployment has been more common (Parsanoglou et al. 2019). Parsanoglou et al (2019) also found diverse scarring effects of active labour market policies.

Research showed that longer education is able to reduce the experience of early unemployment (Brown and Roberts 1994). It is also very interesting to see whether the quick change of various jobs and occupations (typically for people with a lower and less formal level of qualification) provides a well enough sheltering effect from the long-term perspective. Imdorf et al. (2019) found that frequent job-hopping as well as work in some deskilling types of jobs could damage the future chances of young people because employers reflect this as a rather strong negative signal (within the framework of signalling theory) and job hopping was even more negative signal than unemployment. We can see that for some young people job-hopping is involuntary and so involvement in temporary contracts (signals of negative productivity) may further diminish young people’s chances.

My reflection on the existence of scarring effect

In addition to the above mentioned, entering the labour market in bad times, wrong choice of occupation, structural changes in the economy, and low ability to change the profession for something similarly qualified created deep scars in the work lives of the respondents. The role of unfinished or irrelevant education for scarring was often reflected. Respondents stated that not finishing secondary education was a mistake which deeply influenced their future life chances, e.g., to get a better job (Bonny, Derek, Herbert, Janine). Some possible future pathways were closed, and options were lost because they are no longer realistic (Sophie). Some respondents spoke about delays in their personal development, careers, or certain life events (Clara, Quido, Bonny). Clara spoke about her past ‘mistakes’:

“I would learn English and I would say to my former twin not to be so choosy with work...even when it is not work where you would like to stay to the end of your life...to get some work experience, start to learn English sooner and to get some work experience from the start.” (R17: 116)

Other respondents spoke about the impact of work career on future old age pensions (Otto, Tony, Derek). From their statements, we conclude they expected to have low pensions in the future due to a precarious working career or due to low social contributions.

There are also other factors contributing to the scarring effect. Parenthood can contribute to scarring effects due to several aspects. First, some parents had to, due to ‘early’ pregnancy (at least temporally), end their school or their possibilities to study could be lowered, eventually their work career delayed (Sophie). Finding a suitable job for parents of small children is difficult in the Czech Republic and the situation is sometimes even more difficult in the

situation of the absence of the partner. In some stories, debts made deep scars for the future of the respondents (Betty, Bonny). In some cases, there were past periods of imprisonment and this further worsened respondents' chances to find work because they lost their jobs and employers did not want to employ people who had been in prison (Vendelín, Simon, Herbert).

Explanation of scarring is present in the concrete experience of respondents. Ron reflected that sometimes employers asked him about 'a lot of work' (i.e., many jobs) he previously did and the short tenure of his previous jobs. He thought that employers perceived it negatively. Moreover, Janine mentioned that employers asked her about work experience and that employers perceive negatively long periods without work in her career, reflecting that she is not skilled in work.

Reflecting on general patterns of marginalization of young people

We tried to describe the concrete labour market trajectories of respondents and to classify them to several types. This reflects long-term development of work and life situation of respondents. We can see four patterns of marginalization of young people which are to some extent complementary. The patterns were often started (preceded) by a critical event (drop out from school, being in prison, physical/psychical illness, divorce/separation, problems of parents, teen pregnancy, etc.).

- 1) One typical pattern of marginalization was long term (for several years) or permanent unemployment (Karin, Vendelín, Otto, Bruno, Janine, Ellyn). Sometimes this was accompanied by rare occasional jobs, but the prevailing was unemployment.
- 2) Another group of respondents had several or even many jobs (compared to the length of their work career) with rather short (but at least several months) or even longer duration (Ben, Roman, Peter, Derek, Simon, John, Helen, Fred, Violet)¹⁶. In some cases, jobs were interrupted by periods of long unemployment (Derek, Fred). When jobs were short, they were often ended in a trial period or they were fixed term. It is also notable that the jobs of some individuals were often in rather different professions not corresponding to the profession they studied (see, e. g., Peter, Clara, Fred, Lucy). For some of these respondents, it was probably not only about necessity but also about their attitude (willingness) in trying various things. In addition, the attitude of some of the respondents not being afraid to leave a job because it was not ok or because there is a necessity to do something else or there is a better opportunity can contribute to the high number of jobs.

¹⁶ We can show the difference by comparing John who had about seven jobs with a duration of several years, and Fred, who had always rather short and fixed term jobs and estimated between 20 and 30 jobs. Some respondents (Ben, Helen, Herbert) had only one job of longer duration (this can be characterised as a mixed pattern).

- 3) Some respondents were self-employed, or they did bogus work for part of their career (Quido, Simon, Fred, Tony, Lucy, Melinda, Violet, Ron). According to Tony, the risk associated with self-employment was seen in periods of low commissions (irregularity of income) and the possibility of not being paid for the work done. Bogus work is also risky because there is lower social security inherently included and because from the point of view of the state, this can be assessed similarly as work in the grey economy.
- 4) Another pattern related to prevalent occasional work (odd jobs) on specific tasks (Jake, Fred, Ron, Herbert) and including work in the grey economy (Vendelín, Bruno, Betty, Clara, Ron, Tony, Herbert, Violet). This pattern can be connected to pattern 1, but it is a bit different from pattern 2 because the work is often of very short duration (usually almost no longer jobs).

These different trajectories seem similar in some cases (it is not only about the number of jobs but also about the ratio between duration of employment and unemployment). Presented patterns mean a great generalization of concrete fates. Situation of respondents is not such static. There are also three general types with a focus on changes in the situation of the respondents: the respondents whose situations have been about the same for all time (Vendelín), respondents whose situations have improved since they were young (Magda, Roman, Fred) and situations of people whose situation has even worsened since their young years (Simon, John). For example, Fred was unemployed for a long time with only short jobs, but after a crucial change he had several long-term jobs in later years. In other words, he switched from pattern four to pattern two.

Understanding insecurity

This book is about insecurity in its narrow as well as broader meaning. Insecurity as we understand it in this book is both economic and subjective insecurity. It is rooted in the need to secure sufficient income or possession and in need of making ends meet (livelihood). We refer to subjective insecurity as a subjective reaction of a person to structural conditions, signals from their surroundings, or other perceptions of future live (job) prospects. In this sense, two people in a similar situation can experience different degrees of insecurity, because they will perceive and interpret their situation differently (Sverke et al. 2002). This also means that the perception of insecurity may change in time due to new signals, resignation, etc.

Wilthagen and Tros (2004), Anderson and Pontusson (2007), and others distinguished four relevant basic kinds of insecurity: job insecurity, employment insecurity, income insecurity and combination insecurity. We are going to discuss these types in more detail.

Job insecurity is defined as the perception of security to maintain the current job for some time (see Cheng and Chan 2008). Job insecurity is based on the notions of desired continuity (dismissal is an involuntary change) and powerlessness, i.e., limited ability to counter the threat (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010). This is according to the authors, influenced by the following factors: level of protection (employment contract, unions, personal connections), unclear expectations (uncertainty), authoritarian environment

(low personal control), and (managerial) operating procedures. Job security is also connected to the dimensions of probability of job loss and the consequences/cost of job loss and valued job features (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984, Anderson and Pontusson 2007, Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009).

Some authors point out that subjective job insecurity relates poorly to average job tenure at both the theoretical and empirical level (see Gallie 2007a, Paugam and Zhou 2007). There are also other forms of job insecurity that are not directly related to the risk of job loss. Instead, they are related to the potential loss of ‘valued job features’ and/or ‘job status’ (see Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984, 2010, Sverke et al. 2002, Hora 2008b, Gallie et al. 2017, Gallie 2017). These may include fear of loss of skills, loss of work conditions, career opportunities, responsibility, and loss of a certain part of wage. Trhlíková (2017) found in her research four dimensions of job insecurity: labour contract insecurity, labour law (work conditions) insecurity, pay insecurity and economic stability insecurity. Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) have found that young people perceive insecurity at the end of temporary contracts. Krasteva et al. connected insecurity with the following aspects: uncertainty about the future situation in the economy, whether the contract will continue, uncertainty about wage payments, uncertainty that they can protect their labour rights, general uncertainty about the future and fear of negative consequences of unemployment.

We discuss the results of studies that predicted factors of job insecurity. Younger workers have less job security than workers in middle age (Anderson and Pontusson 2007). Still, their perception of the importance of job insecurity may be lower than for older workers (see Cheng and Chan 2008). Low educated feel less secure than more educated (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009). People in temporary jobs feel less secure than people in permanent jobs (see Paugam and Zhou 2007, Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung 2016, Gallie et al. 2017) and they feel less secure in a location with a higher local level of unemployment (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009). Situation in the sector of employment is related to job insecurity (Gallie et al. 2017). Public jobs are perceived as more secure when compared to private jobs (Anderson and Pontusson 2007, Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung 2016). Experience of long-term unemployment can reduce perceived security in all types of jobs, but it is larger in temporary jobs (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung and van Oorschot 2011, Chung 2016).

Job security is most related to the stances of employers and parameters of the employment protection system (discussed in chapter four and chapter six). Important aspect seems to be the control and predictability of end of the job. Young people dreamed of jobs with indefinite contracts, but these were mostly beyond their reach.

Employment (in)security relates to the ability to remain employed for a long time despite the possibility of job loss. According to Paugam and Zhou (2007), employment insecurity is linked to certain aspects of job quality (e.g., on the job training, possibility of work-life balance)¹⁷. It

¹⁷ In other words, they argue that job insecurity is one dimension of job quality which is highly correlated with other (selected) dimensions of job quality.

is about continuous improvement of skills and the chance to find another job. Active labour market policies and life-long learning are measures that may enhance employment security.

Respondents in their assessment often referred about their general situation reflecting more employment security (employment and career perspective) than job security in the concrete job. Losses of jobs are merely episodes for them because they are usually not of such long duration to provide a professional qualification that is not usable somewhere else and hard to change (there are a few exceptions). Active labour market policies and other means of development leading to the development of qualifications are reflected in chapter six.

Income (in)security is about the possibility to secure income in a situation when no job is available. There are two main sources of income security, family, and social protection (Anderson and Pontusson 2007). This means that income insecurity is at least partially independent from the current work income of the concrete person.

This type of security is mostly related to support from the family and common housing discussed in chapter four and the protection provided by the social security system is discussed in chapter six.

Combination security is the ability to combine a job with other responsibilities and commitments. Combination security may be important for some categories of workers (namely, women in our research) for their ability to get or hold a job as well as the ability to avoid too demanding situations and consequent stress (see Scherer and Steiber 2007).

These aspects of (in)security are mostly reflected in chapters four and five.

Above mentioned types of insecurity are interrelated. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) defined job dependence as a function of occupational mobility and economic insecurity. In other words, they connect job insecurity with employment insecurity and income insecurity. Job insecurity is more important for people who would have problems to find another job and whose income is heavily dependent on the current job. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) argued that job insecurity is related to high emotional involvement, which may limit realization to expected rational reactions. Job and employment insecurity also have dire consequences for the mental and physical health and well-being of the workers (see Chung and van Oorschot 2011). Hora and Žižlavský (2009) added uncertainty about the future (whether he/she is going to find a job and when and what is the result of previous job search activities) and lower ability to plan nonwork activities.

Story of Tony

Tony is a man in his middle age. He is married and he has two children. Tony completed vocational training for the joiner although it originally was not his preferred profession. He wanted to be an auto mechanic, but he had health restrictions (eczema) and could not do it. When he was young, he had four joinery jobs, but working conditions there were unsatisfactory including, e.g., long overtime hours, not paying the promised salary, and unjust sanctions on wages. After several years (in 1996), he was released from the last job, and he was not able to find another work. He was forced to become self-employed although he sometimes cooperated with other joiners and he paid rent for their common joiners' shop. He self-learned to be able to do work due to recent trends. Some problems for him come from frequent changes in legislation for self-employment because he had problems to orient himself and react appropriately.

Tony explains that the financial situation of the family was dependent on him finding enough commissions (it is seasonal, based on personal connections) and the economic status of his wife (Tony thinks that she was often unemployed due to having children). They have almost no financial reserves. He had to somehow save money from the more prosperous periods to periods of low work. He also borrowed from family. He said that he was nervous due to the situation because he had delays in payments for his debts.

His self-employment (and profession of the joiner) is in many aspects insecure:

"Nowadays everything is insecure. You are able to find a commission, but you are not sure that you will get payment for it... We [self-employed] have to manage everything ourselves. I have to take car, go to measure it [commission], price it, get the agreement, buy material, make it, montage it, charge it, to do paperwork, receipts, because I do not earn enough to pay for accountant....I am really self-doing self-employed." (R27: 81)

"Nowadays I am satisfied, but there is that insecurity of the work, will it be or not? (R27: 159)

Tony also needs to continuously invest money to keep his business functioning. His only period of formal unemployment was quite recent because he was not able to find enough commissions and pay social security contributions (he had lost the key contact person for getting commissions). He was unemployed for one and half years and had almost no job offers. His family survived due to saved money. His unemployment insurance benefit was low:

"[Unemployment insurance] is poor, because as self-employed, I do not know how to do it. I had low income, but all these [self-employed] have them [low], I do not know, they give it a flat rate, I got employment insurance [benefit] about 4000 CZK (R27: 107).

During the period of unemployment, he did some undeclared work as help for his former colleagues in the joiners' shop. He was able to gradually return to self-employment due to the

help of his friends who brought him commissions. Tony lives hand-to-mouth and is hardly able to save any money and his old age pension is probably going to be low.

„...they wrote me a letter [it was a campaign organized by public authorities] that I should pay 2000 CZK more to have an old age pension around 10 000 CZK, or I am going to have around 6000-7000 CZK. This they wrote me, but I do not understand it and I do not trust them that when I am going to pay 2000 more they will give me a higher pension. In three years, it can be completely different, when a new political garniture will come and a different situation.” (R27: 197)

Despite the discourse of insecurity ('it is still not secure', 'my parents had more security in their lives'), the main discourse in Tony's story is 'to be happy'. He would not like to have a bigger firm because it would mean doing different tasks (management) and more trouble and less opportunity to do manual joinery work which he likes most. He does not need more money, and he is satisfied with the things that he got. He is happy that he can do the work the way he likes it (to have freedom) and he admits that he had problems with authorities in the past. He prefers good personal relationships with customers to making a lot of money.

Another minor discourse mentioned by Tony is 'plenty of work' discourse ('There is enough work. Who wants work, finds work. Who does not want work, does not find work'). It relates somehow to 'claiming Roma' discourse mentioned in other interviews.

My reflection: Tony's story is specific because he was self-employed for most of his work life and because many types of insecurities are apparent from his story. He is an entrepreneurship type, avoiding problems resulting from interactions with employers. Tony speaks about entrepreneurship insecurity (changing conditions for self-employment, uncertain commissions, low security of receiving payment), income insecurity (unemployment insurance, low ability to pay debts, not trusting in future pension). One apparent paradox in his story is that social security contributions were the main reason why he became unemployed. In other words, he had to be formally recognised as unemployed to ensure his security and avoid future problems emerging from accumulated debts on social security payments. He also thinks that paying social contributions for him was a great help from Employment office.

I also think that maybe Tony would be better off if he would be able to promote himself more with standard means such as web pages. For him, tackling everything is demanding because he has to deal with things that he is not familiar with. The issue is that he is satisfied as he is.

My reflection on examples of subjective perception of insecurity

The notion of security is among the key concepts used in this book. It reverberates in the reasoning of many young people. It goes beyond security in concrete jobs. Rather, it is related to the general ability to live a decent life. For some young people, security is among their central life values. Derek referred to his life goals:

“I want to finish school, to be happy, to have a family, to have some background, some security, some solid base.” (R14: 250)

"When we speak about the present, I am satisfied. I have a partner for life with whom I live for 25 years. I am satisfied now, but there is still that insecurity of work, whether it will be or not." (R27: 159)

There is no doubt that insecurity can have harsh subjective consequences and high life relevance. Ken commented on job as well as employment insecurity:

"When you are used to some stable healthy income, when you know that you will get a salary next month, you know how much you will get and you do not have to care. However, when they expel you, you say to yourself: 'What I am going to do?' This is the first that comes to your mind. And this is the moment that you feel worst." (R4: 401)

"I do not want to experience such a period again walking from daemon to the devil asking for work. I need to have a security...where I will work until my pension time." (R29: 43)

For Jake, security is about being able to pay for long-term items and achieving long-term goals.

"Considering other expenses, the house is also not for free, you have to repair something there sometimes and this is not a work where I can be secure that I will have money, eventually later some loan or mortgage for repair, that is hard." (R11: 159).

We noted that the general level of security may be influenced by the concrete economic, political, or historical period. For example, some of the people who lived in the period of transition from communist regime to capitalist society reflected that this period was especially insecure because it was a great chance and they did not know what to expect (Sabina).

Respondents also mentioned security in the meaning of job security. Peter, for example, spoke about his past job in the municipality and compared it with his current insecure position. He links security with the stability of employment:

"If I had stable employment...from the jobs I did best was working in the municipality...It was a secure job, there were money, not as much as in the private sector but it was good...If I could choose I would do this because it is secure and I know that I will earn a specific amount of money and that is fine for me...It would allow me to plan my life better than working in private sector where planning is more difficult when you are not protected by someone who is in high position." (R12: 208)

Another dimension of insecurity is linked to the instability of income when young people work on occasional jobs (e.g., Ellyn, Vendelín, Herbert), are self-employed (e.g. Quido, Ron, Ellyn) or do work based on immediate results (Ron, Fred). These link job insecurity with employment insecurity and income insecurity.

First type of insecurity reflected by respondents is linked to occasional jobs which are unstable, with often emerging periods of no jobs (Vendelín, Herbert, Bruno, Ellyn, Ben). In this context, security is related to jobs which last longer, and they are with a monthly salary rather

than with irregular income (often paid directly at the end of the job). When asked about the psychical consequences of unemployment, Ellyn replied:

"I think that it was bad. Because it is insecure. One week you have an occasional job and then you have nothing for two weeks, workplaces are not available. I think that it contributed to psychical discomfort." (R20: 153)

Insecurity is not related only to the unstable character of the contract but also to uncertainty whether the contract will be fulfilled and given promises about payment and other conditions will be kept (Violet, Eugenie, Bruno, Ben). It happened sometimes that young people did the job, but they ended without money.

Another type of insecurity is related to the possibility of self-employment (entrepreneurship) as it was presented in the story of Tony. Sometimes it combines the disadvantages of both employment and self-employment. Many respondents reflected that entrepreneurship is insecure because stable income is not guaranteed, and you have to invest money first:

"...it is entrepreneurship, working on self-employment certificate. I would rather be employed to have security of work, of income." (R13: 45)

"When I was studying, I wished to cook in the restaurant, to own it. However, the reality was much harder than I expected. I am glad to survive...you expect to start a business, but you need an unbelievable capital from the start and other things, support from family and friends. It is very insecure. I rather have more security where the money is sure than to start something alone. I wanted my own vegetarian restaurant, but I think that it is not going to happen." (R20: 139)

Moreover, work in the job based on immediate results includes various aspects of insecurity. Fred commented on one of his past jobs:

"It was fixed-term contract with the possibility of prolongation. I got a business plan 35 million in one year...it was planned at the table, but the reality was completely different, I was able to achieve ten million and I saw that there is no way forward because also my salary was dependent on it because I do not have these traits of dealer 'to go back through the window'." (R26: 131)

Three immediate threats are present in such contracts – that the contract will not be prolonged, that the income may not be sufficient, and that the income is so irregular due to absence of solid base that in some months you can end up empty handed.

Legitimacy of focus on insecurity

We would like to briefly discuss the legitimacy of the chosen social problem. Discussion of legitimacy is both descriptive and prescriptive. We can ask: ‘what is the inequality’, ‘whether there is an inequality’ (and ‘inequality of what?’). First, we have to define a social problem and field that is relevant for our study. Even when we identify (describe) such an inequality, we can ask whether it is a problem that people are unequal. It is not possible to avoid the discussion of inequality entirely. We think that it is fairer to promote or oppose claims of inequality in one space than to falsely pretend that such equality or inequality cannot exist.

According to Sen (1992), there are three basic types of arguments against inequality: (1) the wrong space argument, (2) incentive argument and (3) operational symmetry argument¹⁸. These arguments are mostly normative, claiming that we claim equality in a bad space or that this equality conflicts with other key values (such as liberty) and/or with valued key society goals (efficiency, operational asymmetry) and may have detrimental consequences (in promoting motivation, and influence on others in the society). We will explain here why we put such arguments aside.

We understand insecurity in a more general meaning including all partial aspects of insecurity mentioned above. We argue that this notion of insecurity is highly relevant. Setting the field of inequality is a part of a democratic process promoting freedom to act and public discussion. Stories presented in this book are not representative for the situation of young people in the Czech Republic. Rather, we have chosen young people whom we expected to have substantial problems finding a decent living space within the society. In this book we speak about the transitions of these young people to the labour market and reflect on specific aspects of these transitions, which we consider problematic because they have harsh consequences for young people and for the whole society. We do not ask the question who to blame for this result. Rather, we try to identify individual perspectives, key circumstances in the life stories of young people, the consequences of what happened to them, and the role of the policy in the whole process. We will show that insecurity accompanies other problematic aspects of social life like poverty, wasted human potential, psychical distress and some of these consequences may influence even the next generation. For all these reasons, we should not underestimate the relevance of insecurity in the life of young people.

¹⁸ This is relevant in the cases when we argue that there are legitimate reasons for inequality in a specific space.

Conclusion of the chapter

We noted that most of the young people whose stories are included in this book are people with interrupted, reversible, and insecure patterns of trajectories. ‘The great transition’ from school to the labour market is crucial for young people in many concrete aspects because it may have an impact on their lives for a long time (scarring effects, consequences for future life such as to be independent, to live a ‘normal life’). Some people who were older among young people reflected that their trajectories were not going in the right direction and that they missed their opportunities, were not helped, made some wrong choices, etc. As we will present in the next chapters, the transition to work is in interaction with several key factors including education system, personal motivation, and personal and family life situation at the time of this transition. Time when young people enter the labour market matters a lot. The main problem we often identified in their reflections was that they were not able to live the kind of life they wanted. Insecurity is a companion in their stories but not the main actor – it is important because some young people reflected that without some security, they would not be able to achieve their life goals.

Chapter 3: Strategies of tackling with insecurity

In this chapter, we discuss the role of perception, agency, and individual behaviour of young people in tackling insecurity. The main preset factor influencing our analysis is time and age, because we focus on young people or retrospectively on periods of life in younger age (when we spoke with people from the middle cohort). In other words, we can track the development of life stories of the respondents. Young people may face extreme barriers to the labour market and limited access to usable welfare and education (Sirovátka et al. 2018a). We consider the following situations that we connect with some type of insecurity: still in education/training, working in an insecure job, being unemployment and being inactive – in the context of our book inactive are at the time of the interview oriented and act towards other goals such as studying or caring for a child or dependent family member more than towards employment. We concern most on situations of strategic choices during education and during unemployment when the need for a solution seems to be most apparent for young people.

Stories of young people are in some respects very different. Sirovátka and Spies (2018) distinguished that young people are not a homogenous group: their values, abilities, living situations, and aspirations may be different. This is in accordance with the argument of Häusermann and Schwander (2009) who tried to capture the heterogeneity of outsiders and with Sen's capability approach (see below). We believe that this also means variance in strategies that young people use. We explicitly link insecurity with the ability to get and maintain some work activity or other reasonable source of income when it is perceived as needed by young people. This is explicitly linked to strategies, individual decision making, and set ways of acting based on such decisions. This is the main topic of this chapter.

Theory of individual behaviour and choice at micro- and meso- level.

Before discussing individual strategies, we want to define some basic concepts (hopefully in a way that can be understandable to others) to preset area and to avoid confusion. Social structure, culture, and agency are in most theories the basic building stones of the explanation of individual behaviour. Structure, culture, and agency theory was in the past often used to explain different perspectives on the problem of unemployment or young trajectories (see, e.g., EGRIS 2002, Gallie and Vogler 1994, Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019).

Structure is understood as something supra individual and existing that may include material structures and conditions; institutions and power as well as social relations, coalitions, and memberships (see Rubinstein 2001). Rubinstein (2001) defined social structure more specifically as the structure of opportunity with their costs and benefits to actors. However, this definition is in my opinion more about the role that social structure has in individual lives

than about the existence of social structure ‘per se’ (Rubinstein himself wrote on page 105 that opportunity is internal rather than external).

We understand social structure as the existence of institutions of economy, state, education system, employment protection system, unions, system of social benefits, family and friends’ networks, etc. All institutional determinants that are discussed in one of the next chapters are specific types of social structure. While they are mostly formally independent of (most) individuals, they constitute their opportunities, provide them with benefits as well as they try to restrain their behaviour. They are though not fully deterministic. To understand the role of institutions, we should focus on the interactions between young people and concrete people working/living in these institutions. This includes, for example, interactions with family, friends, schools, employers, and Employment office.

Agency is, according to Rubinstein (2001), the degree to which persons are authors of their own conduct. People are active agents who have a certain freedom of choice and action. Desires and preferences can be crucial for the constitution of opportunity. Structure and culture according to Rubinstein constitute one another (see *ibid.*, pp. 144). Still, we think about the social structure and culture in this book as about conceptually and analytically separated entities. There is difficulty in separating instrumental and normative actions because what we see as rational depends on values (Rubinstein 2001)¹⁹.

Sen (1992) defined agency as the realization of goals and values he/she has a reason to pursue, whether or not they are connected with her own wellbeing²⁰. Young people are during their transition from youth to adulthood increasingly confronted with situations when they must make their own decisions in the context of unpredictable outcomes and prospects (Walther 2006). A person may act to mitigate early job insecurity and to influence his/her job prospects or to negotiate working conditions (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019). The importance of young people’s ability to influence their own life trajectories is increasingly recognized (Anxo and Erhel 2006). Free choice may be distorted by structural conditions. Previous experience of young people matters and may restrict an individual’s options in the future. Still, some past choices may be reversible, also with the help of others and institutions (Anxo and Erhel 2006). In many situations and contexts, it is very difficult to decide whether the situation is voluntary or not from the perspective of a young person (for example Sophie in this book). People may have biased perceptions of risks (Schmid 2006 – see discussion in the next chapter). Plasová and Válková (2009) suppose that negotiations of unemployed/employees about working conditions are connected to their (negotiating) position on the labour market. Some groups,

¹⁹ Rubinstein (2001: 13), e.g., argued that “...it is rare that structural circumstances are ‘a single exit’ situations that require a particular response: there are almost always alternative ‘adaptive’ responses to practical exigencies and culture dictates the choice of sometimes radically different courses of action.” Individuals may still differ in their ability and willingness to be adherent to the proposed norms or to change them (see pages 29–32). Rubinstein in his book provided enormous attention to ‘free rider’ problem. One possible explanation is that the rules are (at least to a certain extend) adapted by the actors while remaining relevant to action.

²⁰ Sen connects the analysis of agency with, e.g. people’s power to pursue their own respective goals or to success in achieving these.

including mothers of small children, may be disadvantaged on the labour market (forced to accept unsatisfactory conditions to secure at least some work position).

Capability perspective

The concept of capability is among the most influential theories about inequality used to access the position of young people. Sen's (1992) basic assumption presented in the book 'Inequality Re-examined' is that people are different, with different personal and external characteristics and circumstances. Equality is in most cases judged with a specific purpose by comparing some particular aspect of a person – constituting a 'a space'. This is done by giving some importance to both setting outer boundaries and for definition within the space (see Sen 1992). In our case, we focus it on insecurity, but other related (linked) aspects are also relevant (e.g., unemployment, quality of work, or material deprivation). These can be both process aspects and outcomes. Sen argued that limiting the understanding of the inequality to one space could lead to not reflecting the inequality in another space. Thus, the choice of space (perspective of inequality) has tremendous practical importance in assessing some claims and denying others (Sen 1992: 131).

Nevertheless, we cannot reduce functioning to those appraised by researcher. On the opposite, we should understand which functioning young people appraise and which they want to avoid. As we understand Sen's work, both experts' views and the views of young people are in some respects relevant for the defined perception of the problem (see Sen 1992: 54-55, 83). This is realised in this book by presenting both views (view of young people, our view) as separately as possible (reflecting that reconstruction of the story is a partial secondary interpretation).

Sen (1992) writes about the ability of a person to achieve²¹ valued functionings (beings and doings) that he or she has reason to value. Capabilities and functioning are directly linked, representing the same issue within the selected space. Functionings are constitutive of a person's being. Conversion is a process when some person is able to (has the power to) convert means of freedom (resources or primary goods) to valued functionings. Resources are valuable as means to bring valued ends. For example, some of the respondents mentioned that without money they were powerless, their opportunities were limited (Magda, Sabina).

Sen argues that the extent of freedom in this process may be enhanced as well as limited by personal and social characteristics including, e.g., gender, age, disadvantage, personal handicap, location, inadequacy of institutions, need to obey locally shared norms or the way a person is viewed in the society. The consequent question is whether resources, characteristics, and circumstances are adequate to reach valued functioning.

Capability represents various combinations of functionings that a person can achieve and represent his/her freedom of choice from possible livings, the real-life alternatives he/she has.

²¹ Achievement is concerned with what we manage to accomplish (Sen 1992).

This approach normatively assumes that freedom of choice (the part that our own decision plays in the choices) and the richness of real options may enhance the wellbeing of people²². Sen linked his concept to concept of strategy as we discuss it in the next section. He wrote:

"[T]wo persons with the same actual capabilities and even the same goals may end up with different outcome because of differences in strategies or tactics that they respectively follow in using their freedoms." (Sen 1992: 82).

Still, according to Sen, the chosen set of achieved functioning (that we understand as the result of action) may be used to appraise someone's wellbeing. We want to know what young people are able and not able to achieve. Sen also argued that when assessing social policy (welfare), we can consider not only their wellbeing, but also the diversity of personal characteristics of people, conversion factors, and interpersonal differences in conversion. For the evaluation of wellbeing, it is better to understand how social policy helps to achieve valuable functionings than to rely on the assessment of incomes. We return to the discussion of the relationship between agency and evaluation of social policy systems in chapter about institutional determinants.

We have chosen the story of Herbert to illustrate the relevance of the capability approach.

Story of Herbert

Herbert is a Roma man in his middle age. He did not finish vocational training for the bricklayer because he did not enjoy the study and he was distracted by 'going out with his comrades'. He commented:

"I lived in delusion. I was a dull boy. I enjoyed life and did not think about work yet. I had money from my father at home and I did not think it were necessary to go to work somewhere. It came later, in another time." (R31: 169).

Herbert was financially dependent on his parents. He started working at the age of 15 (usually he worked as an unqualified 'support worker' in the building industry). He had only one rather stable job in metallurgy (lasting for five years) when he was young. He got this job due to the help of his father who already worked in the same factory. Usually, Herbert was not able to hold the job for long ('usually after one month I was expelled'). When he worked, it was usually short-term work without work contract ('you take everything you get').

Herbert started to live alone, but later (after two years) he returned to live back with his parents for some time. He had two children with his former girlfriend (at age about 25). Later he married again with his current wife. He lived from day to day, and he felt insecure due to

²² There are several limits to this idea as it was reflected by Sen himself. These may be linked to: a) the relationship between freedom and control (which is not always necessary when still achieving the wanted outcome), b) relationship between freedom and choice (do we really have to choose everything?), c) difficulty of decisions and d) unwanted consequences of choices.

the need to care for the family. He does not claim any social benefits. He reflects that insecurity is permanent in his life.

"I learned to live like that. What I do not find myself, I do not have. Because to get permanent work today, my god, anywhere, I do not have a chance. Anywhere I go to ask...I still go to ask to calm myself. You cannot imagine, when you go to sleep with the vision 'what is going to be tomorrow'. Today I know that I can be calm, so I will sleep. However, one or two days before the end [of work], I will be crazy again. Where will I go? What I will find quickly? Because they do not help you at Employment office, they just go there to sit and drink coffee. You have to care yourself. And they are like that: when I go there, she asks me: 'Do you look for something?' And I am completely finished, totally finished. I say: 'No, madam, I sleep every whole day.' (R31: 205).

The main discourse in the story of Herbert is 'blocked opportunities', the options that are denied to him. This discourse is present in his stories about looking for a job, or about going to a disco when he was young. He gave an example:

"I did not think about returning to school. I did not have a taste for it. After Velvet revolution. Everywhere you went, e.g., we wanted to go to the disco, and they did not allow us to go in. Or we went somewhere, and they said: 'it is forbidden for Roma'. It was like that and I think it is like that even now." (R30: 89)

He said he had 'no chance' to get a stable job, also because he was in prison. His sentence is registered for ten years. He spoke about concrete experiences:

"I did not care [what kind of work]...Parents all the time told me to go to work and I walked [to ask for a job]. However, it was not possible. 'Come next week to ask, come in two weeks'. And when I went there, it was already occupied." (R31: 33).

...

"Nowadays when I go somewhere to ask for a job, they look at me, how I looked like and that is enough for them. And they have all full." (R31: 77)

This experience of refusal was cumulating and repeating, and Herbert was discouraged and had depression. He did not look in other fields than the building industry ('I do not have the head nor schools for it') and when he looked for jobs with the minimum required qualification, he was not successful.

Another his discourse is 'need of education'. When he was young, he did not like idea to return to education because he felt that Roma opportunities are blocked. However, nowadays he regrets not finishing his education, because he would not 'have to beg for work'. Employment office have never given him any job offers and he refused retraining because the decision about training was on him and he felt low support for it from the street level worker. For Herbert it is not possible to live a normal life ('to have a work and satisfied life'). Moving to another place would not help him ('You cannot solve anything without help'). As many other Roma in this book, he thinks that the opportunities were much better during communist times ('no problems and calm life').

My reflection: Although Herbert does not lack motivation, he is clearly unable to change his unsatisfactory situation himself and is deeply unhappy ('I wanted to live, I do not live today'). He is repeatedly refused and there are other factors blocking his possible capabilities (evidence of his previous sentence). From Sen's perspective, his capability to realise valuable functionings is very limited.

"I wanted to live normally, to be satisfied. I wanted to find work, go to work regularly, and have salary. However, it is not possible. It is just not possible." (R31: 91)

He admits that he did not know what to do and he thinks that he could not solve anything himself. Undeclared work is not the preferred option for him, it is done out of necessity. He is happy with the little opportunities (work for a few days) that other people would probably reject. The other very interesting story he presented is when he reflected that he did not use the option of retraining (ALMP) because he did not trust that it would lead to valuable functioning (regular work). He is so discouraged that he even is not willing to take rare available options.

Strategies to tackle insecure trajectories

We will look at the specific way how young people decide and act. The basic assumption of the concept of strategies is that young people can somehow decide and choose various solutions to their problems (Hora and Žižlavský 2009). Evans and Heinz (1994c) defined transition behaviour as patterns of activity that young people adopt in attempting to realize their personal interests and occupational goals within social requirements and structural opportunities. Engbersen et al. (2006) described various strategies as rational solutions to the problems unemployed people are faced with. Snel and Staring (2001) defined coping strategies as strategies aimed to meet basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) and not fall too far below the prevailing conditions in their society. Thompson et al. (1990) argued that the rationality or irrationality of strategies is embedded in concrete social and institutional settings and concrete ways of life. Strategies include both concrete goals (achievements) and concrete means to achieve these goals and for individuals both have to be somehow 'appropriate' from the perspective of own identity (see Rubinstein 2001: 123).

Our reflection of strategies is based on the previous work of Sirovátka and Spies (2018), Spies (2018) and Robinson et al. (2018). We tried to incorporate the following questions to our reflection of the strategies.

- What kind of solution do young people seek?
- How much young people need activity (solution of situation) or is there a satisfaction with current conditions?
- How young people realise their strategies?
- How engaged are young people in the solution?
- Is there compliance with the offered official policies?
- How and to what extent are young people successful in overcoming their situation?

Types of strategies used during education

Evans and Heinz (1994a, 1994c) and their colleagues (e.g., Clark and Kupka 1994a, 1994b) identified four ideal types of transition behaviour: 'strategic', 'step-by-step', 'wait and see and 'taking chance'. Common strategy in their research was 'step-by-step'. We have reviewed their work for our purpose and concluded with these five strategies encompassed the following aspects.

Types of strategy	Key aspects
Strategic (Career oriented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<i>developed career identity</i>', '<i>clear vision of future profession</i>', '<i>clear-cut vocational choice</i>', '<i>want to identify with their work</i>' • '<i>long-term aim and plan in their view</i>', '<i>actively seeks work experience</i>' • '<i>unwilling to change strategy</i>' • '<i>achieving a qualification that one could always fall back on</i>', '<i>secure their subsequent position</i>' • '<i>have a conception how their career fits into their image of future life</i>'
Step-by-step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<i>undeveloped career identity</i>', '<i>do not know what they want to become</i>', '<i>without a definite professional goal</i>', '<i>process of searching for interesting occupation</i>' • '<i>passivity in strategy and search for opportunities</i>', '<i>take it as it comes</i>', • '<i>dealing with successive tasks or problems</i>' • '<i>ready to change or take the next step (including high education)</i>',
Taking chance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<i>finding interests within the process</i>', '<i>inspired by the training or education process</i>' • '<i>taking immediate opportunities</i>'
Wait and see	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<i>keeping one's options open</i>', '<i>be prepared to try something else</i>' • '<i>waiting to see what will turn up</i>', '<i>wait until their current course ends</i>', '<i>postponing career decisions</i>' • '<i>waiting for an opportunity (e.g. apprenticeship) to open</i>' • '<i>using parking options</i>', '<i>withdraw to think seriously about the future</i>'
Blown in the wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<i>very limited options</i>', '<i>had to do things they did not like and there was nothing they could do about it</i>' • '<i>not listened to and respected</i>', '<i>marginalised work conditions</i>'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘coping with life’ or ‘feeling of being blown in the wind’, • ‘depressed and lack of initiative’ • ‘afraid and unwilling to take risks’ • ‘forced to start all over again’, ‘trying something completely different than before’
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These types of behaviour may be interrelated and functioning simultaneously or subsequently for an individual and thus they are not pure types. Relevant dimensions of these strategies included:

- Autonomy in the choice of occupational goals and occupational routes.
- Activity (strategic, taking chance) and passivity (step by step, wait and see, blown in the wind): including the time that young people dedicate to their decisions and whether they tend to pay attention and decide at the very last moment of transition – last minute attitude to careers (Behrens and Brown 1994b, Evans and Heinz 1994c).

We have found that these insights into the decision-making of young people provide a suitable framework for the interpretation of information from other studies (e.g., from Kieselbach 2003, Trhlíková 2017, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018).

We have found also other typologies of the strategies based on different aspects of the issue. Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2019) named the following types: self-relying, self-improving, institutionally enabled, informally enabled, disoriented and unmotivated, hampered and blocked. Trhlíková (2017) distinguished some other strategies including ‘choosing for security’ and ‘combining work with studying’. Strategy ‘choosing for security’ included the choice of an education path that was easier, lessened competition, lowered general school demands, and avoided unwanted and difficult subjects (such as mathematics). Young people sometimes later regretted this strategy and changed their careers to do something more desirable and demanding. This can be also explained by the fact that some young people were more successful during their high school education than in their elementary education. The strategy of combining work with studying was in some cases good because it helped transition but also risky because in some cases it led to the preference of employment and to education drop out.

Types of strategies used during unemployment

Another theory of strategies focused on the situation with different key aspects. Pais and Pohl (2003) distinguished three kinds of behaviour: compliance, ritualism (apparent compliance), and alienation (withdrawal and clear demotivation). Previous research on unemployment (Engbersen et al. 1990, Engbersen et al. 2006) characterised several ideal types of people according to the type of strategy they used, their engagement and successfulness:

‘Conformists’ (Engbersen et al. 2006) are people who conform to the offer of (mostly legal) activities such as looking for legal work or training, engage in the solution of their situation

and are mostly in the long term successful. They usually do not misuse welfare and only rarely work on the side. Hora (2008b) characterised these people as ‘unbroken’. These people try to be optimistic, do not give up, fight against their fortune, and keep looking for the job.

‘Ritualists’ (Engbersen et al. 2006) are people who conform to the offer of (mostly legal) activities and initially engage in the solution. However, they are mostly unsuccessful and that may lead to a gradual loss of inner belief (hope) that the activities are going to be successful. There may be serious obstacles for their work engagement such as health problems. They continue at least formally in pursuing these activities. They do not engage in informal economy. Job seeking behaviour is stimulated by inner needs as well as by the demands of their social surroundings and welfare department. Hora (2008b) characterised ritualists as people with inner resignation – the fact that they look for the job is connected with self-persuasion rather than with the strategy of pretending job search.

‘Retreatists’ (Engbersen et al. 2006) were people who completely resigned to any chance to get a work activity. Although they would like to work, they do not use any activities to improve their situation. This group was more isolated than other groups, which further contributed to their situation and dependence on benefits. Hora (2008b) has found several cases of people who were almost resigned (but not totally resigned). He concluded that periods of resignation might change with periods of renewal of activity. Survivors are people who live from day to day, taking immediate opportunities and resigning to any more substantial change.

‘Entrepreneurs’ (Engbersen et al. 2006) are people who try to find a solution for their situation outside the standard list of measures and options provided. They have an instrumental view of work where the main criterion is high income or preferred lifestyle. They do not have problems with breaking the rules. They may work regularly in the informal economy. They often have some kind of network of contacts allowing them to get a job. They may even decide to change their habitus by leaving abroad.

‘Calculating’ (Engbersen et al. 2006) were people who used social benefits as a mean to some other (not necessarily work-related) long-term goals such as studying or caring for dependent relatives. Looking for a job was as an obstacle to acquire these goals. They do not have problems with breaking the rules. Somehow, the unemployment status seems to be situational for calculating and entrepreneurs. They kept it as long as it is advantageous in concrete conditions but not indefinitely.

Autonomous are people who are not conformist with standard offer of measures because they do not have to be. Living an independent life was high value. This may be caused by other external or internal sources of support or by their satisfaction rooting in their modesty and reduced needs. They rejected work as a main goal in life (or the work has to be enjoyable) or they were able to find viable alternatives when the work were not available. They may be oriented towards other goals (hobbies).

Choices and types of activity

Although various authors usually define the problem in the focus of strategies quite differently, often the problem is defined as ‘income security’, ‘making ends meet’ (e.g., Engbersen et al. 2006) or even ‘making ends meet in a socially acceptable way’. Still, young people may have much higher or completely different life and career plans and aspirations including personal development, to be rich and live and decent life. We believe that young people themselves should define the problem.

There are some ideal types of individuals and their households where concrete strategies prevails. Reasons for this are sometimes long term and often differentiated (Hora 2008b). Jordan et al. (1992) argued that there is in some cases a common ‘income strategy’ shared by both partners. In such cases, it is a mistake to understand the strategy as purely individualistic and not to take situation within the household into account. Preferences and their hierarchy may be important for the choice of a concrete strategy (option). However, not all options are always in a given time equally accessible and real. Concrete choices may be associated with additional costs and burdens. Structural conditions and possibilities restrict the strategies that are really used (Sirovátka 2009). Similarly, Engbersen et al. (2006), for example, found that the use of informal work was influenced by concrete opportunities and risk perception. It matters whether young people perceive their options as real or they perceive that some options relate to minimum chances. Options may be more or less attractive if they are/not compatible with other responsibilities such as caring for dependent family members and studying (Engbersen et al. 2006).

Preferences relate to selectivity (to be willing to accept a concrete option) and it is relevant to jobs, return to education and labour market policies (Denzin and Rubery 2002, Engbersen et al. 2006) but also for concrete conditions of these options that are acceptable. We can think about tactics in this context. Gallie and Vogler (1994), Engbersen et al. (2006), Hora (2008b), and Sirovátka (2009) wrote about the strategy of adaptability targeting to the labour market. They connect this strategy with:

- Acceptance of lower/different type or quality of job: change in content of the job, acceptance of the temporal or insecure nature of the job, acceptance of lower pay, acceptance of part-time job. People tend to prefer jobs that they have qualifications for or with which they have at least previous work experience. There may be also health limits that restrict some work possibilities.
- Acceptance of higher demands or job intensity: overtime work, high work pace, enforced time schedule, unregularly working time, dangerous, and health damaging work.
- Education or (re)training: choice of not preferred field of study.
- Mobility, working away and commuting to work: moving to another city, traveling long times. People are often unwilling to move, and they see this as the strategy of last resort (see, e.g., the quotation in Trhlíková 2017: 47).
- Changing mode of employment: e.g. self-employment.

In the individual perspective, we can see adaptability as a specific competence, which is influenced by both knowledge and skills and personal traits including own motivation. Trhlíková (2017) argued that adaptability was a factor of success in the cases when this led to a better job or gaining of job experience, which was used later. However, it was also necessary not to stay in a nonperspective job for too long. Gallie and Vogler (1994) have found that people with lower education levels and more previous unemployment were more willing to be flexible with some exceptions on training and mobility. Sirovátka (2009) found that being flexible is not always a viable self-helping strategy.

Concerning more immediate operational goals, there are several general types of strategies identified throughout the literature (Jordan et al. 1992, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Snel and Staring 2001, Hora 2008b, Hussain et al. 2016, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). These combine the goal with the corresponding types of activities. Sometimes these types of activity are alternatives (mutually excluding each other), sometimes they may be additive.

Strategies leading to finding employment or work (means for living) and based on personal activities: looking for a job, informal work, collecting and selling scrap metal or herbs. There are several concrete techniques of looking for a job including reading advertisements, asking social contacts, internet use, cooperation with the Employment office or placement agency, and asking employers personally (see Hora 2008b). Strategies are different in how they are time and money consuming and in the perceived availability and successfullness of these strategies. There are also other perceived advantages and disadvantages of concrete strategies (see Hora 2008b). Work in the grey economy is often in the form of short-term and irregular activities (Hora 2008b).

Some respondents had also some specific strategies like collecting metal (Bruno). One of the respondents also mentioned collecting food from dust bins.

Strategy of keeping current employment: this strategy is related to keeping the current job notwithstanding bad wage, low security, and bad working conditions. There are two main alternatives: to quit the current job and a strategy to try to switch jobs. There is a considerable level of different types of insecurity in all these options.

Self-employment: this is a rather specific and less frequent strategy. There are both motivation factors and concrete conditions that people consider (see Hora 2008b, Hora, Soukup, and Suchanec 2011 for details).

Strategies using outer sources other than from work activities: help from relatives and friends (help to find work, financial help, gifts, common housing, and childcare help), debts and claiming social benefits (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b). Help from relatives and friends can be influenced by several factors including limited social ties, bad relations with social ties (family), bad economic situation of social ties, and their perception of the situation of person in need and refusal of help from the side of people in need (Hora 2008b). Claiming of social benefits may be unavailable due to the institutional characteristics of the system and its interaction with the family situation (see chapter 6). Using of outer sources may be

connected with unpleasant feelings of embarrassment, stigma, or dependency (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998).

Strategies using inner sources: e.g., using own resources, savings, considering expenses (abjuring something, buying less, time allocation of expenses, expenses allocation towards necessities), budget calculations and time management (common budget), looking for sales and buying second hand, using own production, selling unnecessary things or own products. People without sufficient income use such strategies because of both necessity and humbleness (see Hora 2008b).

Radical change of family conditions: it may include finding a new partner, cohabitation, movement of official address, as well as excluding nonproductive household members from consuming (Snel and Staring 2001, Trilfajová et al. 2015).

Semi legal or illegal strategies: include truancy, involvement in gangs, making conflicts, thefts, selling drugs, frauds, and prostitution (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019). In some cases, social networks may lead to involvement in unsocial and risky behaviour (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019, Ayllon et al. 2019). For young people it can be an easy way to make a lot of money, but it can have also dire consequences for their future lives (Ayllón et al. 2019) including health problems, broken relationships, and imprisonment.

Studying and training: there are several strategies connected to studying, including: self-education, specific training courses to acquire needed skills, return to school to complete formal education and ‘buying time’ when young people go to school because they have no other alternatives, or they wait for something else (Hora 2008b). Participation in training including active labour market programs, which could be seen as a specific education strategy, is discussed in chapter 6. Among the reasons, why people refused or cannot participate in further education were lack of information and time, low belief in the ability to learn, and in outcomes of education and preference of simple or manual work (Hora 2008b).

Economic inactivity strategies: a) vacation effect (relief, reduced stress, need to relax for some time, belief that it would not be a problem to find a job latter, limited need to find a job quickly or even temporal job avoidance), b) household orientation and strategy of personal improvement, d) escape strategies (Hora 2008b). Young people may also prefer hobbies and social contacts to regular work (Hora 2008b).

Volunteering as a strategy to gain self-confidence, gain experience, or get a foothold somewhere (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019, Bussi et al. 2019b).

Commuting, movement, migration, and travelling abroad strategies: People are often reluctant to move. However, the movement is not such a problem for young people and people who are not settled in the frameworks of friends and family ties (Hora 2008b). Reasons why young people want to go abroad include better chances to find work, better pay and work conditions, and nicer behavior without discrimination (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Movement to another region is an investment in better usage of human capital

(Brožová 2016). While other regions may provide better opportunities, this strategy may be also risky (see Trlifajová et al. 2015).

Strategies used when looking for work

This type of strategy is related to the effort to find work. Respondents were usually well able to look for work for themselves by various specific job searching strategies. When assessing the presented job search strategies, we used the model created by Hora (2008a, 2008b) who divided the job search process to below mentioned phases. Individual job search strategy is a specific combination of activities usually used by the concrete unemployed to find a job and it includes activities in all phases. For example, Fred described his whole individual strategy by the following statement.

"I standardly I used the channel internet including the portal of Employment office, the notice board of job offers, various servers such as [name of private job search server] etc., I registered there, I created an online CV and I published it and I replied vehemently on job offers which I found on the internet by sending them my CV and motivation letter. I would say that from 150 such job offers there were one or two replies, so perceptually it was not very successful. When I was occasionally invited to some interviews, I went personally there about once or twice a month. Even when it looked like successfully at the first glance, it mostly was unsuccessful." (R26: 63)

Finding information about jobs

The first part of the job search strategy is finding information/of a potential employer/workplace/job offer. This mainly included using internet mostly including job search portals where job offers can be sorted by specific criteria (Ben, Ken, Bruno, Karin, Derek, Ron, Roman, Sophie, Lisa, Jake, Janine, Clara, Ellyn, Vanda, Betty, Fred, John, Simon, Tony, Laura). John, for example, said that offers from these portals were sent automatically to his email once a week.

Some respondents (Ben, Karin, Quido, Otto, Jake, Fred, John, Simon) mentioned using Employment office system or a list of jobs – probably they spoke about a database of jobs managed directly by Employment office. This database can be accessed by the internet or there were some printed lists available at blackboards at Employment office. Sophie and Otto mentioned that they had to go for using the internet to Employment office (probably because they did not have internet at home) and Harrold went to NGO for the same reason. Quido, Sophie, and Vanda also mentioned that they were getting a job list of job offers from Employment office by e-mail. Jake was given a printed list of jobs during the visit at Employment office.

Other workplace finding strategies were mentioned rarely. Betty seeks newspapers to look for jobs, while Simon and Lucy said they stopped to use it because it is no longer functioning (employers stopped to use it as an advertisement channel). Another channel sometimes used for looking for the job were various interest groups in internet social networks (Facebook,

etc.). Janine, Quido. Ellyn and Laura described the situation of ‘random encounter’ when they noticed a concrete offer. Simon looked at the webpages of firms where he had worked before.

Most young respondents clearly possessed basic job search skills including knowledge of computers and internet browsing, and they declared no problems with this. Ben and Ken, for example, reflected that they are familiar with computers (they learned using them at elementary school) and looking for work via computer constituted no problem for them. Still, there were some rare exceptions to this rule, people who were not able to use the internet and/or who depended on personal contracts (notably Harrold).

Many young people used their personal contacts to look for a job (Karin, Lisa, Violet, Jake, Janine, Clara, Quido, Betty). Violet explained that personal contacts were good (i.e. functioning) source of job opportunities. Jake, Ron, and Karin said that it was for them the only way to really get a job. For young people (Jake, Ken, Karin), contacts and skills of their parents or other older relatives are sometimes more important for success than their own contacts (see below help in job search). Sources of tips are people whom you trust and who trust you. You can ask them freely about tips:

“Through acquaintance with people, you speak about it [unemployment] and you can get some information, which sometimes brought me somewhere. Or ask someone...meeting people on the street. At that time, it was possible to speak about it without shame, because we were colleagues. It is no longer possible. They look at you scornfully.” (R32: 53)

Other limit of looking through personal contacts is in getting nonsuitable job offers, because acquaintances are functioning in different professional or social groups or otherwise the jobs are not corresponding (this was described by Clara and Janine). Clara and Roman reflected that friends were a good source especially for occasional jobs. We discuss this topic more below.

Contacting employer

The second phase in job search is contacting an employer – personally, by email or by phone. Jake mentioned that he contacted employers by written letter, but many of them they did not react (he had no response) or they reacted after a long time. Quido, Ron, Fred, Magda, Sandra, and Derek mentioned sending CVs to potential employers. Some respondents used phone calls (Ben, Ron, Melinda). We have also noted that for many people an important job search strategy was ‘going around’, visiting employers who offer jobs or who operate nearby (Roman, Ron, Bruno, Melinda, Lucy, Rachel, John, Magda, Herbert, Josephine). This strategy is often about visiting employers who entrepreneur in the same field as the preferred job or entrepreneurs where the unemployed subjectively perceive a greater chance to get a job. Roman e.g. explained:

“I was unemployed last year as well as the year before, having only small jobs for a while. I was looking for a job by visiting all factories, I asked everywhere. They all wanted only my CV, I waited for a long time, but no one noted me.” (R9: 66)

Rachel explained how she looks for work:

"I look at the internet, find something, I call there first, but it is with a bad outcome most of the time, and so I prefer going [directly] there to calling, because they say yes, yes, yes and when you come there they say no, no, no. Therefore, I prefer going personally from the start... It proved to be better...I have CV, I try to look well, dress well, speak nicely, prepare what I will say." (R70: 121).

Role of CV and information assessment phase and interview

Third phase (sometimes merged with the second phase) is applying, sending CV, motivation letters or needed certificates to employers (mentioned by John, Sandra, and Fred) and the fourth phase was interview. Respondents mentioned that employers required proof of education or 'clear list of sentences' (Derek).

Next, we will consider the role of CV. Sandra said that they learned how to write CV during high school. We also noted that some NGOs and schools taught how to write CV (see chapter about institutions). Sophie said that she does not have CV yet nor she knows what she would write there (having no school nor work experience yet). Quido noted dissatisfaction with his CV because he 'did not pay enough attention to create it'. Vanda said that she tried to adjust CV to the needs of employers.

"I always tried to read the announcement of the job, what they would probably need and this I put into my CV. It was still close to reality not to fabricate too much, but to be close [to the real situation]". (R21:51)

Magda said that it is essential to be skilled in talking and how to present herself. Jake commented that he cannot much influence his chances when the decision upon him is based only on the provision of CV. It is much more possible to influence his chances during interviews.

"When you are invited for the interview, you can influence it more, it is much more about you, how you will behave, what you will say, with what style." (R11: 175)

Low success in job search

Most respondents were very well able to look for work and they had a lot of experience with this process, but it was often not leading to success. In almost all interviews, respondents described their low chances to find work (despite sometimes rather high effort) due to the low interest of employers or workplaces being already occupied (Otto, Herbert). On many occasions, friends were the main source for work offers of concrete jobs. They were often able to negotiate acceptance of our respondents for the job (Ron). We reflect that job search strategies were not the main topic in the interviews and this aspect needs further research.

Reflection on criteria for consideration of the job

Final realisation or not realisation of concrete work was of course not only based on the decision of the employers but also on the willingness of young people to accept what was

offered. We reflect on the general criteria that young people mentioned in relation to considering the acceptance of a concrete job. These criteria could be used for concrete jobs both positive and negative depending on concrete circumstances. This topic is further developed in the next chapter when we consider the role of the employers and the characteristics of concrete jobs which the young people mentioned to deny. Basic criteria during the job search were:

- *proximity of the job (Otto, Bruno, Simon, Sophie, Vanda, Betty, Helen, Melinda),*
- *acceptance/preference or denial of specific professions (Jake, Quido, Janine, Sabina),*
- *demanding character or the job – long working hours, time schedule of work, monotonous work, very high demands on effort, stressful, etc. (Magda, Quido, Derek, Ellyn, Vanda, Betty, Helen, Fred, Ron),*
- *stability of the job (Sabina) and level of wage (Peter, Derek, Simon, Bruno, Sophie, Betty)*
- *whether it is agency work or not (Ken, Quido, John).*

If there was a ‘possibility to choose a job’ some respondents mentioned also some other criteria which supported their interest in work such as interesting character of the job, good teammates and less formal work environment (Ken, Roman, Jake, Peter, Quido, Clara, Vanda, Fred). Derek said he applies for jobs that he believes that he could be successful.

In some cases, various kinds of adaptability/flexibility were part of the coping strategy of the respondents. They accepted different types of job, hard and manual work, distant work, time flexibility, lower wages, work on trial, special work demands, and substandard types of work (occasional work) including e. g. collection of scrap metals. Strategy of working on agency work was mentioned by some of the respondents. There was an interesting explanation by Ben and Derek that the concrete choice between flexibility (accepting anything currently offered) and reservations is in their case based upon the actual necessity of the work and the options available. John and Antonia spoke about the gradual lessening of their initial expectations:

“I will tell you...the first half a year I wanted to do only what I did before. After a three quarters a year you start to reconsider this, you start to step down from the peak that you had set before. You say: ‘Ok I might not do only this, I can...’...and nowadays...if they offered me something where I would be...not well but in accordance with the expenses paid, I would take a shovel to put the sand into a cement mixer. From the beginning, there was an euphoria: ‘I will go to do person in chief again’ but you start to lessen [your requirements/expectations?] gradually.” (R16: 147).

“I was looking on the internet, but there were not many jobs in social work, and they were not enlisting. And then I started to look, because I was really desperate, I needed work and then I looked even for tidying jobs, I would accept anything. However, there was no opportunity. In some places they told me directly that they do not accept Roma, sometimes they told me that there is not a vacant workplace.” (R61: 45)

Job finding strategies were influenced by personal and family situation. For example, Sophie did not want to work far away due to her son. Betty reflected the conflict in this between being flexible and family situation:

"I knew that I were going to find work, but I started to lower the amount of wage from my original demands... or the position, which I really wanted to do, due to my son. I wanted to be with him. To work less hours. Because when I worked for 18 hours I came home and he slept, I left home, and he still slept. This was horrible." (R22: 268)

Help of friends and relatives in bridging/matching during the job search

We reflect how relatives and friends helped young people in the job search. One group of respondents did not actively used informal networks to find work (Magda, Derek, Simon, Sophie, Sabina, Vanda, Sabina). Vanda mentioned that her social networks were too limited to be of real help. Sabina said that she did not have friends who could help her in the job search. Derek and Gwen noted that his friends are looking for a job themselves and unable to help. John, Janine, and Jake mentioned that some of their relatives or friends work in different fields and they are unable to help.

"Friends of mine told me that if they find something, they try to match me with job. However, they [employers] want work experience or vocational training or something else that I do not have." (R19: 134)

There were other respondents who have social networks as the only source or one of the main sources of job or work offers (Karin, Ben, Vendelín, Bruno, Roman, Jake, Peter, Quido, Clara, Tony, Herbert, William). There were several cases when older relatives significantly helped young people to get a job (Ben, Karin). Karin noted:

"I looked for work via the internet, sometimes I looked at Employment office, but most of the time at the internet, these job demands were set in a way that naturally I was without chance with my elementary education, only [change] through acquaintances." (R2: 89)

Jake referred that he was better able to get a job through the contacts of his mother than with his own contacts.

"Considering jobs, these I had always from friends of my mother, or they arranged it: 'I heard that there they are looking, try it' and mostly it was successful...[my friends] were not able to help me. My best friend, he works with CNC machines and there is no chance to get there without school or specialised course. Most of my other schoolmates in IT were programmers or administrators of networks which I do not have a qualification for and I do not like to do it. The other friends who studied the same field with me are abroad or they study university and people with whom I studied elementary school I know almost nothing about." (R11: 139)

Personal contacts and word of mouth were most important in Roma community. They create specific job mediating networks. Family and friendship relationships play a role in these

networks, including personal recommendations within the network, etc. These works are typically in the building industry, earthworks, and collection of metal. There were also a lot of cases when friends or family members really were able to help respondents to get a less or more permanent job (Karin, Ken, Roman, Jake, Peter, Quido, Clara, Ellyn, Eugenie, Fred, Melinda, Herbert, Ron, Lars, Josephine, Felix).

"I got [last job] through the help of my long-time friend... so this help is when you know that someone works somewhere, it is best to ask him if he could not ask whether they are not looking for someone...this is the best way for me...or I really appreciate when in some social network on the web there is offer for occasional job from someone I know. This also is that I trust more [these offers]." (R13: 125)

From this perspective, looking through personal contacts seems to be a functioning strategy. Big question is the quality of the offers (e.g., Herbert reflected that most of these works were only lasting few days). Some young people got their best jobs with reference by their close relatives (e.g. Ben). Family could also help in entrepreneurship by direct participation or by bringing commissions (Tony). In addition, bridging relatives could also help in the orientation and development of skills. This is further reflected in another part of this chapter. Help of institutions (Employment office, personal agencies, and NGO) is reflected in the last chapter.

Strategy of self-employment

Several of our respondents were self-employed for part of their lives (Tony, Quido, Ron, Fred, Simon, Violet). Respondents mentioned many reasons why it is good to be self-employed (it is interesting, not stereotypical, more freedom). This was generally not a very secure strategy and most respondents (except for Tony) were self-employed only for a short part of their lives. The reasons why the business ended were very individual. Tony did not have commissions for some time. Simon went bankrupt. Fred stopped the business because it was very demanding, and he would have to invest more time and effort to develop it further. Violet ended due to the illness of her son, demanding character of work activity and health consequences.

Some respondents thought about self-employment as about an alternative to employment (which they usually were not able to find). In the group of respondents who considered self-employment but not realised it yet, there were two main reasons: lack of intellectual capital and lack of financial capital. Magda would like to start a business, but she was not well oriented in self-employment. Derek mentioned that he would like to be an entrepreneur, but he had no basic idea about the business activity. For other respondents, the strategy of self-employment was limited by general low assets and low ability of respondents to get money (Clara, Melinda, Ellyn, Eugenie). E.g., Melinda tried to borrow a loan for her self-employment, but she was refused and so she has never started her business. Ron mentioned several obstacles for entrepreneurship: money necessary to start a business, fees, compulsory social security contributions, administrative burden during founding a business, that the labour market is small (not as much demand) and it is generally difficult to entrepreneur. Sabina said that she did not want to be an entrepreneur because you have to pay at the start, even when you do not earn yet. Ellyn reflected that entrepreneurship is hard and insecure.

Working without work contract

Beside gaining legal employment there was also a strategy of working without a work contract (Vendelín, Otto, Bruno, Clara, Peter, Betty, Tony, Alice, Lucy, Violet, Sophie) or with income on the side (combining legal and illegal work). This kind of strategy was often about occasional work – e. g., earthworks, services, restaurants, stalls in the market, cleaning, helping friends with specific tasks, small income on the side, etc. (Vendelín, Otto, Bruno, Clara, Tony, Lucy). This kind of employment is often situational, but for some respondents it had a more permanent character (Peter, Betty, Alice, Otto, Herbert). In many described cases, young people looked almost permanently for such short work or it was ‘on the call’.

The main advantage of these works is that they are available (easier to find, they constitute a real opportunity) and sometimes they do not have many specific demands, anyone can do it (Vendelín, Lucy, Herbert, Antonia). Herbert said:

“I do it all the time because we live now in evil times. I can tell you I take everything. It is really disaster. However, where should I go? No one is going to give me a permanent contract, anywhere, and so I am glad I have at least this occasional work.” (R31: 121)

Some young people accepted such jobs because it was the only thing available now, and because it is presented as ‘take this or nothing’. Alice also explained that it is better to do a good job in the grey economy than bad jobs legally (this is further reflected in the last chapter). The paradox is that these jobs have some better working conditions (maybe because they are illegal).

People were not much willing to announce these incomes to Employment office or social assistance in fear that their ‘benefits’ would be reduced, or they would be expelled from Employment office (Vendelín, Otto, Peter, Betty). Young people adapt to living in undeclared jobs by not declaring their incomes anywhere, including avoiding taxes or providing different information than what was their real income (one of the respondents).

Some of the young people perceived great risk in working without a work contract or work on trial because many times they did not get money for such work (Vendelín, Bruno). Other respondents were principally against work in the grey economy, they said that they do not have such opportunities, or they were afraid of being caught by authorities, sanctions and loss of family income and other associated risks (Derek, Simon, John, Lucy).

Need of change and engagement

In this section, we consider aspects related to motivation and ability to be engaged in activities. According to Engbersen et al. (2006), it is important to know about the willingness of unemployed to work, their efforts to find a job (other activities), and whether the unemployed are willing to make sacrifices to get a job. We distinguished these aspects in the following text.

Motivation and willingness to work/study

First, we will discuss the motivation to study and work. There are three possible explanations for work motivation: work ethics, work conditions, and preference of, alternative lifestyles. Rationality and social norms frame motivation. Willingness to work is often based on the perception of work ethics – work is perceived as a duty and not working as immoral (Engbersen et al. 2006). Work is important for people as a solid and reasonable source of income (compared to social benefits), a source of social status, source of meaning in life, source of identity and personal development, source of social contact, and source of economic independence (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Trilfajová et al. 2015). Instrumental motivation to work is often strong because living on social benefits provides often strict financial limits²³. Clasen, Gould, and Vincent (1998) have found that for these reasons work was a strongly preferred option and unemployment was not seen as a viable alternative. In some studies, it was reflected that this stance is also a type of self-presentation of being active and deserving unemployed (Hora 2008b, Trilfajová et al. 2015).

Gallie and Vogler (1994) asked the question whether motivation and financial deprivation really matters for the success of the strategies and their result was that it was not relevant. We believe that this result was found because for many people other factors are more relevant than motivation for their success on the labour market. There also other alternative explanations including a contradiction between general motivation to work and willingness to accept concrete work conditions (see Hora 2008b, next chapter).

Story of Bonny

Bonny is a young man who at the time of the interview worked as a pedagogical assistant with small children. He studied health care high school but then dropped out at the third year at the age of 17 years due to absences at school. Simultaneously, he left home and started to live alone. He now reflects that he left his home (parents) due to unnecessary proudness and his behaviour was not justified from his nowadays perspective. He said:

“...when I left home, my parents, I was a dude who lived alone, and it was not typical at that age. It had a lot of advantages that I now see as petty. It was swanking, I felt myself adult, although it was not so.” (R1: 139)

He lived in a squat with his friends for a year and later they found a common flat. He characterised this period as a time when he was slacking, made debts, did not pay social insurance, and used drugs for some time. He was not much interested about the other world (claiming social benefits, paying social insurance, etc.). He lived this way for about three years. Gradually the debts overwhelmed him, partially because he did not care for them. At that

²³ Comparing to widely shared expectations, people in the study of Hora (2008b) explained that social benefits are not high enough to maintain a decent lifestyle. They were even afraid that they would lose housing, etc.

time, he did not have anyone to help him. The only good thing for him was his volunteer activity (working in culture) he maintained from the previous period.

The help in his situation came from his boss at the volunteer activity he attended. Boss took him to his friend working in NGO organisation. Workers in NGO organisation helped Bonny with his debts by setting calendars of gradual repayment. They also helped him a lot by providing him a different perspective on his situation ('that it is not so bad as it looks like').

Later, Bonny applied to the same NGO for the subsidised workplace of a pedagogic assistant. He could do it because there were no specific education requirements, and the job was aimed at people without work experience. This work in a publicly subsidised workplace was for him after one year transferred to the standard employment contract. He started education for a new job by attending specific qualification courses for this new profession (pedagogic minima, social work). He planned to return to high school (although he somehow hesitated to study it at his age) and he wanted to go to the university later. Bonny lived with his parents again because he could not afford his own housing.

The main narrative in Bonny's story is 'others help' in the situation of passivity, resignation, and personal feeling 'I do not see light and I do not care'. This is mentioned on several occasions. He mentions that he himself did not believe that he could do anything about the change of his situation.

"...one moment, it became that I did not care, last year, I was resigned...I knew that the debts are growing, and I knew it could not continue like that. I somewhere deep within me knew that I have the potential to do something with it, but I give a damn about it all and then it changed..." (R1: 43).

...

"It did not even come to my mind to think about it. I was all the time beaten by this situation and wept in the corner, but it did not come to my mind to buck up." (R1: 127).

The second discourse presented in Bonny's story is 'messed life' in the meaning that live events are not in the standard order. However, it does not mean that his life is delayed in all aspects. Rather, quite surprisingly (when compared to his mates) his life is according to him, more advanced in some respects (work experience) and less advanced in other aspects (school, his own housing). What Bonny reflects is that his life is not of 'standard biography'. At the final stage of the interview, he told us about the change in his family when his father lost job. He explained:

"...and suddenly it all changed, and it was shattered to pieces. And all my values, how I saw the world, were shattered. I thought that I would go to high school and university, would do law, because I thought that it was normal in my family. Now when I look back, I am not sure... before I thought that basic school, high school and university is a normal way and it has to be like that and now I have different values and I do not think, this is the way for everyone and I stopped to assess people according to their education" (R1: 129).

On the other side, there is still some contradiction in this because he thinks that education is necessary. Another discourse we see in his case is ‘enlightenment’. We connect this discourse with the reflection of respondents that nowadays they see some aspects of their life differently (and usually ‘better’) than they did before. In the case of Bonny, it is about his lifestyle and relationships with parents (see above).

„Unfortunately I had [different interests], but I say to myself or I have a feeling that during the last year in the work it shifted me a lot.“ (R1: 65)

His personal experience helps him to see also his clients (children) from another different perspective.

My reflection: Bonny is a lucky man because he was helped by other people to the extraordinary extend. Not only that these people helped him personally (his boss, family, people in NGO) but they were also able to use available structural opportunities (subsidised workplace) to help him. His family also took him back home and this is not automatic for Bonny (he is glad and thankful for all help). Bony reflects that he was motivated by the nice behaviour of people in NGO.

“They were the first who said ‘you do it well’ and ‘we see something in you’ and it really enhanced me to another world that someone started to...[he did not finish the sentence]” (R1: 191)

However, it would not be possible if Bonny himself was not somehow motivated to change his situation and if he later would not be able to keep on track, return to live with his parents and further educate himself. I see also inner motivation in his story because he really likes working with children.

My reflection on motivation

We have found the motivation towards various options often changed within the life course, creating a dynamic rather than a static picture. Higher levels of motivation could be noticed when young people matured, and they expected themselves to stand on their own legs. Betty spoke about what she learned from her situation. She said that she has learned ‘to take some things more seriously’. Perceptions of motivation related to work ethics among more mature young people should not be militated or underestimated. Karin, Clara, Herbert, Harrold, and John provide examples of this kind of reasoning:

“I think that when a person work...has more for 1000 or 2000 CZK, it is a difference and it is better, because otherwise you do nothing at home, [when you work] you can have different thoughts and the life is different, make more sense.” (R2: 81).

“Unemployment has no positives. On the opposite, I see only negatives. What positives you can have when you are without work?...Normal person sees no positives in unemployment. When you consider the financial situation, personal life and all this.” (R16: 239).

"...[pressure from parents] was the greatest stimulation factor [to find work]. However, there is a fact that when I would not work, what could I do? I could do nothing, I could not buy anything. Nowadays you need money for everything, for lighting in the room, for flushing a toilet, or for leisure activities. Therefore, you need money to live. And so, it was the typical engine for me. The greatest engine was for me that I had to pay for the necessary things. However, I would seek work anyway, I would not neglect it. I dislike 'social cases' who take advantage of the state. I would not like to be like that and so I would look for work anyway." (R17: 214).

"[Work] has great significance for me because it gives me a feeling that I am able to do something or that I do something which is useful. I can repay it to my husband somehow financially. Thus, for me it has a great significance." (R21: 127)

Among the factors mentioned by the respondents, we can identify work as a source of life sense, need of activity, economic reasons, and refusal of/distance from claiming social benefits. Work means having a decent income, to do something sensible and it allows to live 'normal life'. Some young people note the social effect of employment:

"When you have work, you are one hundred times better, because first you earn money, you are proud and you more appreciate it, you go among other people, make friends and you start to have higher self-esteem." (R7: 331)

Economic reasons are often presented. Money from work are a source of decent lifestyle and sufficient security:

"Work is a security that I will bring home some crowns [Czech currency], I pay the bills and eat something. It is stupid but it is it. Nowadays, without work, thinking how to pay fines, rent, bills, it is more and more of this, they want a lot of [money] at school. My mother-in-law helps us. Because we do not have enough." (R25: 119)

"I would like to work. I wish it a lot. To earn sufficient money and work. To have supplementary income." (R58: 271)

"Work is security. You get paid, you can pay your bills, buy something for children. Almost no one goes nowadays to work only for fun, you go there for your salary." (R32: 121)

For some young people, there is motivation to do something with their lives to achieve a change of their situation. Harrold spoke about motivation and urgency to finish education.

"I must want it [finish education]. I must want to do everything for it. If I would not go to school, I would not go to work and I will [only] say I want to work. If I would only speak about it, it is not going to happen." (R57: 362)

Some respondents (e.g. Roman) mentioned that they wanted to escape claiming social benefits because they were not sufficient to feed the family. Other respondents mentioned

finding employment quickly when they were desperate and without income and they ‘needed to find something quickly’ (Janine, Peter). This can be understood as emergency motivation. It is also typical for people who live from day to day.

Young people’s willingness to work is sometimes somehow not absolute (in the meaning of accepting everything), but it is conditional. It may be related to strong work status or career identity, concrete demanded financial conditions, or other work conditions. Some people connect motivation with willingness to work for a certain wage. This wage is not only defined by the offers and demands of both sides of the contract but also by employment legislation – it is not allowed to work for less than the minimum wage (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). Clasen, Gould, and Vincent (1998) argued that improvements in income have to be perceived as real, sufficient and secure before the unemployed will accept work. Uncertainty about jobs and rules reduces willingness to take a temporary or insecure job (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). Moreover, Trilfajová et al. (2015: 66) concluded that:

“Financial motivation to work cannot be reduced only to income from employment. We need to include also the possibility to secure the economic stability of the household in the sense of securing long-term and regular income that allows for financial independence of the household. This situation leads to much higher motivation”.

Some people do not like solutions to their situation that would leave them half-dependent on the welfare state (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998)²⁴. Young people can be also in the unemployment trap (income from benefits and occasional jobs is higher than from potential formal employment when other expenses are considered)²⁵ or in the poverty trap, when any new legal work income is subtracted from social benefits (see Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora 2008b)²⁶. This problem is highly relevant exactly for young people living with parents (see Trilfajová et al. 2015). There may be a group of unemployed, who are better when living on social benefits and working on the side – this decision and its rationalization is often dependent on concrete conditions (see Jordan et al. 1992, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). Debts may limit the willingness of the unemployed to take a legal job, because debts would be subtracted from potential income (Engbersen et al. 2006, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Trilfajová et al. 2015). Still, for some people, debts are a motivating factor because they want to pay them and live a normal life again (Trilfajová et al. 2015). Some authors argue that for specific unemployed, being unemployed or in ALMP programs is more secure than to go to

²⁴ This may include both in-work (top up) benefits and other benefits (housing, family) based on low income.

²⁵ Researchers repeatedly modelled the small difference between social benefits and available wages in the Czech Republic (see, e.g., Žižlavský 2004, Trilfajová et al. 2015). However, these models are clearly limited because there are other factors such as orientation, moral assessment, and perception of insecurity that influence decisions outside the frameworks provided by such models.

²⁶ Other remarks including the poverty trap include additional expenses, debts, executions, and the role of other benefits (not directly linked to unemployment) and complicated ways in which these factors may contribute to subsidizing legal or illegal jobs (see Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Trilfajová et al. 2015).

the open labour market (see Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). We will also discuss this argument further below.

Story of Pablo

Pablo is a young Roma man, 18 years old who lives with his parents. He studied elementary school and later vocational training for a bricklayer. He initially wanted to do this profession and study for a bricklayer, but he dropped out of school in the second year of his studies. Main reasons to drop out for him were low motivation to study (he did not like it) and bad relationships with schoolmates.

Pablo is unemployed for one year. He is registered at the Employment office. Usually he spends his time on his hobbies (Facebook, listening to music), or he goes out. Sometimes he does occasional manual work in construction such as demolition work or pavement placement (work on call – through his contacts or contacts of his father). It is very occasional and seasonal. In his contemporary situation, Pablo in some situational contexts prefers enjoying life over work. He explains on a recent situation when he missed a work opportunity:

"On Saturday I should have gone to work, but I did not. I came home at five o'clock in the morning because I had been in the disco and so I did not go [to work]." (R61: 169).

Later he regretted that he was not going. Pablo has not severe financial problems because he lives with his parents and there are some social benefits provided to the family. However, Pablo is dissatisfied with his life. He would like to have permanent work, but he thinks that no one will offer him with an employment contract. He would like to live a normal life (house, car, family, saves, and good job) but he has no concrete plans other than 'to find work'. When Pablo was offered retraining, he refused it (see below).

The main discourse in Pablo's story is 'low motivation to study'. He does not like school. This discourse is clearly visible in his statements: 'I am glad that education is over', 'I did not enjoy it at school', 'I will not do school, I have enough of school', and 'They offer me school all the time'. Pablo is disappointed that school (or training) is offered to him at Employment office instead of work. Notable is Pablo's argumentation about refusing the retraining course. He is persuaded that he would not finish it.

"I would be able to handle it [training], but I would not enjoy it to go there, two months in school and three months of praxis, working normally, I would not enjoy it." (R61: 121)

Pablo argued that he knew that he would not finish the training course – it was too long for him.

My reflection: Pablo is not generally rather demotivated to do any work (he works occasionally), but he dislikes school very much. It is a strong topic for him, and he is not much willing to compromise in this aspect. His parents provide him with some shelter against the perils of the outer world, reducing his financial necessity to work. Pablo is also influenced by the fact that the work that he does is occasional and seasonal. I consider his case as the most

remarkable example of a story where demotivation blocks some opportunities that would be otherwise available to Pablo. His not fully used potential lies in his willingness and capability to do manual work which is much more natural for him.

Alternative motivations

For some people, other lifestyles may be viable alternatives to working life (such as traveling) or the jobless life is somehow more advantageous than working (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora 2008b). Bøhler et al. (2019) wrote about ‘Messy Life narrative’ of individuals who develop alternative visions of their life they want to live that contrast with the norms and values of their social peers. In some life situations, work conflicts with nonwork goals and other needs are more important than employment (Walther 2003, Hora 2008b). Wallace (1994) described how young people took their time off to do other things. These may include student’s life, traveling abroad, childcare, elderly care, or overcoming of personal or family crisis (e.g., dying or death of a partner or other family member, divorce). Care for children is preferred to work, e.g., when there is no viable alternative to personal care (Hora 2008b). There may be other household duties, which some men and women may perceive as a legitimate and enjoyable alternative when work is not available. Hora (2008b) referred to this behaviour as ‘household maintenance and improvement strategy’.

Story of Sophie

Sophie studied at a health school to become a nurse for children. She still wants to be a nurse in the house for small children or for children with mental handicaps. She had to interrupt school due to her pregnancy in the third year of her studies. She was unemployed until born of her son and then she claimed parental benefit. Later she returned to a distant study at a private school. Motherhood influenced her life.

“If I did not have to stop school due to motherhood, I would finish it normally in the day study.” (R18: 182)

Sophie is a single mother and father of the child does not care for it (personally nor financially). She was not looking for a permanent job until recently, although she did one occasional job. She studied and/or cared for the child and she claimed parental benefit. Sophie plans to find a job in half a year and to finish her school with an abitur in two years. She admits that her financial situation in the last years was not good. She wanted to live alone a care for her son herself. Being a single mother, she was able to live in her own flat (since her son was one year old), but it was possible only with the financial help of her parents. She reflects that she is limited in the jobs that she can do.

Sophie noted that she is motivated mainly by the prospect of her son. She looks for a job and hopes to find something suitable both financially and with an acceptable time schedule. She wants to further improve her flat and be able to pay for the hobby activities of her son.

Interruption of school further strengthened her conviction about the importance of education.

"My self-esteem strengthened to achieve what I wanted to achieve, to finish school and later maybe I will continue further...in higher vocation school." (R18: 118)

Sophie presents discourses of 'career identity', 'need of education', and 'creative work'. Sophie thinks that education is essential.

"I want to achieve something, to have good work, a work that I will enjoy...I think that this one is good, enjoying, I would like to be able to help someone...I had this idea to go to the health school when I was fifteen, sixteen years old...because my mother works in social services and so this was why I have chosen this field." (R18: 96)

Sophie explained that her initial persuasion did not change ('It did not change. I still continue with what I started and what I want to do'). Sophie said that she is sure that after finishing school she is going to work in the health field.

My reflection: Sophie was very motivated to fulfil some of her initial plans despite the changed conditions. While she was not very motivated to work or to study while the child was small, when the child grew up a bit, she returned to her original aspirations. Although she had to abandon some of her initial plans like going abroad, she was able to achieve a lot including return to school, care for her son herself, and finding a flat. She is very methodical in her approach and she plans a lot in advance. In contrast, when the child was small, she concentrated fully on it and she put her plans aside for a while.

My reflection on alternative lifestyles and motivation of young people to work

We noted several cases when young people preferred in some moments of their lives other activities rather than working. Such activities included caring for children (in the case of Sophie) and the elderly, living alternative lifestyles, and doing sports and hobbies. Quido was playing American football and it was for him both a source of identity and somehow it distracted him from studying. Fred explained that he felt satisfied with unemployment (see psychical consequences). He also explained how he is occupied by doing some activities:

"Besides having my own activities like sports, etc., tennis, which I could do, most of the time, I cared about my elderly parents, who require certain care. I found out that because they are very nice and they cared about me from start to the end, I said to myself that I should at least minimally to repay this to them somehow. What is in my power, and not much is my power, but what I can do for them, because they have health problems, I try to ensure some comfort for them...it has grown, because they health status started with some fluctuations to be worse and worse... it took me more and more time and at one moment it looked like that I will have to care for my father full time, but they are better now. I spent a lot of time caring for them. Second related thing is that before I did not care for the house. The house that we live in was built in the 1930s and almost everything is original...it needs windows, roof, complete reconstruction of everything...I could also care for the house to at least ensure that it

will not fall on my head, if I am allowed [by the parents] to live here for free.” (R26: 143).

We can see that recreational activities mean for some people (e.g., for John) a great way to kill time and lessen psychical problems caused by unemployment, but it does not mean that these people are demotivated to work due to these activities.

Several people (e.g. Tony) mentioned the need to restore their physical and psychical conditions after long employment. This I described in Hora (2008a, 2008b) as ‘holiday syndrome’. However, this is probably not very detrimental for motivation or future job chances because the period needed to rest is usually short (lasting only several weeks).

My reflection on demotivation concerning studying

We noted that motivation to study developed differently than motivation to work. There was a rather small group of young people who totally neglected the second level of education when they were in the last class of elementary education. They even did not want to enlist there (Ray, Karin). Some other young people have very low profession aspirations, but these are not based on low motivation to work but on low self-esteem and unpredictability of the future. E.g. Rosalie said:

“I want to find work and either I will finish school and if not, I will do occasional jobs.”

...

“If I would not find work, I would like to try school all the time. Because I do not want to go to Employment office. My parents are at Employment office, but I do not want to. I want to have vocational training.” (R60: 227)

Some young people are very passive. People like Pablo or Lisa are clearly demotivated to change their situation. Lisa, e.g. said ‘I would like to change something, but I do not want to’. Such people surrender when faced with the need to do more effort to achieve their dreams.

Many young people like Robin present the discourse of ‘negative motivation’. They think that there is a negative influence of parents on some children in Roma community concerning their motivation to study and preference of undeclared manual work.

“I am Roma and if I like to study, I will go to study. The school will accept me. However, a lot of young Roma do not care about it. They do not want and will not go to study. They will end school and go to Employment office. If they wanted, they would be able to access these schools...They will rather go to do earthworks to earn money than go to school. If they are not guided by parents to go to school, they do not care. ‘My father said that I do not have to’, and so they will not go. When their father will tell them to go to school, to have vocational training, they will go. However, they see that their parents do not care and so they also do not care.” (R49: 113)

Preference of work over education is described in the following statement of Antonia.

“Originally I wanted to be the cook and then I went here [study administration] and I had a plan that I will withhold until I would be 18 years old and then I would find myself

a job. And then when I was in the third year, I told to myself that there is only one year left and so I will not end it now, but I will finish it. And so, I did.” (R61: 148)

It seems that some young people have to be strongly motivated to withhold and complete their studies.

Engagement and limits of engagement

We will discuss engagement in activities in this section. It goes beyond the declaration of general motivation to reflecting how active young people are. Simons (1987, quoted in Rubinstein 2001: 135) points out that research “reveals how the orientations of actors – identities, defined interests, values, folk theories, and so on – constitute opportunities and motivate action”. First recognised dimension of engagement is how motivation really transforms to activity. Trhlíková (2017) found that some of her respondents in the interview explained their success by their previous activities in job seeking or education. In addition, Behrens and Brown (1994b) explained how activity or passivity in the creation of occupation identity influenced young people. They wrote:

“Not only do ‘the active’ have advantages in that their job searching is likely to begin earlier, be more comprehensive, imaginative and purposive, but also their earlier formulation of career goals was likely to mean that their employment, work placement or other experience were likely to have greater coherence; as a result they found it to convince employers of their commitment to the chosen path.” (Behrens and Brown 1994b: 207)

On the other hand, we can see that some young people change their career goals several times and/or they are not able to realise them because of less resources and less supporting environment, including information and networking (see Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Trhlíková (2017) found that for some young people there was a change of profession difficult because they considered their previous costs for building the previous career and limited time for a new start.

Other aspect of engagement is connected to the perception of a concrete situation during unemployment. In the initial period of unemployment, some people perceive unemployment as a catastrophe, while others are initially relaxed, believing that it would not be a problem to find another job (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). People can be less engaged in job search when they need time off or when they are in an active labour market program or waiting for a job answer or for promised job (Hora 2008). Tony (mentioned in the previous chapter) explained that he used his previously saved money during the initial phase of unemployment to have some rest. In most other cases, the unemployed declare that they continue to look for the job.

Strong barrier to engagement is in low self-perception of the chance to find a job on the labour market, e.g., in case of health problems. Schmid (2002b) points out that in a critical situation it is important whether people perceive that they are able to overcome the situation on their own (self-confidence) and with the support they can expect from others. This can lead to the

mobilization of individual resources. When on the other hand, the situation is perceived as never-ending nightmare, their ability to resist may become paralyzed. Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2019) described how their interviewee had fallen into a prolonged period of despair and depression (also often accompanied with deteriorated mental wellbeing or health problems) and was unable to undertake any actions to improve his/her situation. Often people who were refused several times became discouraged and this may limit their future activities – their self-esteem is low, and the social and psychical costs of refusal are too high, and they give up (see Engbersen et al. 2006, Hussain et al. 2016, Hajdinjak 2018a). Wallace (1994) described the case of Tracy who was unsatisfied with her current situation and trapped in an unsatisfactory set of circumstances but lacked both confidence and means to change the situation. Sen (1992) even argued:

"In situation of persistent adversity and deprivation, the victims go on grieving and grumbling all the time, and may even lack the motivation to desire a radical change of circumstances. Indeed, in form of a strategy for living, it may make a lot of sense to come to terms with an ineradicable adversity, to try to appreciate small breaks, and to resist pinning for the impossible or the improbable." (Sen 1992: 6-7).

Trhlíková (2017) on the other hand described the opposite case how one of their respondents was able to finish her study due to her persistence.

Story of Doris

Doris is a young Roma woman, aged 18. She lives with her parents. She had bad school marks at elementary school, but she was able to improve it due to afternoon remedial classes in mathematics and English provided by a local NGO. Due to the improvement, she was able to get vocational training for a shop assistant in a drug store. She said it was more difficult there because there were new people (they had to get to know each other, problems in relationships with other schoolmates). After some time, she switched to another field of selling goods (general, common goods) within the same school because she did not like selling in a drug store. Later she had inflammation in her leg, and she did not go to school for two months. Although she tried to excuse her absence for health reasons, she was expelled because the school workers said they did not care:

"My mother called them all the time and she was there personally but they [the school] said that they do not care, they expelled me...They said that this is common [not going to school]. They had many such cases and that they are not required to force students to go to school. And that they do not care a bit. They did not give me a chance. And I did not want to be home and I said that I drop out." (R71: 49)

Doris said school dropout is common among her peers. She was unable to find another school and so she switched to a private high school that often accepts unsuccessful students from other schools. She studied first grade at the new school at the time of the interview. She believed that she needs some certification (paper) to be accepted somewhere to work. She wants to finish the abitur. Her dream is to work with children and to go abroad. She is not very

successful in finding occasional jobs. Up to time of the interview she did two occasional jobs but in one of them she did not get paid. She is now afraid to accept other jobs.

The main discourse in Doris story is 'need of activity'. She used to dance but gradually she started to dislike it, so she stopped. She is deeply bored by available recreation activities (TV, computer) and has no personal interests. There is nothing to do around that she would like to do.

"I do not like how I live now. I look for occasional jobs on the internet, but I am not successful. I need work because I resist to do nothing. It is every day the same." (R71: 73)

Doris thinks that interest in certain activities is a key to the improvement of life of many young people. Interest helps to overcome the initial lower success. Doris reflects that many Roma children have nothing to do and they often take drugs. They should choose the right activities and not wrong activities.

"[I would like to see] these children that they do not do what they do on the streets. [What they do] That is awful. They could spend the time that they are in the streets by working or doing occasional work or to learn at home or go to school. However, they are not interested (R71: 445)

NGO can help them and the conditions towards them should be stricter, there should be also some pressure and enforcement. Doris also reflects on the widely shared 'education discourse' (need of education/certification to be employed).

My reflection: Many young Roma drop out from vocational training and/or they end up in a private school, but they are often unable to finish it (one reason is also money). One interesting aspect about Doris's story is that she studied (and studies) something completely different from what she wants to do (it may have an influence on her motivation). She was not sufficiently engaged in her situation at school during the illness, otherwise she may be able to continue her studies. Doris reflects that personally she is bored and 'going in circles'. The other thing is that there is a contradiction between her discourse of 'need of activity' and the situation when she said that she did not go to language tutoring because she was occupied by other activities. Doris is unsatisfied but she is rather passive in changing her situation. However, she is often able to use help which is provided to her by others.

My reflection on engagement, self-perception, and activity

Some young people normatively believe that engagement (being active) is a necessary precondition of success and it is a way to success. For example, Robin, Alan, and Jake spoke about motivation, trust in own abilities (self-perception), and activity.

"When you [anyone] want you achieve it [life plans]. When you will not care about it, then nothing. You must want [believe that you] must achieve this. And when I will not achieve it, I will not believe in me." (R49: 203)

“I hope and I must believe, when you think it is not going to have worth, it is not going to have worth.” (R11: 163)

“When I will not try it, it would not happen. However, when I will follow it, it will happen and I will trust in me and I want it, then it will happen...I would not give up for sure.” (R73: 481).

Peter described the following process where his self-esteem growth due to work experience.

“...before I was not sure about myself, several years ago I was not sure about me. I did not think about me that I am so skilled but now after all work experience, I have...It has never happened to me that someone would complain to the quality of my work...or was not satisfied and I listened how I was appreciated...what can I solve...it is not my work, but I solve it, I am interested and people are not bothered, they are glad...I now really trust to myself.” (R12: 201).

We also noticed how engagement is reduced on the base of past negative experiences. Quido defined the consequence of repeated refusals during the job search as ‘loss of confidence that I will find something which I would enjoy’. Fred described it in the following way when speaking about looking for work:

„I did it automatically, it was on the edge of my mind. As my effort was unsuccessful in the long term, I did not expect [to find work] and I accepted that I will never find it...after several months a person stops to expect that someone will call you to get you to work...I have got a neutral feeling from this, I was not much bothered by it. Only when someone asked me to come, I felt better and happy”. (R26: 163).

Karin said that she was discouraged by how people looked at her. Later she added:

“I thought that it cannot happen that I would find work and that something different could be for me. I do not know, no.” (R2: 129)

“One time I was really unsuccessful, and the person maybe stops to try and fight. Because he thinks that it is given, and he cannot change it. If he does not have someone to prove him, it is not true...I thought it could not happen that I would find work. No one had work and it was just going in circles.” (R2: 93)

According to classical theory, engagement means a lot of activity and persistence even in the situation when job search is not successful in the long term. Trust in their own abilities is connected to the belief that the unemployed are able to find work in the future. Sandra, Rebeca, Barbara and Antonia argued that ‘Roma people have no courage to try’. They argued that some young people stop their efforts after the first failure (give up), they do not withhold and stay rather home. In such cases they are not sufficiently supported, or they are not able to use the offered help.

“People have enough help, but they have to realise that it is not sufficient to go there once, only listen to something and not go there again. They have to visit the person

often for him to be able to help them, call there, etc. Some of them are without belief, because when they find some work on the internet – it happened also to me – I said to myself in advance that they will not accept me. I tried and they really did not accept me..." (R63: 212)

"...Motivation. They do not have any motivation. They see and hear at home: You cannot do it, where do you think that you are going? You do not have the abilities to go America or something similar. (R41: 75)

Orientation in the system and in the opportunities

Orientation is another important dimension influencing individual strategies. Orientation is about having sufficient information about possible options and about being able to assess this information in a way that leads to an informed decision. According to the authors (e.g., Behrens and Brown 1994b, Engbersen et al. 2006, Nairn et al. 2012, quoted in Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018, Hussain et al. 2016, Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019) young people:

- Are unable to formulate clear goals that they would like to pursue,
- May not be oriented in the possibilities in education and in the labour market,
- They may not know what they want to do,
- Had naïve and incomplete view of the requirements needed to pursue their dreams,
- Could not imagine the outcomes of their decisions only to discover the full implications of that choice at a later stage.

Formal help in orientation during education and unemployment is labelled as career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) services (Lewis and Tolgensbakk 2019). CEILAG are relevant across education, employment, health, and welfare services. Key aspects of CEILAG are universality, wide access, and capacity and quality of advice services. Young people often required or missed such services (Lewis and Tolgensbakk 2019). Career orientation measures are both active and passive from both sides (see Behrens and Brown 1994b). They may be provided face-to-face or online (Lewis and Tolgensbakk 2019). Two main tools are providing of information (making clear what range of opportunities were available – clarifying and reducing confusion) and individualized (two-way process) guidance counselling. The latter measure allows young people to state their interest and prospect career images. Many students have more than one option in mind and for some of them their current hobbies can be the source of their future careers. Some authors (such as Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018) argued that while voice is key in the definition of career choices, young people should be guided to options that constitute 'realistic career pathways' (and/or explore how they can become real options). Support in career choice has to be provided relatively early, still the final decision should not be required too early.

However, the following limits of career counselling were found (Behrens and Brown 1994b, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018):

- Missing, only one-shot or nonfunctioning career services,

- Severely constrained opportunities that were available for some people,
- Young people were unaware of possible career service or they were confused,
- They were aware that some help with their decisions is available but they were reluctant to use it,
- Low trust of some young people in counselling services
- Young people were discouraged from the options wanted by them,
- Young people were talked into something they did not want to do and later dropped out,
- Very low aspirations of some young people.

Although we define four relevant situations that are somehow different: still in education (before entry to the labour market), in training (with bad or good prospects), in employment and in unemployment, in this chapter we discuss mainly orientation during the phase of studying and orientation during unemployment. It is mainly because the other two situations were much rarer, and they were not much mentioned in the interviews. Partially these situations are reflected in other chapters.

Orientation and career choices in education

Two nested choices are crucial during the education phase – choice of a secondary level school that inherently in most cases includes the choice of prospective work activity/profession. Factors for the choice of concrete school included dimensions: general/vocational, proximity, quality of school, and expected labour market utility (Trhlíková 2017). Trhlíková (2017) and Zimmermann et al. (2013) argued that not all young people had a clear vision about the quality of schools (they can both overestimate or underestimate it) or about their future profession – rather their vision was unclear and later it proved to be far from reality. Clark and Kupka (1994a) found that not all young people have a clear idea about their career identity and the concept of career strategy is somehow alien to them (see also below). Concrete chances and circumstances are important for them. They may also not understand the importance of their decisions. This aspect is relevant from a relatively early age because paths in the education system are often prestructured and based on few key decisions. It is important for young people to have practical placement to have some idea about the world of work (Clark and Kupka 1994a) and/or to know about the requirements of high education (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). In other words, the school should be able to prepare students for life after school (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Otherwise, young people later realize that this chosen path was not the right path for them (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019) and break their studying or apprenticeship, often effectively losing their formal education.

Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) wrote that young people choose their education more according to their personal interests rather than opportunities for future work. Krasteva et al. argued that this is caused by unawareness of the situation as well as lack of professional advice and guidance. This includes both the real content of the job and future working conditions. Additionally, some young people do not believe that education is important or a

steppingstone for their future jobs. There may be also other reasons why the family does not support further education of young people (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018)²⁷.

Story of Lampert

Lampert, a young Roma man at the age of sixteen, was in the last 9th year of his elementary education. He was satisfied with his current school and generally liked the school, but did not like learning of Czech language (school subject). He lived with his parents and his main hobby was football. He occasionally worked (helps in the construction) but this is not an important issue for him.

The topic of choice of school and future occupation was somehow naturally addressed in the interview several times, maybe because Lampert was in the last grade of his elementary education. At the start of the interview, Lampert states that his dream is to be a football player. When asked which school he had chosen, he said that he was going to the high school of ‘using computers in the car repair industry’. To direct question why he has chosen that school, he said:

“I did not know what to do for a long time. I had several fields in mind, but then I said to myself, that [there is] an abitur, and my friend from school goes there, even two, and so I said to myself I will go there.” [When immediately asked about liking cars] „A bit” (R37: 105).

Later in the interview, Lambert admits that he has no work plans yet and he does not think about it. He wanted to be a cook but now he does not know. However, generally, he thinks that school is important. In yet another part of the interview he said that he really wanted to be a policeman, but his teacher discouraged him from this by saying that he would have to complete university. Later he found that this statement is not true for common police officers (for whom having an abitur is enough), it is necessary only for police criminalists.

Discourse of Lampert are ‘need of education’: when he speaks about the choice of school (‘I wanted abitur, to have it’) and ‘obligation/caring’ (‘I would like to be able care for my family’). Another presented discourse is ‘influence of environment on young people’. Parents are not guiding nor enforcing their children to fill their duties and their mates ‘pull them out’. His brother is an example for Lampert, leading him to avoid some activities (taking drugs, not meeting with bad people).

“There are drugs a lot. And a lot of parents do not encourage their children to go to school. And when they find a bunch of friends and they [friends] tell them: ‘Do not go to school. Let us go out’. These problems are often there. Even young people taking drugs.” (R37: 247)

²⁷ This is evident in the living situation of young people living in ghettoised neighbourhoods, where low education and low perception of the importance of education is common. Life of young Roma people is influenced by the culture, believes, and lifestyles of Roma community (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018).

Recreational activities (some of which are provided by a local NGO) are according to Lambert better than flanking and they help to avoid negative behaviour. Parents do not enforce their children to stay at secondary school. Parents may have their reasons:

„They [parents] want their children help home and ask themselves: ‘What is the school good for?’ However, these children will regret it when they will be adults.“ (R37: 323)

Lampert needs help from his parents to support him in his career dreams. He believes that parents are crucial for helping him to achieve his dreams.

My reflection: It is a paradox that although Lampert values education much, he is not well oriented in his future work plans. He mentions several professions: football player, car mechanic, policeman, and cook. (Maybe he is also influenced in this by the flow of the interview as he reacts to the current topics). Although he considered several studying options, he finally decided on one that he himself clearly is not very keen about and he has no current vision to work there. He himself admits that he did not think about his future profession much, only to say later he really wants to be a cop. His stance is a clear example why helping in the orientation of young people, including reflection on their wishes and skills, is important for their future success.

Story of Janine

Janine is a young woman (24 years old) who lives with her parents. She is single and has no children. She studied three different high schools (gradually – for two years, one year, and three years) but she did not finish any of them. She extensively explains during the interview about the reasons.

“Because I was young and stupid, and I did not want to go to school. Thus, I skived off school. Parents scold me a lot, but I did not care, and I did not go to school.” (R19: 49).

“When I went to high school, I did not care about my future. When I was fourteen or fifteen, before you applied for high school, it is stupid to decide about your life. Because kids do not care what is going to be in five years. They care about boys they like, going to the disco, or going out with friends. They totally do not care about these things....I thought that ‘all the world lay under my legs’. When someone told me, for example, my parents that I had to, I did not care. I see it differently now.” (R19: 169).

She did not have any duties then comparing to present. Janine compared herself with her friends studying university and regrets her past behaviour:

“I should have gone to school more and learned more. It is late now. I think it is stupid when small children decide about themselves at that age, they do not know what they want to do, or they do not care. There are only a few children that know at the end of elementary school, what they want to do.” (R19: 291)

Janine has been unemployed for several years with brief interruptions by some rather short work experiences including both legal and illegal jobs (her longest job was for three months).

She refuses to do the most unqualified jobs (cleaning lady, cleaning streets). She said that otherwise she is not very picky – she did, e.g., shop assistant (selling shoes), hostess, and chambermaid. She said that she was able to find a job relatively quickly when she was under pressure. Her financial situation is manageable because she still lives with her parents.

When she later in her life realised that education is important, she studied one school in Prague in distant study, but it was too difficult for her and she had no time due to work. Now she studies another distant study school. She is in the middle of her study (the third of five years).

„I considered it for a long time because I am afraid of the abitur. I do not get it with languages, and you have to do them [at abitur]. I thought about it for a long time, but I said to myself that I am going to try it, it is my last chance” (R19: 163).

She explains how she was recently expelled from the Employment office because she refused to do a cleaning job due to her studies.

“...the lady [a street level worker at Employment office] sent me to do the cleaning lady for [low money]. However, they refused me, because I study in a distant study and I go to school every Thursday. And they needed someone for every day [a week]. And because I brought a study receipt, the lady expelled me from Employment office. Because I go to school.... and I wrote them that I do not agree with this, because I think it is stupid to leave school to do a cleaning lady. There was a legal case, but because I had a short-term job then and I had to bring them my statement in seven days, I did not manage it...and they expelled me.” (R19: 85).

Later she added:

‘I think that they could give me a chance when I have the effort to finish school. They could give me a chance and not say it is not a reason [not to take the cleaning job].’ (R19: 115).

Similarly as Lampert, she still does not have a concrete view about the profession she would like to do – “I will see what will emerge.”

Main discourse present in Janine’s story is ‘need of education’: (‘I have a problem that I do not have school’, ‘I have only basic education. It is stupid.’, ‘I cannot find a job without school’ and ‘they [employers] want school most of the time’). Employers want the work experience and/or a vocational certificate which she does not have.

“I would like to really finish [school], so I can step on my own legs, have some experience, go somewhere and not to sit home all the time and live hand-to-mouth.” (R19: 149).

She also noted that she felt bad when compared to her friends:

“A lot of my friends study for engineer, having promotions and I am the only one with elementary education. That is stupid.” (R19: 64)

Minor discourse used by Janine are 'lacking work experience/scarring' ('They [employers] think that I did not do anything for a long time or that I am not able to work, when I was not somewhere), 'claiming Roma' ('Roma are at the employment office all time and they are not forced to work') 'calculating', 'going in circles' ('I cannot develop my career how I would like to') and 'enlightenment' ('I was young and stupid').

My reflection: Janine now studies her fifth school. Janine herself repeatedly pointed out to two aspects. The first one was that she was unable to consider the consequences of her behaviour for her future life when she was younger. Her parents were unable to convince her to care for the school. Second is that catching up what she missed when she was young is very difficult because she had to study in changed circumstances (including the negative stance of Employment office). She refuses to adapt to working conditions which are typical for the sector of unqualified jobs. An interesting example is that she left her only 'long-term' job because it was lowly paid and long working hours. She still does not have clear plans for what she wants to do and her motivation to work is instrumental. School dropout is a typical factor leading to insecurity in the labour market. Janine story has many similar aspects to the story of Derek described in the next chapter.

Story of Fred

Fred is a man in his middle age who lives in a separate flat in the house of his parents. He returned to live with parents several years ago due to his financial problems. He had several partner relationships, but they ended and now he is single. He has no children. He thinks that before he was not ready to have children because he was unemployed and thought that he would not be able to care for the kids and now he has work, but no partner. He cares about his parents who are old and need his help and for their house. Fred have never had serious financial problems because his former girlfriend and his parents supported him both financially and with free housing.

Fred studied mechanics and completed both vocational training and abitur. He said about himself that he is not studying type. In the choice of profession, he was inspired by the employment and hobby of his father. However, later he never worked in the field that he has studied. He explains:

„....I have a high school for mechanics and I have vocational training for servicing of machines, but I never got deeper work experience in this and most importantly I am not a person who would like to do a career in metallurgy. Put plainly, when choosing my profession, I was not very clever and [later] I looked for cumulative administrative positions such as storage worker, shop assistant or driver or everything together. However, these positions anyone can do without any professional training and so I, in the great competition of other unemployed, often ended empty handed.” (R26: 69).

He was displeased with work experience in the studied field.

“...when I got some reason, I found that one thing is to hobby home and the other thing is to stay somewhere by the conveyor belt and to do 1000 screws a day and I realised that this is not an activity I would like to do, but it was late.” (R26: 71)

He thought about returning to school, but he was not motivated ('I have very strongly developed weak will'). He started to work in different fields (his first job was in administration). During his work career, Fred was unemployed for a long time and had only short but sometimes regular jobs. After 10 years, he was able to find more stable employment and he was employed in various jobs since then. The variety of professions he did is great, including administrative positions, driver, NGO worker, storage worker, earth worker in gardens, shop manager, sales representative, e-shops, and computer drawing (visualisation). He estimated that altogether he worked in between 20 and 30 jobs. He reflects that the professions he did in the past are replaced by other technologies or by other economy models ('people as I am, are no longer necessary in the process'). Now he prefers to have more stable work. He is employed but he is afraid that the firm is going to be closed within a year.

„...and I looked for work where I can stay in a longer horizon...I do not like repeating going for the job interviews [all the time], so I would like to work here [in the current job] as long as I could, better up to...as long as I can.” (R26: 115)

The main discourse in the story of Fred is 'enlightenment' ('my view has changed 180 degrees'), 'the way is the goal', 'creative work' and 'work is a good thing'. He reflected that he was very ambitious when he was young, but now he cares much more about concrete work conditions (e.g., to have interesting work, do not have to work in 'too formal' environment, to have some autonomy and have good workmates).

“I do not have concrete goals but quite the opposite, for me, the way is important or the activity itself, not to suffer too much doing it. It is completely opposite from my approach when I was twenty.” (R26: 121)

He reflects that he is much gladder to have work than when he was young, and in the past he thought that the main thing is to make money and work is 'necessary evil'.

“When I was 35, I realised that I do not want to do earthworks until I am 50, I do not want to stay with a shovel in the garden. That I imagine... end of my career...not in the making of screws...but in more comfortable conditions...and this vision grew stronger and there was an increasingly desperate need to solve it somehow and so I said to myself that I will try to find a job where I can stay in a longer horizon in conditions I like...When I prioritised working conditions over wage it was possible.” (R26: 167)

My reflection: Fred was not well oriented in the conditions of the job for which he studied, he chose wrongly, and he was consequently not able to switch to something else qualified for quite a long time. Once he found a preferred job, he was rather quickly able to gather a quite sophisticated informal qualification. Finding out what he really wants helped him to create a coherent strategy and build it around his dream. He realised that he needs creative work to be satisfied.

My reflection on school orientation of young people

We noted that the most important decision with tremendous impact on the life of young people was the choice of secondary level education. We reflect on the process of choosing secondary level education through the perception of young people. Factors that influenced the decision making of young people were:

- They liked it, they wanted to do it as their preferred profession (Vanesa, Lars, Josephine, Rebeca, Philip)
- Difficulty of the school (Lars, Bob, Patricia, Philip) – some young people avoided difficult schools.
- They wanted to have an abitur (Lampert, Jake)
- They perceived that the school was more practically oriented with more praxis (Bob).
- Example of their siblings or friends who planned to attend/attend the same school and they recommended it (Vanessa, Lampert, Lars, Josephine, Leila, William)
- Aspirations to do the same profession as their parents (Fred, Rebeca, Sophie)
- Proximity of school (Greta)

Vanessa argued that young people choose secondary level education according to their previous school success and perception of their abilities. This is accompanied by their perception of school subjects which they liked or did not like. Perceived difficulty of the school was considered.

"I attended [concrete elementary school name], where were all students Roma. My schoolmates told me to go to [another concrete school name – second level education], because: 'There it is clear that you will succeed. It is not difficult and good people are there'. I said: 'OK I will go there'. There were [at school] all fields of study that I disliked. I have chosen the bricklayer and I started to like it." (R40: 83)

Another important aspect is whether young people have to pass entry exams or whether they are accepted automatically (according to their school marks during elementary education). We can see this in the example of Randolph who did not pass entry exams due to high competition and he went to another school where he was accepted without entry exams. The opportunities to choose the field of education were in some situations clearly limited by the interplay between personal situation and structural factors.

- limits given by health reasons restricting some preferred professions (Tony)

- limited possibility to choose secondary level education. Usually respondents had two choices (Violet, Gwen), sometimes only one (Natalie). Young people sometimes spoke about going rather to school where is a better chance to be accepted (Max).
- they were not accepted to school (vocational training) which they chose (Vendelín, Felix, Rebeca). Typical reason is bad school marks during elementary education.
- That they did not pass entry exams for preferred profession (Violet, Randolph, Felix)
- That they were not allowed to choose school (profession) themselves (Violet).

Some respondents presented or concluded that their overall life orientation was rather low when they were young (Karin, Peter, Derek, Janine, Leila, Robin). This usually means that they did not have a clear idea about their future profession. Leila, e.g., argued that she wants to stay with her school mates, and it is for her more important than which field she is going to study. Additionally, she said:

"I think that after I will finish school, I do not know what I will focus at. It does not matter, and I do not care." (R47: 13)

Many young people do not have a clear vision of their future profession during the last year of their elementary education or they go for 'low track'. Another corresponding issue is that young people study something, but they do not know what they are going to do afterwards (Robin, Patricia). Robin did not know (i.e., was not able to explain) which field he studied. About his future after school, he replied that 'it is in the stars'. Later he added that he wants to be the chief of a building firm employing more Roma. Patricia went step by step. She was not much oriented towards life after school beyond saying that she did not know what to expect and that she would look for work. Patricia has chosen her vocational training for a confectioner because she thought that it was easier than other offered possibilities. Patricia is in many aspects a very passive (and not much talkative) person. She often replies: 'I do not know', 'I would not change anything here' and 'that is their problem'. Natalie has chosen vocational training for the confectioner because she 'likes baking a bit'. Although she was not sure that she would be accepted, she submitted only one application because she did not manage another one in time. She can still use one another additional round to place another application. In such cases, not enough attention is given to the choice of school.

Some respondents commented that they did not pay enough attention to education or planning the future when they were young (Vendelín, Karin, Ben, Peter, John, Clara, Janine, Fred, Lucy, Herbert, Leila). They were clearly oriented towards enjoying life and did not care for school or future jobs²⁸. General orientation towards studying is very well described in the story of Janine presented above. In her case it is about both orientation and a motivation. In

²⁸ There were comments about having low responsibility (being dependent on parents and not caring about their duties) (Vendelín, Herbert), goofing off (Karin, Janine, Herbert), being devil-may-care (Betty), spending money on nonsense things (Helen), making debts (Bonny), having low motivation to work (Fred), living 'wild life' and 'doing crazy things' (Magda), squatting and using drugs (Bonny), and being sentenced or being in prison (Vendelín, Otto, Simon, Herbert).

other words, some young people, according to her view, should be more persuaded about the importance of education.

Second crucial aspect is the choice of the concrete field of education. Some respondents had their dreamed professions which as they themselves reflected were very hard to achieve (football player, dancer, actress). Most of them aimed at much more common professions. This included the following negative aspects concerning the field of education:

- Young people reflected that they were too young to have a clear idea about their working life (Derek)
- Some young people cannot choose their studied field themselves (Violet, Sandra)
- Young people do not have a clear idea about the concrete field which they want to do
- Often young people were not informed about the real conditions in the professions they chose (Derek, Fred)
- Their attitude towards the prospect job changed even during their studies (Clara, Fred, Doris).

The respondents were often not satisfied with the field of their study and said they would not have chosen it again or they just preferred another type of job (Magda, Roman, Derek, Simon, Fred, Alice, Rupert, Doris, Sandra, William). Peter said:

"I have something that I missed. I did not know until my high school, what I would like to do, what I would enjoy. And I think that they fight with this, or most of my schoolmates...completely did not know what they would like to do...It has to start at elementary school to get them familiar with things, not to enforce them but let them know. This is important also in the family." (R12: 210)

Immediate consequence is that young people are not interested in the field during their studies or they even do not like it (Derek). Rachel spoke about her choice studying for a job assistant.

"This field [I study] is not corresponding to me. I do not want to do it. I do not know what I will do next. I would rather work with children, to create some recreational activities for them and work with children." (R70: 37)

Sabina have found only after getting the first job that there emerged health problems preventing her to do the job. Ellyn studied to cook but later she became vegetarian and she refused to work with meat. This deeply limited her possibility to find a job as a cook (because there are not so many vegetarian restaurants). We also noticed that sometimes respondents liked their profession but later they found that it was not compatible with their caring responsibilities and they abandoned it (Betty, Lucy).

We reflect how the decision about studying is influenced by important others. Parents' influence on decision making is apparent in some cases (Vanessa, Clara, Sandra, Natalie), in both a positive and negative way. Sandra described how her parents were conscious about her school progress, they were in contact with teachers and pressured her for higher

education. Natalie noted how her father persuaded her to continue her education. Vanessa said that her parents were interested in her choice of secondary school. She also said:

"My family, my mother and sisters and my friends support me a lot. They tell me all the time: 'You are the person who is able to handle it'." (R34: 354)

Clara described how her parents discouraged her from continuing education:

"I was young and stupid, and I did not have any extra goals. Maybe I could complete my education going to upper secondary education. If I could change it, I would change it. I would not obey my parents when they told me: 'You think that you are able to do the upper secondary?' I would say yes, and I would try it and would go there. I was not an extra learning type, but I was not stupid, I only did not learn, and I did tests only with my knowledge based on my memories from lectures, and the marks were a bit worse. However, I know that I was able to learn and understand and maybe I would be able to complete upper secondary education." (R17: 142)

William reflected that he decided for the car mechanic because of his friends and because initially he liked it, but he stopped to like it during studies. One of the visible outcomes of a bad choice of school is that young people do not like the field that they had chosen (Sandra, Doris). Sandra explained about her choice of high school:

"Since my fifth or sixth class, I always wanted to be a cosmetician. However, my mother did not like it at all. I do not know why, but she wanted me to have some widespread field, e.g., trade entrepreneurship, or something similar. This is the reason I went to this high school." (R42: 32)

Sandra was able to finish her studies, but she did not find corresponding work. Later in the interview Sandra added:

"I really did not like economy. I did it only because I said to myself: 'Once I am here and I should finish it'. Because I had all books bought and all materials. And so, I did not want to switch to another school and have to arrange everything and so I stayed and finished it. And I said that this field is widespread. And so, I finished it." (R42: 124)

Now Sandra tries to find work in the field she studied. On the other hand, speaking about her other future plans, she thinks about retraining for a hairdresser or about going to university to study something different.

There is also a formal process of career counselling and help in school application. Vanessa mentioned that children are provided information brochures with the offer of secondary level education. Some young people reflected how teachers, psychologists, or workers in NGOs helped them in the process of transition to secondary education by helping them with advice, which field/school to choose, and with administration (Ray, Rachel, Maria, Gwen, Patricia, Rosalie). Maria described this:

"They [school workers] gave us lists with various fields, schools and you could choose where you would like to go, and everyone marked what he/she wanted. We brought

this to them [school workers], and they called to the school themselves and gave us application forms and we sent it and the schools accepted us or not. School helped us a lot.” (R52: 149)

“They [NGO] helped me a lot. They helped me to find school. If it were not for them, I would go to a completely different school which I did not like to do. I was accepted for a confectioner, I did not want to do it. They found me this school and so I went to the hairdresser.” (R50: 221)

Ray was recommended the profession of floor layer by his teacher. Although he would like to be an auto mechanic, he accepted that auto mechanic is a too difficult occupation for him and that the floor layer is sufficiently easy. Teacher helped him with the papers to school. Lisa commented a very negative influence of her teacher who effectively discouraged her from following education (although the concrete mechanism is unclear).

We reflect that there is the dilemma between the assessment of the skills of a young person by the teacher and preferences of the young person. However, there should be also a clear reason for discouraging and viable strategy offered to the young person which he/she is willing to accept.

Orientation during unemployment

People are also often less oriented when they become unemployed for the first time or when their previous unemployment experience is not relevant any longer (Hora 2008b). Young people may have problems when applying for a job, do not know what the relevant skills are (whether they have them) and what employers want (Böhnisch et al. 2002, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Negotiating arrangements with employers requires a set of skills that are often beyond many teenagers – especially their understanding of the complex conditions of the labour market (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Knowledge of critical institutional arrangements (laws) is an important precondition of meaningful action. People often do not know the exact system rules and do not know about the chances of the system (including ALMP programs) or do not know how the social benefits are calculated (Hora 2008b, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Engbersen et al. (2006) pointed out that people sometimes do not even understand the terms and language used by street level workers. Another problem is that the system is changing relatively frequently (Hora 2008b). When young people do not know or do not understand the rules, they can decide differently from their interests (Formánková and Křížková 2010). Orientation is a precondition of any rational calculation of incomes from work, work expenses (including lost time, independent housing and eating, traveling and childcare costs) and family income and incomes from social benefits (Hora 2008b). Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) argued that young people copying strategies are often rather passive. Miles (2003) argued that young people who are ‘realistic’ about their potential might become demotivated or lower their aspirations in advance to take anything they can get.

Story of Violet

Violet is a woman in her middle age. She studied vocational training for a shop assistant in jewellery. She finished her vocational training half a year before Velvet revolution. During the socialist period, most young people were prepared for a concrete firm, but after Velvet revolution the firm where she should work in was disbanded (because all such previously state-owned services were privatised). Violet left on her own will because her father started business in the retail trade. There was a great boom of such shops because such goods were not common in communist Czechoslovakia. She worked there for several years with interruptions for motherhood and several other jobs which always did not last for long. Violet said that she reflected in advance that many of these jobs are unstable, but she was forced to accept them due to her financial situation. In time of need, she returned to work in the shop of her father. She was unemployed several times for several months. Violet said that she was unemployed and working at the same time for several employers. She explained:

"It was several times. It functions even nowadays, because the boss, the employer tells you: 'Go to the Employment office and you will get this and this'. You can earn, but you have to obey and go to Employment office, because the state pays health and social insurance for you." (R32: 29)

It was possible because there was not much control in the 1990s. Later she founded an entrepreneurship, and she was self-employed for four years. She ended the entrepreneurship after her son became seriously ill and she divorced. She did not regret being an entrepreneur because it was a nice period, but it was time demanding, having high responsibility and her work had health consequences. Violet was able to find a rather stable and nice job where she was employed at the time of the interview.

Despite having difficult periods in her life, Violet tried to be resilient. Violet presented one discourse concerning the development of her stance. First, she described her situation in the 1990s when she was young:

"No one was there to support me and tell me, what should I do. I did not know, and no one knew. However, without bravely and without drive, 'try this, you have nothing to lose', no one told me this. I know it now when that time is gone.... Even my parents were afraid to do something, tell something, push me, pay for something, guide me, they had horrible fear. I would like to have this knowledge and return back." (R32: 85)

"The life experience is not transferable to children, because they did not experience it themselves. And no one was able to persuade me either. I had to experience it myself and now I would say that in something they [parents] were right." (R32: 92)

She spoke about the development of her initial stance:

"I changed. I became increasingly seasoned. Due to the approach of surrounding to me, I played hardball, I fought for myself. And when I saw what everything is happening and what is possible to do, I did it too. It was a period when I told to myself: 'You are

going over the edge' and so I slowed down in something. It was a fight for mere survival. I had a feeling that the stronger wins. And it was functioning in the sense that a weak person who returns to his past is without the chance." (R32: 69).

Violet thinks that everyone has to care for herself/himself and have to struggle for it because 'no one gives you anything'. It is rather hard to say whether this is about her loneliness or about individuality.

Violet presented a discourse of 'motherhood'. I see two aspects here. One of them is that when Violet speaks about her role of the mother being realised by raising children.

"I have my own living place, the children are adults, both almost finished their studies and I finished my role. Now I want to live in good health." (R32: 65)

The second aspect often mentioned by her is the perceived need to transfer her knowledge to her children. When asked about the importance of education, Violet connected her motherhood also with 'need of education' for her children.

"Sure. The thing is that I compensate this [my missing education] to my children. I press them hardly, even sometimes completely, to achieve something. I am able to tackle it on my level, but they need twice as much. Because I do not want them to be in what I was 25 years ago. I hope that such times will never return. Moreover, I want from them. I enable and support them if it is possible. I understand them. I tell them: 'If I had your education and years, what limits you?'" (R32: 79)

My reflection: _Violet reflected that she was not well oriented in the labour market when she was young. She had to learn everything herself because no one was able to advise her well. Orientation on the labour market was more difficult because it was shortly after the transition from the communist planned economy to market-based economy. For some people living in postsocialist countries, it was very difficult to adapt to these suddenly changed conditions with frequent changes in ownership structures and legislation. Many young people understood this period as 'wild times'.

My reflection on general life/work orientation

Orientation on the labour market includes two main aspects: general work orientation (related to the previous part) and orientation in the job search process. William commented on these two aspects in his statement about the necessity of the help from more experienced people.

"Someone has to help young people with job search. E.g. their mother or father. Someone has to help him/her. They [young people] are still young, they do not know what they want." (R39: 206)

We have seen that some respondents had no life goals, no clear things that they wanted to achieve, or they said that they did not think about it (Karin, Roman, Peter, Clara, Quido). Sometimes their goals were aimed only at the present and were relatively simple (find work,

keep current work, etc.). Randolph spoke about living from one day to another day in Roma community:

"There is no motivation. I do not think that they are completely without motivation, but they are without faith, not in God but in themselves, that they will one day live a better life. They live from one day to another day. They think that every day will be like today. Most of them think: 'Today I have something, but tomorrow is far away. I do not know what is going to be tomorrow'. They have no vision or something that they could follow." (R45: 47).

Roman was not able to say what would be helpful for him to change his situation. Sabina had a problem with work orientation because she could not do her initial profession. ('because I ended in the kitchen, I did not know what will happen to me, what I will do, what is going to happen, where to go'). Janine spoke about the need 'to have peace' in the meaning that she wants to have her things finally settled down and live a normal life. Young people reflect that great obstacles are ahead of their plans to live a normal life and that it may not achievable. Many young people spoke about 'going in circles'.

Second aspect is about being oriented in the job search process. Parents' help was not only about contacts, but it was also about help in matching and teaching job search skills. For Ken, for example, parents found work because they called to the employer instead of him. We can only speculate that it can be also about other specific traits or skills of parents (Ken thinks so). There could be also a pressure to look for work from family – mainly parents, typical for respondents from the youngest cohort (Ben, Roman, Clara, Herbert). Employment of the respondents was supported also by personal care for the children (see below).

The third dimension is strategic. It is the skill of guessing/predictability in being able to foresee which offer is viable, whether employers will keep their promises (Fred, Ben). Ben said that he is not able to recognise in advance whether the job would be suitable, whether the employers will keep their promises, and whether he will be able to keep the job. It is also about being able to guess when to act (to leave the concrete job, to apply for concrete job etc.) to minimize insecurity. Helen and Eugenie spoke about uncertainty concerning changes of jobs. Such decisions are very difficult and sometimes they lead to 'bad decision' (see below).

Young people may not be well oriented in options available for help in job search or about other options (benefits, active labour market policy). This is reflected more in the chapter about the institutions.

Influence of relatives on the orientation and strategy

Important sources of orientation and help include parents, friends, and schoolmates (Trhlíková 2017, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). This may include, e.g. 'family profession model' (following the profession of their parents), persuasion and silent support (Trhlíková 2017). Nevertheless, different parents may have different capabilities to help their children: different skills of parents, different aspirations, different resources and different stress factors. All of this may have an influence on the capacity to pursue young people's career

aspirations (see Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Other factors such as parental expectations, cultural norms, and proposed gender roles may also play a role in decision-making (Zimmermann et al. 2013, Gehrke, Günther, and Seukwa 2018).

We also reflect that along with the support and help from relatives, young people may be under pressure toward wanted opportunities. Pressures arise from both external and internal sources and they may interact (Biggart et al. 2002). Economic pressure can be seen, e.g., in the situation when young people prolong/postpone finishing their studies (Trhlíková 2017). This is how the economic situation of the family and social relationships are related.

Story of Rudy

Rudy is a young Roma man aged 15 years (close to his 16th birthday). He still studies the last year of his elementary education also because he had to repeat one year (school grade). He plays football a lot during most of the afternoons and spends a lot of time with friends out, usually long into the night. He has some respiration problems and due to them he stopped playing football in the professional club (advice of the doctors) and he does it only as a hobby. He likes to spend time in the streets, where he smokes. Sometimes he also drinks alcohol at the weekends. He gets his spare money from social benefits (from his mother) or he borrows them. He has no work experience yet. Rudy is very satisfied with his current life and he would not change anything. He reflects that as a smaller child he was even more satisfied.

Rudy does not know what he is going to do when he finishes elementary education. He missed the period when young people must enlist for secondary education. He initially chose vocational training for a baker and plumber. He should have filled application forms for vocational training and brought them to school, but he 'did not give shit about it'. He hesitates to do it even now when he still has a chance. He has only very vague and imprecise visions about further (second level) education system. He is decided that he is not going to continue in any other education. Instead, he plans to work in the scrap metal collection facility of his uncle. He has no other plans and believes that he is going to work in a scrap metal collection for his whole life.

"I will 100 percent work there. Why not? You just sort the metal to tell the truth. Every Friday [you get] 4 500 CZK. That is enough for me." (R48: 263).

He wants to have a car (Audi) and to be rich, but these dreams are not essential for him. "*Maybe I will just survive, as I survived when I was young*" he said.

The main discourse presented in the story of Rudy is 'I am satisfied. I would not change anything'. He often repeats that he would not change anything because he likes it as it is. E.g., his parents plan to move to another part of the town, but Rudy would like to live with his grandmother where he lives now. Maturing for Rudy means having more things to care about:

"[Before] I did not smoke, I did not need so much money that I need now. How should I say this? I did not go out. I was at the courtyard all the time or in the club and I went home early." (R48: 99).

Rudy reflects that in the past it was surely better than now. When asked why he changed it, he replied that he is in puberty now and has different friends. When asked about the possible improvement of the life of young people he replied that it is probably not possible and said: ‘I do not know how, and this is the reason I do not want to change it.’ (R48: 409)

Story of Leo

Leo is a young Roma man, 16 years old. Leo completed elementary education with no particular learning problems (he did not repeat any classes, had good relations there), but he decided not to continue with any other education. He explained that he did not want ‘to wake up and have to learn’. On one side, Leo stated, *“that all people forced me to continue [education] but I did not go”*. On the other hand, his father influenced his final decision when he offered him a working opportunity.

“I thought about it [continuing education]. I am with my father. He told me that if I do not want to [study], he is going to take me to work. That I am not going to stay at home. I said, yes. Therefore, I went to work.” (R56: 89)

Leo’s father is an entrepreneur, and he employs people for doing earthworks. Leo works in the earthwork for two months. It is his very first work. He is satisfied with everything in his life and he does not regret (non) continuing to second level school. Leo lives with his parents and he gives half of the earned money to his mother to cover family expenses. Half of the earned money he has for personal needs (clothing, discos, etc.). He spends a lot of time out with his friends. It is normal for him to drink alcohol there [he is sixteen]. He likes the neighbourhood where he lives although it is not so nice – there are frequent thefts and prostitution, and a lot of people take drugs (not him). Leo has no plans for his future (even for a few months) and he hesitates to talk about it.

“I do not plan anything yet. [Q: not even for a short time?] No. I do not plan anything. I do not know if I will do that I want. What I would like. What I will do in the future.” (R56: 363)

Leo declares anti-education discourse (‘I was glad we did not learn’, ‘I did not want to learn’). Leo’s opinion on the locality is an interesting mix of views. First, he is not very oriented in how things are for young people in the locality. Second, many things are OK for Leo, or he does not care about them (unemployment, housing, environment), but some things are not (stealing, drugs, prostitution). He, e.g., comments: ‘That is true that this is not my problem, but it annoys me. It is a shame’. Leo would prefer to severely punish such behaviour. He doubts about a possible change:

“There are a lot of people who want to earn from selling drugs – that every young guy takes it. They sell themselves [prostitution] to have money for drugs. Most of these are Roma. I doubt that they would like to change it.” (R56: 357)

My reflection on the stories of Rudy and Leo: Stories of Rudy and Leo are in some respects very similar it (also William is such case). They do not like school, or they do not care about it. They expect to get manual work from their relatives (this is common in Roma community). Either no one really helped them or persuaded them to continue their education (Rudy) or their relatives help them to decide for not going to educate (Leo). Their families are probably not much interested, or they support future work in work where 'education is not necessary'. They continue the ways of life which are typical for many young men in their community. Preference of manual work is frequent in Roma community (Bob, Felix, Rudy). Bob commented:

"They would like to go to school but they are often expelled. Low school attendance is a crucial issue. Because for going to school they do not get money and so they do not care. They are, for example, not able to get a job for a weekend, but they find it during the work week. And so, they go to some occasional work instead of going to school. And all of them are expelled." (R46: 67)

They also have short-term orientation and no other more distant plans for the future. Decision to study further is based on initiative and activity which they clearly lack. Often, they do not think about it (William). Rudy himself prefers working to continuing his education. He is not firmly decided, sometimes he says, 'I do not know', or 'We will see' but it seems that he is very unmotivated to study and that due to his passivity he would end up with elementary education. Rudy is happy and any changes endanger his current state of happiness. Rudy would like 'the world' to stay as it is and he does not seem to be ready for the crucial decisions of his life.

Story of Bob

Bob is a young Roma man who lives with his mother. Bob completed elementary education with certain problems. During elementary education, he was in the class for children with specific needs. In vocational training for a car mechanic, he repeated three classes, but he finished it successfully. His father died six years ago. Bob spoke about him:

"My father is no longer with us, he died six years ago, and it was a horrible period for me. I promised him to complete vocational training. My father was Roma and he had vocational training. And so, I promised it to him, and I kept my promise." (R46: 219)

Bob likes his profession of car mechanic. He does occasional jobs (usually for one or two days) in his profession of car mechanic. Although Bob has a lot of job offers, he cannot work legally because otherwise his mother would lose social benefits. He explains:

"My friends, they have work, but it is black work [without legal work contract], do you know what I mean? That they do not show it anywhere...I have one friend who works, and he has an employment contract with everything. He has to pay health insurance etc. However, I am not so lucky because my mother would lose money. She lives from hand to mouth. And so, I have to survive it somehow with her. I would otherwise work for an employment contract. I had work offers everywhere, but I cannot...She would

lose everything. What they would give me, the social office would everything withdraw from her. Whole my salary would be withdrawn, and I would have to give everything to my mother home." (R46: 51)

His mother had also an important influence on him to avoid drugs. Bob does not like the locality where he lives (nasty behaviour, stealing, violence), and he would like to move out. Bob would like to live with his girlfriend with whom he spends a lot of time with, but it is difficult to get a flat. He would like to move out of the locality, and his girlfriend is the main motive for him to stay for some more time in the locality.

"If I had a child, I would not live in this quarter. I would move out. Because I know how it would end up. These kids are speaking rude, they are insolent, etc. They steal since their early childhood. It is everything they learned on the street. They see adults doing it and they learn it and they do the same." (R46: 127)

Bob reflected that his life changed. He wants to earn some money first and to have children later. Bob understands financial reserves as the main means of future security. Bob reflected that his girlfriend changed him a lot.

"I have bad experiences from my childhood, a lot of problems and it warned me. If there was not for my girlfriend, I would be still like them.... My girlfriend is very clever. She commands me briefly and I have to obey. I respect her a lot because she really helped me. I appreciate her a lot. She helped me to stop to behave stupidly. I behaved nasty, I had problems with cops, I went everywhere, and I had nothing. I have her and I can save money, this I could not before, I spent everything immediately. And I stopped to do problems. I am with her all the time, I help her, and she helps me, we would do everything for each other, what is in our power." (R64: 187)

There are not many apparent discourses in the story of Bob. One exception is the discourse of 'Racism and discrimination'. Bob reflected that Roma cannot get housing because no one wants to accept them for flat. He told a story when he and his mother were forced to leave the flat because the landlord found that they were Roma family (his mother is not Roma). Bob said: 'He [landlord] told us that he did not want any 'fucking' Roma'. Bob noted that there are friends between Roma and non-Roma when the people are good. Roma are often not working, but the reason is also that no one will accept them for jobs. Bob thinks that Roma sometimes see racism, but they are not willing to do or accept steps leading to the improvement of their position. Another discourse is discourse of 'claiming Roma' (see below).

My reflection on the story of Bob and the influence of relatives

We can see three key people in the story of Bob who had an important influence in Bob's life. It is also because Bob was willing to listen to them. He accepted their advice may be because social relations are an important part of his life. We see a similar reflection of the influence of relatives and friends also in the statements of Robin:

"My father advised me a lot...to make a driving licence, to start my own business. Not to be stupid. He said: 'Look how I ended up, I am without work, you must not end up like this.' (R49: 209)

Robin explained how his friends were important for his general life orientation:

"When we have some problems with other guys, we [friends] help each other. And sometimes we help each other in 'Do not go there, do not do it, go there'. We help each other not to do silly things like stealing, making problems, taking drugs, this is how we help." (R49: 165)

There are concrete cases and situations where good people function as 'guardian angels', helping the respondent in the critical moment by providing them with some solution or opportunity (Bonny, Melinda, Alan). Alan explained:

"I changed. I used to be brat. I am not saying than not. I went through...[nasty things?]...but since I joined [the name of the woman who organised singing and dancing activities], she changed my life. She showed me how you can make someone else happy, persuade him to reflect. She organises camps where various people join and meet each other..." (R72: 175).

It seems that some young people can be persuaded or led by example.

Difficulty of decision and theory of intuitive judgements and choice

In this part, we will discuss the difficulty of formulating a viable strategy and why it sometimes leads to unwanted or unexpected consequences. To decide reasonably, the results of young people's actions and interactions have to be at least somehow predictable. Uncertainty may significantly reduce the benefits of orientation. It is hard to make people responsible for adverse happenings over which they had no control (Sen 1992). When we want to assess the freedom to achieve, we depend quite heavily on the knowledge and the ability of the person to understand and intelligently choose from the alternatives they really do have (Sen 1992). This is a probable reason why young people tend to ask for and realize preset options (Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003). In other words, they want to be guided. For young people, role of the couch may be important – someone willing to teach young people and willing to give his/her time (Trhlíková 2017).

Pais and Pohl (2003) argued that the traditional school system is functioning when future demands can be established in an unmistakably clear way. The process of decision-making is difficult when young people are left alone to decide or to realize their decision – e.g., when they miss support mechanisms once they leave school (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Böhnisch et al. (2002) argued that in Denmark weaker young people have yet to decide what to do, and while they are expected to make this decision themselves, they are not competent enough for decision taking (see also Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018: 104-105). Many young

people are not aware of the serious consequences of a bad academic performance until they experience how it acts as a barrier for further education and jobs (EGRIS 2002). Other young people blindly and submissively follow the rules until they realize dire consequences (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018).

Another valuable insight into decision-making (the choices that people make during transitions) is based on the theory of ‘intuitive judgements and choice’ (Kahneman and Tversky 1984, Kahneman 2003) and its relevance in ‘TLM approach’ (Schmid 2006, Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002)²⁹. Decisions of people are rooted in two systems – first of them is rapid, more based on impressions, and leads to intuitive judgements, anchors, and prototypes, and the second is more slow, effortful, and deliberately controlled (Kahneman 2003). System 2 is sometimes for some people able to correct judgements rooted in system 1. The corrected decision/answer is not guaranteed to be right/true. Various objects have various levels of accessibility. Kahneman (2003: 459) wrote:

“Absent a system that reliably generates appropriate canonical representations, intuitive decisions will be shaped by the factors that determine the accessibility of different features of the situation. Highly accessible features will influence decisions, while features with low accessibility will be largely ignored. Unfortunately, there is no reason to believe that the most accessible features are also the most relevant to a good decision.”

Decision value is defined as the contribution of an anticipated outcome to the overall attractiveness or aversiveness of an option in the choice (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). Individual may choose a variant of the global value without detailed comparison of the options or even not consider the other variant. Decisions are defined as situational (at the moment of transition), driven by intelligence, the information available is in specific situational context, affects, specific situational factors such as time pressure, concurrent involvement in different task (cognitive load), time of the day and mood (see Kahneman 2003). The following aspects of risk perception were identified:

- There may be transition costs connected to specific transitions (see Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002).
- Preferences and choices of people are reference dependent (Kahneman 2003). People compare the perceived gains and losses connected to an event (transition) from one (current) state to another state (in their current situation) rather than the outcome states of wealth.

²⁹ Similar strand of thinking in economic theory is defined as ‘bounded rationality’ (Simon 1978, Kaufman 1999). Decision making is sometimes done in complex situations that are dynamic and where uncertainty about consequences is present, where there is too few or too much information, costs and time limits (to attention) to activity are present, knowledge and people computing capabilities (mind) are limited, and emotions (arousal) are present. The same situation may be assessed differently in different timeframes (see Kaufman 1999).

- The strategies of young people may include risk prevention (it is not going to happen), risk mitigation (if it happens, it should not pain too much), and risk coping (what to do when it has already happened) (see Schmid 2006).
- Losses seem to be intuitively larger than gains resulting in loss aversion (Kahneman and Tverky 1984, Kahneman 2003). When positive, certain things seem to be more attractive than things with high or intermediate probability. The preference for sure gain is an instance of risk aversion (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). This also results in greater willingness to risk in case of potential loss (risk seeking).
- Experience of the past is more valued than prospects. People tend to maintain the status quo (reference values, stability) in both the situation of prospective improvement and even more strongly in the situation of potential loss (see Kahneman and Tverky 1984).
- People care much more about low risk soon than for high risk in the distant future.
- Perception of the situation is based on the framing (the actual formulation of the situation, e.g., in positive or negative terms, in a specific context or with a different amount of accessible information).
- It can be expected that people are risk-averse (see Kahneman 2003). Risk aversion is more probable when the outcomes of the bets are more significant in the context of the current situation.

Such situations may be emotionally demanding. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) argued similarly about the situation of threat of job loss. People at risk of job loss begin the process of withdrawal used to enable functioning at the time of job loss.

These expectations may provide a useful interpretation framework for understanding young peoples' behaviour. Decisions are linked to uncertainty about future outcomes, such as the possibility to claim social benefits if the unemployed take a temporary job. In this sense, welfare may provide more security than an uncertain job with poor working conditions (Snel and Staring 2001, Engbersen et al. 2006). Engbersen et al. (2006) argued that it is much easier to get out of welfare than to claim it again later. There may be too much paperwork and benefits may be delayed. The result was a short-term attitude towards the future in which people were not likely to give up what little security they had (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Engbersen et al. 2006). Another factor potentially contributing to the decision is the fear that the person would not be able to do the work that he/she is for (Hora 2008b).

Research usually have found that people who live on social benefits do not have enough money to make ends meet. The obvious paradox is that these people are able to move to more acceptable living conditions only by means such as odd jobs in the informal economy. There are several factors in play: better pathways are restricted, there is not much external help, and the rules of the social security system restricts almost any possible improvement of situation. Snel and Staring (2001: 10) argued that:

"The most important disadvantage of formal social security is, however, that it forces people to live according to a set of rules that strongly limits their opportunities to seek their own solutions to their material problems".

Musil (2004, 2006) presented the notion of dilemma as an enforced choice between two unwanted or risky options. We can recognize three typical contexts in which we can discuss dilemmas. Musil argues that the dilemma is persistent, and it cannot be easily solved. There are three distinguished strategies to tackle the dilemma. First, inspired by the work of Lipsky (1980) is the avoidance of dilemma. Second, inspired by the work of van der Laan (1998) is the change of conditions that leads to dilemma. Third, proposed by Nečasová and Otava (2017) is a change of values and ideal that is inherent in the dilemma.

The main conclusion from this part is that conditions for decision making may be difficult, young people may be less oriented, and they may react intuitively. This is in opposition to the picture of young people as fully rational and calculating. This aspect was somehow captured in the statement of one of the respondents in the research of Clark and Kupka (1994b):

"From my present point of view many decisions were wrong, but at my state of development at the time I could not have decided differently, therefore they were right then" (Manfred, quoted in Clark and Kupka 1994b).

Story of Nancy

Nancy is a young Roma lady. She moved to Roma locality three years ago. Nancy completed elementary education outside of Roma locality (in a class with the other four Roma children) and later she applied to one school at the secondary level of education where many Roma children go. Nancy studied here for four years (standard length of study) but she did not go to abitur. She explained about her education:

"I went from elementary education to 'elementary education'...school regime and all... I did not perceive that I am at the secondary level. This was also a reason why I did not care about it and that is [the reason] why I did not go to abitur...during elementary education I was a devil, causing a lot of problems. At high school I calmed a lot, but we listened to the music with my friends and not listened to lectures, and I regret it. It is a bit late." (R72: 96)

After school dropout, she tried to find work and she has got a public works workplace sorting and distributing clothes to poor people in a local NGO. However, this job ended after nine months with the end of subsidy.

"It was a public works program which was temporal. I worked here for nine months and then I ended, and I was not able to find any work. I realised that it is not much possible to live without school, the school is necessary and so I negotiated with the local NGO that they would help me with tutoring, and they also helped me to enlist me for abitur." (R72: 19)

Nancy prepared for abitur which she would pass in a short time (next week after interview). Nancy was unemployed at the moment looking for jobs where qualification is not so necessary. Employment office offered her nothing in her last unemployment spell lasting five months.

"I still look for work, but it is hard. I have no work experience, no school....so I look for it [work], I would accept anything. However, it is hard." (R72: 25)

Nancy also thinks about studying at another school.

"I will go to a local NGO to my worker about school because...I decided to do one more school with vocational education. The more schools, the better. I decided between doing massages and working at the post office. This one or another one." (R72: 139)

Nancy lives only with her mother because her father left them when she was very small. She spends a lot of time caring for the household and caring for the small child of her friend. All money she has are from her mother who works. Nancy spoke about the work of her mother:

"She [mother] is not very picky. Neither I am. If I could, I would do the same as she does. She is sweeping the streets wearing a yellow jacket. It is not a bad work, it is not a good work. However, in these times, she has no reason to be picky and she is not ashamed. I am not ashamed too. I would do it myself without any problem." (R72: 73)

Nancy presented discourses of 'enlightenment', 'need of education' ('it is definitely in education') and 'need of work experience'. These are all apparent from quotations in her story.

My reflection: It seems that Nancy is not firmly persuaded about her strategy or about her future. She allows herself to be distracted and she changes her strategy often (her strategy and view of the world seems to be very inconsistent). In her view, accepting emerging opportunities rather than building a coherent strategy may limit her in future development. We noted such aspects (e.g., accepting emergent, not holding to complete work in progress, frequent change of orientation, uncertainty) also in other stories.

Story of Clara

Clara is a young lady who successfully finished vocational training for a confectioner. She was not a studying type ('*I was young and stupid, and I did not have extra goals.*''). Although she originally liked the confectioner profession during elementary education, during her vocational studies she disliked it. When she tried to work in the field, she found that she was unable to influence the conditions of work (hygiene, etc.) and 'do it her way' and she left the job.

She worked in a coffeehouse, but after some time she found that the employer did not pay social contributions for her and he owned her salary. Clara left the job. Later Clara was unemployed for two and a half years during whose she had only occasional jobs. She was picky and did not want to do manual jobs. She had health limits because she has epilepsy, and she

cannot work at night. She worked without a work contract (usually in services) or she earned only up 4000 CZK (allowed limit for working disregard). Clara explained:

„I did not want to do a confectioner and I wanted to do something I would like, so it was the reason I was picky and the reason I did not want in to work in the factory. I just wanted to do the work I would like and not something I would hate...and I am also picky about the work colleagues...when I do not get on with colleagues, it is also bad.“ R17: 123).

Clara was provided retraining for a barwoman (according to her it was not sufficient to get a job) and later she got placement in a subsidised workplace (ALMP) as a chambermaid in the hotel. However, she had no experience with this profession, she got no advice, and she left after five months due work conditions and behaviour of employer. She switched to the shop workplace, but she was released from there after one week. She was expelled from Employment office because she left the subsidised chambermaid position without noticing. Then she worked for one and a half year in the factory, but she left because she did not like the conditions there and especially the conditions during reorganisation (she was sent to different work position). At the time of the interview, she worked in a shoe shop for one month.

During the interview, Clara reflected that she should have not been so picky and should have earned some solid work experience when she could. She also thought that the language knowledge and driving licence is going to be important for her future chances to get a job. Clara reflected on her position on the labour market:

„Lady at the Employment office offered me various offers and I tried them, but no one called me, or I went for the interview and I did not like the job environment, or they did not like me. When I tried something higher without work experience, they simply told me ‘no’ or they did not call me. And when they would accept me, I did not like it. I knew I had that short-time job. It is my security that I am able to make ends meet and provide support for the household. Therefore, I had no reason, when the Employment office paid me health and social insurance, there was no motivation engine to hurry...but when I left the hotel, I had to find something quickly, because no one paid me health and social insurance“ (R17: 95).

Discourses reflected by Clara are discourses of ‘need of work experience’, ‘selection’, ‘creative work’ (‘I would like to do something I would enjoy’) and ‘competence’. She argues that she is not stupid, and she is competent. However, if she has done things differently [she said], she could be in a much better position. Clara connects missing work experience from years of unemployment with her lowered current life chances:

“...I think that it can influence me now. I think that it is because I do not have work experience from these three years, it influences me up to now. Because now I have work, but if I lose it, or if I would like to go to do au pair in China, I cannot because I do not speak English, so it influences me...if I found a job earlier, I could have saved money for [language] course, it is all connected. (R17: 193).

She had some opportunities (a notable difference from many other respondents) but she hesitated to use them. There is no clear apparent goal for her. Rather, she looks in different directions for emerging opportunities. However, in time this strategy changed, and she realised that knowledge of language and driving licence are important.

My reflection on the story of Clara and similar experiences

We can see that Clara preferred the work that she liked over formally ending her unemployment. However, after several years there is no notable improvement in her position. There are several other notable aspects in the story of Clara:

- We can see in some cases that immediate gain (money at hand) is in her reasoning preferred over longer-term prospects. Clara rather did undeclared jobs, but now she reflects that it harmed her chances on the labour market.
- Clara said that the undeclared job and payment of social security contributions together provided her with security and demotivated her to solve her situation.
- Clara might not (at least for some time) care for strategies that would move her to better career paths.
- Clara quickly decided to do things that later proved to be a problem as the situation of ending ALMP prematurely (and sometimes it could be expected). Clara also left many jobs because she did not like the conditions there without a clear plan about the next steps.
- Clara often took emerging opportunities, but it is difficult to recognise whether such opportunities are realistic or illusionary. Long term strategy is completely absent (e.g. Ray) and it is at least not coherently presented in the discourses of these young people.

There are other such cases. Betty described how she was expelled from Employment office. She worked in an undeclared job because she was promised an employment contract there and she hoped to get it.

"The worst [psychical consequence] was recently after I was expelled because I thought that I will get an employment contract and I let them to expel me from Employment office. Now I have to repay health insurance for half a year which now I owe. The work really was not worth it." (R22: 134)

There were several situations when young people (e.g. Melinda) left a good job because they were optimistic and they believed that they would find another one, but it never happened. It is very difficult to assess chances on the labour market and predict the ability to find a job in the future. On the other hand, others hesitated to risk their security for an uncertain vision of improving their situation (see above). For example, Helen spoke about the decision between a better but uncertain job and the currently offered but worse job or the need to search further. She could not wait for a better job half-a-year. In addition, she reflected that taking a job is risky.

"If I took a job and I ended it because I did not like it or I found that I were not able to do it, I would have not entitlement for unemployment insurance." (R23: 164)

Eugenie spoke about her fear of changing jobs for better ones because there is insecurity whether this new promising job will be all right and all as promised. She regretted not being more courageous for change in her last job.

Success and failure in the strategies

Success or failure of the strategies is based on a concrete perspective, and thus it can be relative. This implies that young people are often characterised on one or all three dimensions: a) what solution was sought, b) whether it was successful, and c) why it is successful or not. The characteristics included both activity (effort) and its outcome. Young people can be characterised by all their history, current work/school situation (at the time of contact), and future plans. Snell and Staring (2001) argued that human plans and actions do not always serve the purpose they were intended to serve. Unintentional results can make the situation of people even worse.

Trlifajová et al. (2015) argued that the possibilities of unemployed to choose among work offers are often very restricted. They must accept subsidized jobs in the public sector, temporary jobs, and a work without work contract. Hora (2008b) stated that perceived chances to find work diminished with longer unemployment. Low success of the strategies was evident in frequent refusals in the first phase of the recruiting process. Another dimension of success is rooted in the ability of people to keep the acquired job (Hora 2008b). Gallie and Vogler (1994) and Sirovátka (2009) concluded that the flexibility strategies used in the past were not very successful in improving the labour market position of marginalized people. Hora (2008b) concluded that strategies of using inner resources were mostly involuntary³⁰ and from the perspective of economic security, at most partially successful, because many unemployed were in severe material deprivation despite these strategies. Still, these people are able to adapt and to be used to very low income (see Hora 2008b: 128-129).

We believe that the success or failure of the strategy is most visible in the stories. We present three stories to show the critical aspects forming the success or failure of the strategy.

Story of Rebeca

Rebeca is a young Roma lady who is 17 and lives with her parents. Since she studied elementary school, Rebeca wanted to be a lawyer. She did not have good enough marks at school and as a result she went to an economy focused high school (this is the school that also her mother had studied). Rebeca likes the field of economy. She thinks that it is better for her future work and more entertaining to have training for a specific profession (specialisation) than to have a general education (gymnasium). In addition, she is glad that she is able to avoid school subjects that she is not interested in.

Rebeca studies economy high school. She says that she has sometimes problems there because she is the only Roma at that school and the other pupils sneer at her or they have

³⁰ Hora (2008b) characterises them as difficult, unpleasant, and sometimes even irrational.

nasty talks. She has a strategy not to listen to them. She also found friends at high school. She is not satisfied with her school marks. She learns in the afternoon and uses afternoon tutoring provided by a local NGO (languages). It helps her to have better school marks. She also works in occasional jobs to have some money. She would like to live somewhere else, at 'calmer place'. She mostly tries to spend her leisure time out of the locality she lives.

Rebeca is very purposeful and 'career identity' oriented. She is not satisfied with her present life but 'it is hard to say' why. She believes that economy high school with abitur will give her '*basic security if something would happen*'. After abitur, she may continue to the University for the studying of law. She already saves money for the future when she wants to travel and have a family.

"I want a flat and car. I do not say it is going to be in one week, but to get it in some time. And if the lawyer is not possible than I would like to have a permanent place in the office and a permanent income...to be secretary. And to save for a flat. To have a family and to travel around the world." (R36: 645).

Another discourse presented in her story is 'activity'. She argues that you have 'to want', 'to get work', to 'have an effort' and to 'be successful'. Rebeca believes that the activity will help her to fulfil her dreams (flat, car, travelling) and that when she is not successful on her way, she will open another door (meaning opportunity). She contrasts this with some people in the place she lives 'who are lazy, and they do not have imagination or plans'. They are unable to 'arrange things'. NGO can help them to spend their time in a reasonable way.

My reflection: Rebeca is a rather rare example of someone among our respondents who has clear and coherent plan for the profession (lawyer or secretary) and is relatively successful in realising it (up to yet). She wants to have some security coming (in her eyes) from attaining some level of education. She believes that securing a certain level of education is ensuring a good life (education discourse). She is very well able to use emerging opportunities of support for her and she herself puts a lot of effort into activities leading to fulfilment of her dreams (homework preparation, etc.). She was well able to withhold problems emerging from the negative attitudes of her schoolmates. Rebeca is a typical example of career-oriented person who attained some success due to her strategy.

Story of Philip

Philip is a young Roma man (23 years old). He is single but lives alone. Philip studied elementary school, but he was transferred to school for children with special needs. He was happy at elementary school because he had no worries then. During school they had a workshop where they did various manual works (with wood, etc.). Philip most liked 'painting things'. When he was in his 9th grade of elementary education, he already knew what he wanted to do. Because he liked painting during school activities, he asked if there were a school for painters and he went there. He studied vocational training for a painter and varnisher. He studied it for two and a half years, but he did not finish it. (We do not know from the interview why he left).

He was unemployed and he did only short-term occasional work (the longest for 14 days), mostly in the field he studied (painting, moving, clearing out flats, distribution of advertisements). He had almost no work in the last half year. Philip claims social benefits. He would be more satisfied if he had work (he also needs money due to debts).

“...I have payments that I can nowhere to repay from, that is bad...” (R69: 73)

Philip is rather passive (or not very inventing?) in looking for work. He does not think that the work is a problem that should be solved by involvement of someone else. He only asks for work in one local NGO and sometimes he got some occasional work from his friends (not lately).

The main discourse in Philip story is ‘need of education’. Education is according to him important. He would need work because he has financial problems to finance his housing and he is afraid he is going to lose it. Sometimes he would need some advice what to do from someone more experienced. He reflects that he would need education to get work. Painting is still a profession he likes, and he would like to do it.

“I remember more my vocational studies, this is what I lack, because I cannot find a work without it. I would like to put it back somehow and compete it to be able to look for the job better.” (R69: 61).

There is no retraining for his field (painting) and retraining courses are paid. He thought about doing a bricklayer, but he would need school too (no such training courses available). School is for him the only alternative to have qualification. He wants to return to school and ‘stay on his own legs’ and repay his debts. The problem was that when he asked in his original school if he could return, there was no free place in the school, and he had to wait to have the possibility to return to school up to the next year. He likes this concrete school because it was not so difficult, and he is afraid that other schools would be more difficult:

“I can look for another school, but I think that [original school] would be better. It would be easier for me. I think that I would be able to tackle it...[he names other schools] schools, vocational training, these are rumoured to be more difficult. I do not know. I suppose I would not have [competences] to do it. I would be better in the first school because I am afraid that I would not be able to tackle learning etc.” (R69: 373)

Philip also used discourse ‘need of work’ (‘I am home all the time...I know it here. I am bored’) and ‘unworried youth’ (‘when I was young, I had no worries’). Another discourse in his story is ‘discrimination’ (‘he is asked whether he is Roma’, ‘Roma are not wanted’, ‘employers should not decide on the skin colour’). There is an interesting defence reaction towards employers:

“I say, I am Roma, [but] I am [in the way of living] that I work, I am able to go to work but they say directly that they do not want Roma.” (R69: 549)

My reflection: Although Philip is among the young people who had a rather clear vision about his preferred profession, he was not very successful in his plans. Involvement in concrete

activities during elementary school helped him to determine what he would like to do because he liked it. However, later he was not able to conduct this profession although he would still like to do it and he was able to do it when the work opportunity occurred. From his reflection, it is hard for us to conclude whether his recent low success is influenced by his passivity ('I would be better if someone offered me something') or because his strategy for looking for work (ask social contacts, going to NGO) is limited and unsuccessful. There is not much outside help for him. His firm plan is to return to school next year. Hopefully, this will help him. We see both aspects of 'taking chance' and 'wait and see' in his story.

Story of Peter

Peter is a young man who started to study at 8-year gymnasium, starting from the 5th class at the elementary school (a rather prestigious path of general education for talented kids in the Czech Republic). However, after 9 years of compulsory education (after the fourth year of Gymnasium), he changed his education to a technical type of education with abitur (in electro technics) because he saw he could not study university and he believed it would be easier to find a job afterwards (having only high school without university). However, he did not like the vocational school due to its low quality: in his words, mainly due the absence of good language education and he thought that a lot of schoolmates in the class contributed to the low quality of education. He had low motivation to study there. He worked beside school and finally he dropped out. He explains how he later realised that education is necessary, because some jobs are closed to him and only some employers allow people without education to 'grow in job'. He plans to return to school in a distant form.

Peter has been registered at Employment office for several years and he worked simultaneously in several jobs (we counted about ten he mentioned). Mostly he worked only with temporal work contracts or without a work contract (working in grey economy). His longest job was for three years. Peter reflects that work conditions were good:

"I worked two or three days a week and I had 15 000 CZK and 'diets', and everything was good there. There was only one mistake that it was that there was no employment contract and so I was long-term registered at Employment office." (R12: 28)

Sometimes he also worked in regular employment including one publicly subsidised workplace. He explained how it was possible that he could work while being simultaneously unemployed:

"Fortunately, because I did not fill the form about the preferred positions much, they [Employment office workers] did not follow me nor they offered me some crucial job offers, it was possible to tackle them with the tale that I already have something arranged, some interview, and so they did not give me [any job offers]" (R12: 29).

The only reason for his registration was avoidance of social security payments because he did not claim any benefits.

Peter has no life goals with long-term plans. Two aspects are particularly interesting in his story. His work career is so fragmented that it is even for him hard to reconstruct. Almost no

jobs in his work career were in the same field of work. He worked as driver, storage worker, mechanic of industrial machines, operator, waiter, and computer maintenance. He presents himself as 'very skilled person with initiative'.

The main discourse in Peter's story is discourse of 'calculation'. He does not want to do hard manual work and to be identified with it, he compares effort to money, requires benefits in the job, compares conditions in the jobs, declares several times reservations to concrete offers of employment or jobs and explains how the formal arrangements are not met. I provide an example of calculating reasoning:

"There were great differences between branches of the firm considering the quantity of work, salary, comfort and benefits, because every branch had...in Prague they do the same work for completely different money. We had 20 000 CZK which is above average in the [region] and for [profession], but it was a lot of work. In Prague, they have 25 000 CZK, 25 days of holiday, nothing of it is here, and they have plenty of other benefits. Here you have 20 000 CZK and nothing more." (R12: 102)

He also changes jobs very frequently and declares willingness to do so. He explains:

„The reason [for frequent job changing] is that I did not enjoy it anymore and something better emerged for me what looked more interesting for me.“ (R12: 95).

Peter speaks about 'escaping to unemployment' because 'employers get on his nerves in time'. He mentioned that sometimes he has problems to work under boss control and it would be better for him to work for himself. Another discourse presented by him is 'need of education' (see his story above).

My reflection: Peter can be characterised as a typical 'calculating' (in the typology of Engbersen et al. 2006), and as a prototype of 'job hopper'. Note that one critical event when he was young was enough to change his life completely. Although changes in jobs are not always under his control, he at least mostly knew about them in advance and had a plan about his future work and financial situation. Although also he reflects several moments of insecurity in his work career, he is not particularly worried about them because he was always able to find another job. He also says that he is self-confident in his skills. There are according to him not many consequences of his previous life and he reflects that he caused most of the negative consequences himself. From the perspective of the values highlighted in contemporary society, we could interpret his strategy as a failure and his great potential as partially wasted. However, we would understand that he would probably not agree.

My reflection on the strategies

In a simple perspective, we can see successful strategies as those which lead to attain the basic life goals of young people or which allow to live the preferred type of life. In some cases, short-term preferences go against long-term goals. In this perspective, we conclude that most of the young people were not able to achieve this or they were still in the process. We note that the first differentiation is in the aspect of the presence or absence of profession and career goals. At one extreme, there are people who, like Rebeca and Quido, are very career oriented:

"...mainly I want to have work, where career development is possible when you work there for some time and you know that gradually with time you can develop somewhere rather than working on the same position for ten or fifteen years." (R13: 49)

On the opposite, many young people did not have clear life goals. Changes in life came often at the moments when young people had to attain positions on the labour market. For some young people, it was a 'hard fall on the floor of the labour market'. This may lead to the process of personal development as well as to the process of reconsidering. Many young people accept the changed reality and accept the marginalised position resulting, e.g., from their unfinished education. Derek mentioned that he chooses options which he believes that he is able to do and to get, and he considers the income. Some young people (especially some Roma) were not able to get almost anything. There was also some perception of ritualist behaviour (Vendelin, Fred, Violet). Violet noted that she replied to advertisements which were not suitable for her or which looked strange and funny. Fred explained:

"I created some job search stereotypes, routines, starting in the morning....I did it completely automatically. When my effort was unsuccessful for a long time, I somehow accepted it that I will never find work...after several months you stop to expect that someone will call to go to work somewhere. I had a neutral feeling, it did not disturb me. I recovered a bit when someone called me to show up, I was glad. However, usually it was nonsense and for nothing." (R26: 163)

Coping, resistance, and social resilience

In cultural studies research, there is an inherently present process of exploration of how the phenomena studied sustain or challenge broader structures of power (Saukko 2018). Traditionally, resistance was traditionally linked with challenging dominant ideologies and society in both 'real' and 'symbolic' dimensions (Saukko 2003). We see two aspects here: resisting structural determinants of own position and resisting theoretical expectations about our position and theoretically limiting our real agency (see Gray 1997).

More recent literature more often works on the concept of social resilience. Dingeldey et al. (2015:11) defined social resilience as "...the extent to which young women and men are able to negotiate conditions potentially avoiding the most adverse consequences of such insecurity". Hvinden et al. (2019a: 13) defined it at the individual level as: "Opportunity to acquire a feeling of well-being, the ability to cope with adverse circumstances and realize valued and meaningful achievements in the short and long-term". They consider active agency as a constitutive element of social resilience. According to Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) and Bussi et al. (2019b), we can find three possible aspects of social resilience: coping, adaptation, and transformation.

- Coping: short-term, ability to cope with immediate adversities (immediately, day to day...).

- Adaptation: medium term, recover, learning from experience (learning), anticipating future risks, strategic self-organization, adjustment, planning.
- Transformation: long term, interaction with institutions, substantial change, new ways that enhance functioning, progressive change.

Other researchers add more dimensions that go beyond resilience on the individual level (see Bussi et al. 2019b). We understand such circumstances here as external factors or sources of resilience that are both sudden and continuous. In some cases, strong experience or external shock led to a change in behaviour (Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019). Keck and Sakdaporlak (2013) argued that we should also see resilience in the context of competition for scarce resources, with its winners and losers, and aim our attention to the outcomes of such processes.

Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) have found some personal traits that help young people to be resilient. These included tenacity, perseverance, persistence, and serious attitude, to be realistic, stay calm, focus on contemporary problems, go step-by-step, and have optimistic, positive thinking. Hora (2008b) has found that some people kept looking for the job despite the low perception of personal chances to find a job. The people in this situation themselves argued that they 'refuse and cannot retreat'. Resilience may be seen also in the ability of young people to accept conditions that are not advantageous or even acceptable. The people themselves argued that 'have to withhold it' (Hora 2008b). Still, such a strategy may lead to negative feelings and mistrust. When considering difficult or unpleasant working conditions, people often say that they are willing to withhold them only temporarily (Hora 2008b). Trhlíková (2017) argued that for young people it was important to be able to leave in time in cases when they were misused, they did not have sufficient law protection, had to work without a work contract and were not paid accordingly. Another strategy may lead to compensating for work aspirations in other areas of life (Miles 2003). Hobbies are a mediating factor in reducing boredom and stress connected with unemployment (Hora 2008b).

Story of Magda

Magda (Roma woman in her middle age) has grown up in institutional care. She was not much in contact with her family because she blamed them for the unnecessary burden of being grown in institutional care that she had to bear. She studied vocational training for a glassmaker. After releasing from institutional care when she was 18, she gradually lived in several asylum houses.

"...living in asylum houses, it was on the edge really, that I will tackle it, or I will not tackle it and I will go down the hill, but I hold..." (R7: 41).

She lacked help from parents in preparing her for adult life.

"It is difficult because I had to learn, no one showed me, no one, nor the institutional care prepares you for the life out there, how it really is, and this is what it is all about" (R7: 275).

She initially thought that everything would be easy. After a period of unemployment, she found a job, but she lost it ('I did not like it. I was young and stupid...') and she was then unemployed for several years. Magda rather soon had two children as a single mother and the family claimed social benefits. The father has never seen children. She herself described the first years of her adult life as the 'wild period'. She said she was unhappy all the time and she was seeking something, but she did not know what she seeks.

She was 'helpless because without money you could not do anything'. She also went into debts. She got help from NGO organisation in crisis when she and her children were homeless and NGO workers helped her to place her adolescent children temporally to institutional care.

It lasted about 15 years before she was able to settle down, because she was alone in everything and no family could help her, nor any institutional help was provided to her except for the mentioned NGO and basic social assistance benefits. She also found a boyfriend but it the relationship did not hold.

"Friends helped me psychically. This is important, because the psyche is very important, or I would hang myself down, or I could fall down...and start to take drugs, drink heavily, or do prostitution, but because they help you psychically, it helps you a lot." (R7: 181).

She describes how she started to manage her situation step by step. The key moment was when she realised that she wanted to change it.

„Employers do not even talk with you: 'I do not have money, go out and bye', and you are totally humiliated, but you cannot give up, you have to be strong and go on. However, many times, you are sent down....and when you say this to Employment office, they do not care..." (R7: 405).

"I had to work with myself, step on my own legs and say to myself: Not any longer, not this way, I have to do something about it. Because when you have a job, you are one hundred times better, you earn money and you are proud of it, you value it more, you meet people, have new friends, and esteem yourself more." (R7: 331).

She was very disappointed from living in the asylum houses, and she set a target herself to get her own flat (to get a flat from municipality). She found a flat, she met with her late husband, and then she found work. In the latter period, she was more successful. She had two stable jobs. She reflects that her husband helped her a lot. Magda reflected on her life:

"...you have to work on yourself and that falls, that bad things – they mean success, because I went through something, and I had to help myself and thus now I know, how I could talk, what I want from life and that helped me a lot. That falls are in something good in life." (R7: 65).

Now Magda is divorced. She lives in a flat, cares for her granddaughter as her foster carer, and works in the cleaning profession.

The main discourse in the Magda story is ‘I had to help myself’ (it is mostly described above). It relates to the aspects of being alone in everything and having no one (neither family, nor social workers) to help you.

“It lasted several years until I settled down, because when you are alone in everything and you do not have a family to help you but are alone, it lasts long until you settle down, until you find someone, the relationship breaks down, but you must go on.” (R7: 95)

For Magda, this works as a barrier for the changing of her situation. She connects this with responsibility for herself.

She also marginally mentions discourses of ‘enlightenment’ ('I had to find out what life is about', 'I would do it completely differently') 'claiming Roma/deserving, undeserving' and 'Roma discrimination' ('It is difficult for us, but they cannot put us in one bag, saying that because we are black, we are all bad, that is not true.') Another specific discourse is 'hard work' when she talks about the manual job she had. We will return to this aspect in the next chapter.

My reflection: Magda was in a very difficult situation, but she was able to tackle difficult and unpleasant conditions with quite surprising effort and ability. However, it was not overnight. She admits that she had to learn it gradually. Her story is particularly interesting not because she made a miracle work career but because she was able to ensure her own housing and raise her children almost by herself (latter with the help of husband). Apparent paradox is that she argued that she had to help herself, but she also reflects that others helped her. We find similarities with her tale, e. g., in the Story of Karin presented in the next chapter.

Story of Rachel

Rachel is a young Roma lady, who is 21 years old. She lives with her parents. Rachel has always wanted to be dancer. However, she did not pass the entry exams for the dancing school (conservatory school). She started to study vocational training for a shop assistant in general goods, but she dropped out because she had learning problems. Later, after one year, she returned to school and now she studies vocational training for a shop assistant in a drug store. She thinks about continuing her studies in the future to have an abitur. Rachel's main hobby is dancing, and she also teaches dancing to children (she also earns some money this way). She does not want to be a shop assistant. She is not sure what she is going to do, but she wants to be an actor, to teach dance, she wants to work with children. She also wants to move out and achieve a better life for her children that she plans to have in the future.

Rachel believes that in life you have to have a goal and try to achieve it by concrete activities. Rachel notes the dissonance between her rather satisfactory personal situation (in her view) and the depressing situation of her community. Rachel thinks that the life of Roma community is hard.

"The locality where I live. Someone could say: 'I am going to have a paper' [education], but you go out and you see the souls who have nothing to do, and they do silly things, and you want to help them, but it is not enough to work 120 percent. I would like to help them but simultaneously...it destroys my mood when I see this. However, it energises me that I must and can help them somehow." (R70: 45).

...

"It happens that you do not have money for school. Parents are not able to pay it. Or you look around and you see those horrible things, and it takes your heart, you say: 'I wield'." (R70: 313)

In the final part of the interview, Rachel concluded:

"I would like to say...when you are not successful, do not give up. Go through it to tackle it all." (R70: 327)

Rachel presents a discourse of 'need of education'.

"I think that it is because Roma do not have any education, and so they have to do silly things. They do not have work because they do not have education. And so, they do silly things, and it ends up in taking drugs and similar things." (R70: 89)

Another discourse presented by Rachel is 'racism'. Rachel presents an ambivalent stance. She said that she occasionally meets with racism and she had also some personal experience with it but not as much. First aspect is that you are recognised as being Roma and then you are refused. Rachel thinks that you can convince some people about you when you have good skills and/or you are good at communication and they change their stance. However, some people judge you immediately, without consideration. On the other hand, Rachel thinks that Roma are very passive, they are rapid to react (refuse), they do nothing to change it, or they even refuse the offered options.

"I do not know. They [Roma] complain all the time about racism and racism. However, my opinion is that it is not about racism. If they wanted to do something and were not as whites say 'all the time on the dole', if they wanted, they could change it. And when not parents, at least you can lead children to this. Therefore, each generation it would be better." (R70: 95)

Rachel thinks that sitting at home will not help Roma.

My reflection: What is particularly interesting in the story of Rachel for me is how she declares a strong will to struggle outer and inner structural conditions, which she reflects. It is reflected also in some of her activities. He is among a few exceptions among our respondents who really returned to education. She teaches dance and tutors small children. She spoke about attending demonstration. She strongly believes that change is possible, and she would like to contribute to it. She reflects, however, that her ability to do so is limited. She admits that sometimes she is overwhelmed with depression. We can also see how her strategy is inconsistent in time.

My reflection on social resilience

We can see that some people developed competencies helping them to overcome difficult situations. Young people themselves reflected that they were under pressure and they were or were not able to bear the circumstances. Josephine perceived the problem as a low ability to withhold for a longer time when facing difficult conditions. It included motivation to go beyond the basic level of satisfaction with herself. The precondition of emerging resilience for some of the respondents was a specific bad situation or recognition that their overall situation or one concrete aspect was unsatisfactory and with bad prospects and they want to change it.

For other young people, grim visions about the future worked as an impulse for change: for example, the vision of being imprisoned, bad health of the parent, and the expectation that she will no longer contribute to the family budget. We understand this as a part of the school of life discourse:

"I think that it kicked us for life, it taught us to care for ourselves. That you have to care yourself because no one is going to care for you. Nowadays, contrary, I think that everyone expects someone to care for them." (R29: 43).

Another strong impulse for some young people was the finding that their comrades are in a much better position and 'that the train already left the station'. This means comparing themselves with others and reflection on their own bad situation (Janine, Bonny). It is not only about money but also about feeling inferior when you see how successful others are. For some, there was also a need to prove own value to others, to find new friends and gain self-efficacy. There was sometimes a need to overcome the feeling of discouragement.

"There were such glooms. However, I felt deep in me, that I am able to tackle it, that I cannot give up and surrender. It comes to me, probably yes, but as it comes it also goes away and I can go to look for work. Or I cannot achieve something when I am unhappy with it. I have to gather." (R32: 109)

...

"It influenced me...that I am...that nothing endangers me. When someone tells me some troubles...that I developed psychically. Maybe sometimes a person is ruined by loss of work but I was strengthened. Every time I was without work, I was telling myself: 'Someone would need you. You are a hard worker'....I truly believed in me." (R32: 123)

We briefly reflect on the discourse of enlightenment clearly visible in many stories. For Lucy, the difficult situation functioned as an impulse to do something. However, in some stories we saw the need for stabilisation of the situation (Magda, Karin, Fred). Ben, for example, said that for improvement of the situation it is important to have work for a longer time. Young people often needed more time for positive development of their situation.

Social networks can have a positive as well as negative influence on change due to support, positive examples, and increased motivation (Bonny, Karin, Magda, Herbert, Robin). Magda spoke about how important was help from friends and later from her husband to tackle this

financially, emotionally, and with withholding on the right way (concerning not going to black activities). Bonny stated that it helped him that the different opinion on the topic was important for him and that others motivated him. Key to resilience was the ability to gradually resolve the situation (one by one). Similar ‘step-by-step’ strategy was mentioned by Quido and other respondents.

We may also consider that the ability to withhold or tackle a situation is part of the general personality of some people. Bonny developed a similar idea:

“I think that generally the situation with employment in an early age or with work opportunities now or with some delays in life, it is a lot about the character of the person. I can think about a lot of people who would be hit so hard that they would completely lose motivation for any development and they end up that they do not care. On the other hand, I know people who went through such life troubles that which would put me down 6 meters below the earth, but they withhold and went through it and they take it as me now. However, I know that their situation was 100 times worse. I think that it is a lot about character and about people around.” (R1: 188).

Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, we discuss the strategies of young people, most of whom had substantial problems in gaining a stable position on the labour market. For young people, finding a stable job means often complete life change, enabling to get housing, and starting to build their independent lives (see next chapters). We have seen that individual agency, and individual decisions in some cases significantly influenced the future of young people. We noted that decision-making is rather difficult in the context of insecurity when the position of young people is already marginalised or endangered. Rationality of the strategy is bounded. We should put much more attention to the prevention of insecure positions and use secure places (such as years during education) as guiding points to future life. Many young people regret their past mistakes which I think had been avoidable with more guidance. We understand that some people are blocked in their stances of refusal and negative motivation and some people are also discouraged from action (e.g., low self-esteem). We also need more individual support and remedial features and be able to get to young people when they are change ready.

It is not possible to interpret a strategy as a concept which is based only on individual decisions. Some young people are resilient and focused while others are going in circles without outer help. We listened to concrete stories when important others were key for the improvement of the situation of young people and this potential improvement seems to be questionable without real help (e.g., Bonny was helped by his friend, Magda was helped by her husband). On the other hand, we can see how the chances of young people were diminished by important others who led them in a questionable way (for example, guiding children not continue their education), were using harsh sanctions (teachers dismissing young people from school and not allowing them to return) or were neglecting young people (see discussion in the last chapter). The interaction between institutions and young people is

clearly visible in the interviews. Existence of such institutions is as relevant for young people, as real and accessible they perceive such institutions.

Chapter 4: Factors of insecure position

In this chapter, we reflect on specific aspects of the situation of young people which may lead to an insecure position. We understand this insecure position as a position with the following traits: not being able to fulfil personal aspirations, having problematic education, bad chances to find work, longer periods of unemployment, etc. We thus go beyond subjective feelings of insecurity which are nevertheless present in such stories. These factors are both antecedents and consequences of the situation in various time moments during the live stories of respondents. We look how these factors contribute to the insecure position (in this chapter) and how the insecure position leads to various consequences (in the next chapter).

Factors and circumstances presented in this chapter may also work as conversion factors. A conversion factor is a way in which a person can convert a resource to improve his or her capabilities – conversion factors can be divided into the following groups: (1) institutional, (2) social, (3) familial, (4) economic, (5) cultural, (6) political and (7) personal (Bøhler et al. 2019). Such factors can influence young people both positively and negatively. In this and the next chapter, we discuss factors that are related to personal, family, and local circumstances at micro and meso level. Factors connected to publicly regulated institutions of education, employment, and welfare state (i.e., policy factors) are discussed in the sixth chapter.

Sen (1992) forcefully argued that any selection of diversities and conversion factors has to be contextual. We should be also able to distinguish contexts and factors that are usually set for people (e.g., age, sex, are hard to change, etc.) from those factors that can be influenced by individual agency. We reflect that the quest of fully determining factors and outcomes in the lives of young people is somehow doomed to fail in such qualitative research that we do in this book because there is no focus on causality and statistical inference. On the other hand, we would like to show concrete examples of live stories to discuss the possible relevance of wider aspects of the situation and to get more insight to the concrete conditions.

Previous literature (Dean and Taylor-Googby 1992, Bendit and Stokes 2003, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Mareš, Sirovátka, and Vyhlídal 2002, Hora 2008b, Hora and Žižlavský 2009) jointly distinguished following main factors influencing insecure position and perceived chance to find work:

- local conditions: locality where people live, including, e.g., economic conditions, schools, and infrastructure.
- labour market situation: structural changes, unstable conditions, unreachable labour market, low work opportunities, low wages,
- individual competences and personal factors: age-related factors (lack of work experience, look), health problems in relation to work ability, criminal past, low qualification and skills, language barriers, job search skills, motivation (willingness to flexibility, ability to leave social benefits)
- family situation: social class background, cultural values, relations, caring for children and elderly, role of the partner, and housing conditions

- role of employers: stereotypes, discrimination, high demands, time limits, quality of potential employment,
- other sources of help: low contacts, low references, low resources to find work,

We are going to discuss some of these factors in detail in the rest of this chapter.

Locality of residence

Locality in which young people live can have specific features providing both restrictions and opportunities for active agency. Regional labour market conditions (including, e.g., dimensions of urban/rural and centre/periphery) determine the range of work opportunities for young people (EGRIS 2002, Bendit and Stokes 2003). Infrastructure of social services (including specific social services for young people and their accessibility/availability, sufficiency, and quality) and distance from other places are other important factors (Günther and Seukwa 2018, Tryfona et al. 2018).

Sometimes a neighbourhood or district is a specific place creating a special context in which people operate (see Snel and Staring 2001). Young people (including some young people in our research) often lived in relatively deprived neighbourhoods, often with a history of blue-collar workers' housing, where the following features were concentrated when compared to other relatively close locations (see e.g. Snel and Staring 2001, Bendit and Stokes 2003, McNeish and Lacle 2003, Hussain et al. 2016, Hussain et al. 2018, Hajdinjak 2018b, Tryfona et al. 2018, Gehrke, Günther, and Seukwa 2018, Grander and Stigendal 2018, Tan and Spies 2018).

- Specific building infrastructure, poor quality of housing, small flat side and overcrowding of housing, and the existence of 'slumlords'
- Lower access to quality education system,
- Relatively undeveloped infrastructure of production and services,
- Limited health services,
- Lower outreach of public institutions (employment services),
- Specific population (homogenous or heterogeneous), the possibility to maintain only specific social contacts,
- Very high concentration of unemployment, high share of people living on social benefits,
- Low work opportunities, low quality of jobs, and illegal work,
- Limited public transport,
- Selling drugs and prostitution, crime, and limited safety within or outside neighbourhoods,
- Poverty.

In many cases, such localities have been created for 'the other' or 'unwanted'. People were pushed there by coincidence, market forces of deliberately by political planners (see Gehrke et al. 2018). Living in poor, ghettoized neighbourhoods is a significant factor of social exclusion, especially for people from Roma minority group (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov

2018). Some researchers also noted importance of the stance of people living outside the area or of the general society (Hussain et al. 2016).

We recognize that the locality is not completely isolated, but it is connected to other localities and other wider structures (Saukko 2003). We can study its differences from other places and relationships to other places can help us to understand the way in which such places are formed and form places outside. Engbersen et al. (2006) and Hussain et al. (2016) showed that spatial isolation, quality of transport, and economic situation are relevant factors due to the need of commuting to work. The key aspect is whether young people from deprived neighbourhoods are willing and able to move around the city to use its resources. This may be related to their identification with a particular area, obligations and networks within the area, situation within the area, and opportunities outside the area (see Clark and Kupka 1994b, Hussain et al. 2018). People whose situations improve often leave the deprived area (Gehrke, Güntner and Seukwa 2018, Hussain et al. 2016). On the other hand, people in some cases have to leave their homes involuntarily due to the process of gentrification, especially in traditional areas close to the city centre, which became more attractive for investors (see Jubany and Güell 2018, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b, Chrabászcz et al. 2018)³¹.

In our research, we have a lot of young people who lived in deprived neighbourhoods. This includes all respondents in CITISPYCE project and some respondents (minority) in NEGOTIATE project. This means that in our research the locality context is more relevant than in other similar pieces of research.

Story of Rupert

Rupert is a young Roma man. He lives in one of the deprived localities. After elementary school Rupert studied high school in information technologies. He had to repeat one year at school. He used afternoon tutoring by a local NGO, and he improved. However, finally dropped out and transferred to other private high school. He studies the third year of private school. He said that he left the former high school because he was not successful there, he did not have a computer at home and his family was moving and had financial problems.

Rupert regrets leaving the first school. Former school was better because he learned a lot there, including speaking foreign languages. Private school is of much lower quality and easier. He does not think that he likes the field of study and wants to do it. Rupert wants to be a policeman or entrepreneur. He thinks that he would have better work opportunities and wage if he would have finished the former school. Rupert sometimes works in construction to have money and to support his family (mostly at weekends). He is less satisfied with his life than he used to be.

³¹ This process is paradoxically caused by relatively affordable housing prices in the locality leading to people from other parts of the city wanting to move in (Chrabászcz et al. 2018), by property renovation leading to higher prices (Grander and Stigendal 2018, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b) and some outer property investments with the vision of future profit.

"I was satisfied with my life up to the last year, but nowadays it would be better to move a step further. To make a step from puberty and start to think about life, about my future, etc." (R44: 45).

Rupert strategy is to go abroad and earn money and then to return home or to move to live in other locality close by (to be close to his parents).

Rupert extensively explains his perception of the locality where he lives and the community of people who live there (in Rupert's story people and place are strongly connected). According to his description, one key aspect is the lively character of the place. Other parts of the city are calmer. There are a lot of pubs and gambling houses. Environment is dirty, houses are decorated by graffiti, rubbish lies on the pavements, and some people put rubbish out of windows. The place is dangerous in the evening. Rupert spoke about it as about 'not to go area' and 'menagerie'.

"Various things happen there. I do not wonder that people are afraid to go there. It is very sharp there. People steals on the streets. Drugs. It is bad. It is because they do not go to school. If they were going to school, they would be more oriented and cleverer and they would not do such stupid things." (R44: 73)

....

"People here are weak to change something. Someone is satisfied to be a drug addict...someone waits to go to prison in 17-18 years. It is horrible. There are not extra [prosperity] visions for anyone." (R44: 233)

Rupert argues that people are 'out of themselves' because of drugs and poor due to playing gambling machines. Many people have debts.

The second aspect described by Rupert is connected to the economic character of the locality and family life. Young people do not have family support to go to school. Other aspects mentioned by Rupert are home violence and neglect (people are less helping each other than before), which contributes to low attendance at school. Low interest in schools and school dropouts is widespread. There is mass unemployment and claiming of social benefits. Roma people cannot get a legal job due to discrimination. Most men work manually in undeclared jobs in construction.

On the other hand, there is a greater infrastructure of NGO services in the deprived locality, helping people with specific needs or young people more generally. Moreover, there are some sport facilities that young people can use.

The main discourse of Rupert is surrounded around an idea, reflecting that people living in the locality are somehow embedded there, in their current lifestyles. Rupert mentions 'Anti-education discourse' (this is explained later in this book). According to Rupert discrimination contributes to the very difficult situation of Roma. Another discourse mentioned by Rupert is 'trap of unemployment'.

"...when they find work, it is not as well paid as they would imagine. And that forces them to stay on social benefits." (R44: 129)

Rupert also means that 'people have dreams, but they are weak' and despite of all effort they are unable to change their lives:

"They put it in their heads, but they only pointlessly lie to themselves. For example, a friend of mine said that in two years when his baby will be born, he is not going to live there. He did everything for it. He went to work, saved as much as he could and nothing came, he is still in the same position. It is not possible.... You have to completely change your mind to clap your hands in a moment and say: 'I am someone completely different'. People here are weak for this." (R44: 249)

My reflection on the story of Rupert and similar experiences

The experience of Rupert is like the experience of many other young people we talked to who lived in deprived localities. Young people describe it in the following way. The locality is lively, people are permanently wandering around the streets, and people know each other. The most painful problem in the locality is the widespread use of drugs among young people. Among other problems mentioned by other young people are desolated houses (and the environment which is continuously destroyed, public facilities which are often stolen or broken³²), lack of facilities for young people, a lot of noise even at night and common prostitution.

Even young men living there (e.g., Tobias, Harrold, Bob, Trevor) argued it really is violent and dangerous to be there or to go to some concrete places. Lampert said that you can meet nasty people there. Tobias spoke about some people provoking and attacking without reason. Bob described experience from the last week when a boy and a girl living outside of the locality were ambushed and robbed and the boy was beaten. Nancy and Rebeca spoke about ambushes and thefts in the neighbourhood. Rosalie commented that she meets a lot of unpleasant, dangerous people and with a specific risk for girls:

„Everywhere you go, it is a fear there. When you go in the evening alone, or even with the group, you are afraid everywhere. You do not know, where he is [who you meet], who it is, or even you know him, and you are afraid of him. You do not know what he can do. He can beat you or rape you. Fear is everywhere.” (R60: 299)

More young women felt insecure or they were similarly afraid alone at night (Vanessa, Rebeca, Laura). Laura commented that often cars follow them because people confuse them with prostitutes.

We reflect on the reaction of young people to such living conditions. Some young people are used to this and they do not care much (Robin). Lisa said that young people in the locality cannot be trusted. Some young people (Lampert) say they guide their friends over the locality. Some young people wish to change it (Rosalie). At the time of research, the situation was not improving despite some young people mentioning more frequent police controls that in other

³² There is an apparent contrast between the destroyed environment outside and nice flats inside the houses (Randolph).

parts of the city. Police control is considered necessary, but others consider it to be oppressing (Trevor). In many interviews young people declared interest to move out of that locality (Ray, William, Bob, Vanesa, Barbara, Nancy). I often understand this interest as a need to escape rather than only seeking better opportunities. For other young people, the locality was paradoxically their secure place, or they had the discourse of 'security in known things'. An example of this is the statement of Robin:

"I know it here. I know what I can and what I cannot. In other quarters I do not know. I am new there and I do not know what I should, what I can and what no. There are completely different people, who I do not know. Here I know everyone." (R49: 81)

Typical argument within this discourse is that other people outside the locality do not like to meet Roma, they look strangely to them, have negative comments, etc. (Rachel).

Social, economic, and spatial segregation

Some authors perceive segregation as a specially applied inequality. Kieselbach (2003) links spatial segregation with low qualification possibilities. Typical segregation is in the school system:

- When young people from immigrant backgrounds or ethnic minorities are discriminated in the education system (Tryfona et al. 2018).
- When there is a sharp distinction between public and private schools and academic and vocational schools (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018),
- When a substantial proportion of pupils in particular schools are from ethnic minorities form a lower socio-economic position (Plug et al. 2002, GAC 2009, Jubany and Güell 2018, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b, Tan and Spies 2018) as a result of 'dezoning' process (see Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). This may result in lesser education performance and a tendency among the parents of non-migrant children to avoid these schools and antieducation behaviour (Plug et al. 2002, GAC 2009, Jubany and Güell 2018, Tan and Spies 2018). Some desegregation policies can even further contribute to segregation (see Hajdinjak 2018b).
- There may be substantial differences in school drop-out rates (Bendit and Stokes 2003) and chances for future education (GAC 2009).

Story of Josephine

Josephine is a young Roma lady, 18 years old. She lives with her parents, is single, and has no children. She contributes her mother money for housing. Although Josephine has a boyfriend, she does not hurry to move to her own flat because she does not want to be an adult so fast. Although she is not fully satisfied with her life, she enjoys her current life as it is, and she is glad to have at least some work. She complains not to have enough free time.

Josephine studied vocational training for a hairdresser. She decided to be a hairdresser because she liked it since her childhood and her friends wanted to go study there. Although she was able to complete vocational training, for one year before the interview, she was

unable to find a job in the field (due to lack of experience) and she accepted a job as a cleaning lady. She started to study English language after work (in the afternoon), but it was difficult for her to motivate herself to learning when she simultaneously worked. She likes her current work of a cleaning lady although it is low paid (at the level of the national minimum wage). She stopped to look for another job because she does not have time for further job search. It is difficult for her to fulfil her own financial needs.

Several times during the interview, Josephine pointed out on the relationships between Roma and people from the Czech Majority during education.

"There is a difference when you go to school with Roma and Czechs... When I attended elementary school, it was normal, no one wondered that there is a Roma girl. However, at vocational training, even when there were relatively a lot of Roma, they looked at me: 'She is that Roma girl'." (R41: 17).

Czech schoolmate children in the vocational school had comments on her due to her Roma origin, which were rude, and they also used 'such comments' in conflicts with her. Josephine is glad that the people in her current work look at her normally and she likes them. She also argues that she feels more secure within Roma community and locality than outside it (she lives outside it now, in the centre of the town). She explained:

"Now I live in the centre of the town, and it is very different there. I know that here [in the Roma locality] in the social flats there are Roma who do a lot of mess, etc. However, I feel more secure among them, because I have grown up among them, I already know them, and I know what I can expect from them. It is dangerous for me now when I live in the town centre because I live in the street where often 'skins' [skinheads] go. And I want to go out at evening on Friday and we go back home around three o'clock at night. We met them several times at the corner...and they looked at us, scanning what we do, and I was feared. In contrast, I went here [to the locality] normally without any problems." (R41: 45).

Although she lives at new address for more than one year, she still did not know any of the people living there. I named this discourse presented by Josephine as 'security in known things'.

Another discourse presented in the reasoning of Josephine is 'segregation'. She argues that both groups (majority and Roma minority) are separated, and they judge the other groups on the base of shared views which may be inaccurate:

„The problem [of Roma]...their problem is that they did not grow up among Czechs...Roma are all gathered here. They have their own behaviour. And when they come among other people, they do not know their habits...their manners. They do not know how they speak/enjoy and the other [Czech majority] do not know how they speak...I admit that some Czechs have never met Roma, but they already judged them. Because they know that Roma steals, but they never met them. However, I also know

others [Czechs] that would change it not to be Czechs and behave so. They know it because they live there.” (R41: 67).

Another discourse in the story of Josephine is ‘motivation’ and ‘negative or positive influence of parents and friends’. She thinks that Roma people are talented, but they are not willing to put all effort into things like learning and continue somewhere else, they do not withhold. They are not motivated by their family and neighbours to try or they are even discouraged. On the other hand, there is a negative influence from the outside, especially from friends, towards taking drugs and stealing. Bad behaviour is also a reaction to inferior initial conditions. Josephine reflects that she has problems to motivate herself. Her parents and NGO workers motivated her to study, and it helped. She tried to study, but she stopped:

“I know that I am not much gifted, and I am not a learning type...I have already taken my pink glasses off about attending schools. I wanted, but I found that I am not a swift learner, even less when I regularly go to work, and I do not really want to study, it is bad [her situation].” (R41: 185).

She also mentions work experience discourse ('all employers wanted work experience from me') and 'calculating' discourse.

“Most of the boys from the Roma community are working in construction, but they earn more money than when they would go to normal work.... Because even if there is 70 CZK per hour, they still earn more...If I were a boy, I would rather work on the construction site.” (R41: 98).

My reflection: The three main discourses presented by Josephine are interconnected into one great story about Roma. Their ways of living are different. Roma are separated, misunderstood, and segregated. They lack motivation to change it. In the remaining situation, when other paths are blocked, they found their own ways of living using the resources they have, accepting ‘inevitable’. This is a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. Josephine herself accepted the job of a cleaning lady although she completed vocational training for a hairdresser, which was her dreamed profession. However, she was not able to find work.

Discourse of Sandra

Sandra is a young Roma lady, aged 21. She finished high school with an abitur in the field of ‘trade and entrepreneurship’. She was not able to find work in the field she studied, and she accepted work in the call centre. Although she did not like the contents of the work, there is one aspect that she likes most in her work. Despite working in a collective which is mixed from both Roma and non-Roma, people mutually agree and there are not any distinctions based on ethnic origin. Sandra still wants to find work in the field she studied, but she is glad to have at least some work.

The main discourse presented in the reasoning of Sandra is ‘social exclusion’ (although she herself is not defining it so). Her reasoning is relative complicated and multidimensional. Sandra said that there is a distinction problem. Sandra divided Roma people into two groups: one group going far from the world and living their own life (including negative behaviour)

with whom it is impossible to live with and the second group who is unhappy because they are not able to get to the centre of happening and they are put at the edge of life and completely neglected. They are not free because they have to carefully consider what to do and where to go. Roma people according to her have concrete problems in relationships with the majority, e. g., they are not accepted to work, they are not allowed to enter certain clubs, they rather avoid certain places because they expect problems there, or they are falsely accused of stealing. This is according to Sandra, what discourages young people from participation in society.

"They [Roma] say to themselves when they [non-Roma] behave to us like this, why should we have good relations with them. And they separate themselves and create their own group which they want to defend. And they do not participate any longer." (R42: 104).

Other discourses presented by her when describing looking for work were 'lack of experience' (where you can get work experience when no one will employ you) combined with 'discrimination' and 'anti-education' discourse ('they do not find work because they are Roma despite having vocational training'). She also believes that the statement about lack of experience is only 'cover' for not having to accept unwanted people. She also argues that young people are discouraged from looking for work and demotivated to learn:

"The main problem of young people is that they are not motivated...they see in the case of their parents that despite effort, they [parents] are not accepted to work. And this leads to saying: Why should I learn when no one is going to accept me anywhere, because we are Roma" (R42: 88)

Parents do not motivate their children to learn. It may also discourage people to participate in the society (and encourage them to separate) or it may invoke similar negative strategies. Roma may also be afraid to try to change their position because they are afraid of payback.

My reflection on segregation

We identified three main aspects in which segregation was present in the interviews: the question of education, spatial aspects of segregation, and relationships. Because we did CITISPYCE interviews in specific deprived localities, we reflect that there are schools in these localities where most Roma go, and about which locals spoke like about 'Roma schools' (Harrold, Rachel). During the interviews we also reflected that many young Roma from such localities went to only a few second level schools (mainly vocational training or private schools where there are majority of Roma). Rupert commented that only a few Roma people go to study outside the locality or outside two or three schools typically providing secondary level education for Roma. This may be related to the question of quality of education reflected in the chapter about institutional determinants. Alan spoke about the problems of segregated schools considering the quality of education and the relationship between Roma and Czech majority:

"It is better when children are mixed. When they are separated, that is horrible... When they know each other, they are able to create a better relationship... We should not have racist stances towards each other. We should help each other and we [Roma] can have it in the same way as your people [Czechs] do." (R72: 289)

Important aspect is the relationship between Roma and other children especially during secondary level education. When young Roma were minority during the education process, they had various experience. Sandra, for example, said that she had good relationships with her schoolmates. Other young people reflected problems in personal relationships. Trevor described such problems comparing Roma schools to schools where Roma are minority, reflecting his experience.

"We do not do the difference whoever come, he is blue, yellow or I do not know which colour. Always he is a friend. However, at my former school, it was horrible. They get me down so that I had bad nerves.... I was so nervous that I would like to stand up and hit someone. However, this would destroy my school attendance. Therefore, it is better to sit with your mouth shut." (R65: 102)

Alan also described how he had problems joining with the school class at secondary level of education.

"These [schoolmates] there [at school] very not very good. My friends with whom we had promised to go there to be together did not come. You have to get to know new people. Whether they are good or false, who are racists or something like that. There were some such people who were not from there [from the city], but from the villages... I did not want to have problems. I knew that if I did something to him, it would be even worse, and so I ignored it." (R73: 37)

This experience is spread out among Roma and some young people (Rosalie) expect to have such problems when they decide to go schools with not Roma majority.

Another typical aspect causing segregation is avoiding (they do not go there) and not allowing in (we are not allowed to enter). For example, Mortimer said that he only rarely goes outside the locality because he sees no reason to do this. Mortimer also noted that people living outside the deprived area are afraid of going there. Trevor do not go outside the locality because he does not feel well in places which he does not know. There are some other fascinating examples from CITISPYCE interviews. Even when people from the locality have friends living outside, they often do not visit each other much (Maria) or Roma guide them through the locality. This may further contribute to segregation. Tobias argued that when people are segregated, they do not meet each other, then 'the good people are not visible'.

Ethnicity and ethnicity-based discrimination

People from ethnic minorities and immigrants can be confronted with reduced work opportunities due to language barrier, different 'normal biography', socio-cultural stereotypes, unclear or minor legal status, and difficulties to succeed within the culturally

hegemonic education and qualification system (EGRIS 2002, Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Bendit and Stokes 2003, Walther 2006). Therefore, they often have lower education, unclear legal status, they work illegally and are vulnerable to misconduct (Bendit and Stokes 2003). Discrimination towards young people may be based on both taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination (see Parsanoglou et al. 2019). For marginalized young people, there is a risk of discrimination due to gender, length of previous unemployment, appearance, skin colour, or foreign origin (Hora 2008b, Hussain et al. 2016). The discrimination is often mentioned as the main reason of not being able to find work among Roma people (Hajdinjak 2018b). People feel discriminated not only due to the skin colour but also due to accent and locality of residence (Hajdinjak 2018b).

Story of Melinda

Melinda is a woman in her middle age who is married and cares for several children (one her child and three her grandchildren). Her mother is Roma, and her father is from 'Czech majority'. She studied vocational training for a confectioner. She had her first child during her studies and then she returned to education and completed it when she was eighteen. She worked in catering and her husband (who worked at night) cared for the child. However, Melinda was ill (she had a backache) and she had to leave work. She lost her second child during pregnancy and she was hospitalised in psychiatry due to the psychical consequences of lost motherhood. She also had other health problems (paralysis) which lasted for several years. Later, when she recovered, she was unable to find work as a confectioner. She was according to her words discriminated. She has never got work as a confectioner again, but she was able to bake cakes for other people at home (she did it until she had to move to a rooming house). Sometimes she worked as a cleaner and hospital attendant (after she completed a retraining course for it).

Melinda divorced with her first husband and stayed alone with her daughter. They had severe existential problems (did not have anything to eat) because they did not get social benefits. She was deeply depressed and thought about suicide. It was a moment when a sudden opportunity came to her.

"I wanted to kill myself. I sat at the bar and thought about drinking and taking pills...and a woman sat next to me and asked me what I was doing there... I told her that I wanted to commit suicide, to end it. She thought that I was joking...and she said she would have a solution for me that I can lead a dancing group. I said that it would be wonderful, but I did not believe it...and we arranged a meeting and it was [NGO organization] ... We did 'casting' and took children from the poorest families." (R30: 15).

Melinda started organising dancing for children and it helped her to improve the financial situation of the family. She also met due to dancing activities with her second husband, and she had a second child. However, her husband was sentenced to prison due to not paying alimony for his children from the previous marriage. After he returned from prison, they lost housing and had to move to a rooming house. They also took her three grandchildren for personal care. Melinda became ill again and was diagnosed with cancer, but she survived. Her

health severely limits her work, and she is more life oriented on caring for children and grandchildren now.

"I care for them, so they have them [their chances]. I already missed my chance and I do not believe I will have it again, because I am finished now" (R30: 71).

The main discourse in Melinda story is 'discrimination'. She is deeply persuaded that discrimination is the main source of her low success in her original profession (confectioner). She explained how she was refused during personal contacts:

"...I looked for a job as a confectioner because I have experience since I have worked in the workshop. On the phone, it was all nice, we had agreement on the job, they wanted to take me, but when I came there, they told me several times; they had had bad experience with Roma. Whether it would not be better for me to look for a completely different kind of job" (R30: 9).

Other aspects of discrimination she commented or were inherently present in her talks were: '*you are Roma*', '*you do not belong here*', '*they do not want me because they believe I will steal*', '*if you were someone else, we would trust you*', '*I have vocational training, but it is of no help*', '*they did not give me a chance*'. She also described how once she was beaten by skin heads in public transport. According to her, the approach from authorities (e.g., social assistance clerks) was discriminating and rejecting because she was Roma and they were unable to do anything with discrimination. She concluded:

"I am afraid about our children, when they complete vocational training, complete school and they say: 'Grandma, why we did go to school when no one wants us?' This is what I am afraid". (R30: 77).

Another discourse in Melinda story is 'it was better during communist times'. She as many other Roma compare the current situation with the better situation of Roma community in the communist regime. During communist times she was not attacked, discriminated nor said anything bad due to her origin. Later she went through hunger, poverty, and homelessness. She further explained:

"...I want to cry. I remember my beautiful childhood and how I lived during those times. It was wonderful when I did not feel pain, fear and poverty, I did not even know that these things exist". (R30: 35).... "If there was not a revolution and communists were there, I know I would raise a lot. I know I would live differently. Completely differently. I know that I would live according to my plan. It is not possible now." (R30: 73)

Melinda also used communists as the reference frame of good people who helped Roma.

"This was a drop of hope for me. And I was completely happy, and I said to myself that even when the communists are no longer here, still there is someone who has health and who will help me, who will not only watch us die." (R30: 15)

My reflection: I see that there is a cumulation of difficult moments in the story of Melinda. This includes being ill, being Roma, being a lone mother, without work for a long time, and divorced. She herself underestimated the role of her health problems at a young age for her work future. She also admitted that she lied employers about her health status. One aspect is especially notable in her story. While she was never accepted for employment as a confectioner, she was (according to her words) successfully able to do the same profession as self-employed. It seems that her inability to find work in the dreamed profession was not about her skills but about other factors in play. Total absurdity within her situation is reflected in the statement at the end of the interview.

"I looked for a fault in me. I said to myself that something is wrong. I regretted that I was born among them [Roma]...why I was born to them [parents] and not someone else. Such bad, nasty ideas. To my parents. I fault them. Because I was told personally that I am Roma and that I 'should not be angry' [in Czech polite way to state refusal]. I have a bad experience from their side [majority/employers?]...I had thoughts that it is the fault of my parents. Where I did a mistake? And why it is only me?" (R30: 69)

In addition, Nancy pointed out that ethnicity is about self-perception:

"White put us all into one sack...stealing and taking drugs, gambling...telling us no....most people say that I am not Roma, but I tell you that I am Roma, half to half but I live since my childhood only with my mother and I feel being whole Roma. I do not feel being white." (R72: 108)

Laura presented the opinion that her skin colour is what she is not satisfied with but she cannot change it and so she has to accept it.

Story of Amanda

Amanda is a young lady, aged 19 years. She has only elementary education. She did not go to vocational training because she was not accepted. She said that it was because she was aggressive and quick tempered. She was recommended to psychiatric care, but she did not go for the test.

Since Amanda ended elementary education, she did only occasional jobs as a cleaning lady. She lives with her boyfriend and their small child, 2 years old. She is on parental leave and claims parental benefit and social assistance. Most of the day she is with the child which is demanding for her. Her hobbies are watching TV and listening to music. Although she works occasionally, it is difficult for her to combine work and care for the child because her boyfriend also occasionally works. Financial situation of the family is unstable. Sometimes they do not have enough money and have to borrow from the family.

The main discourse of Amanda is 'discrimination'. She describes concrete situations from her personal experience. Most of the time, she can find work only due the help of friends. When she tries to look for work, she is always refused even for jobs where qualification is not necessary:

“When I call there, I am invited, but when they see me – maybe it is because I am Roma or I do not know what I should think – they always tell me that they will call me but no one did it.” (R54: 117).

Similar situation is according to Amanda when looking for housing:

“It is difficult with this [finding housing] because it is similar as with employment. You call there, you are invited to visit...money may also play a role in this. It is written in the newspaper that it is without deposit. They see Roma and they want two or three monthly rents in advance.” ... “They may be afraid that we are Roma and that we would destroy it [the flat]” (R54: 181)

Due to these problems with housing, young people have to stay with their parents, go to the rooming house, or hope to find someone who will accept them. Another Amanda's experience included specific behaviour towards Roma in restaurants and shops:

“It happened to me many times that I went to the shop and immediately a security guard started to chase me...I needed to buy some things for the baby and the security guard stopped us [and asked] to spread out our jackets...it is unpleasant, and people turn towards you and point to you even if you did not steal anything” (R54: 263).

This experience is according to Amanda based on the different approach of the majority towards Roma and other people. Amanda sees this as the main barrier for achieving her life goals.

„These people are barriers because they look at the person only from outside and they do not know what is inside.“ (R54: 255)... “There is a lot of racism, increasingly people are racist. I am not racist. I take all people as they are, we are all people, everyone wants to live, we are all the same, we have only a different colour of skin, otherwise all people are the same.” (R54: 261)

Amanda argues that good as well as bad people are among both majority and Roma community. Amanda is very concerned about the future of her children due to racism she perceives to be widespread.

Discourse of discrimination for Amanda is accompanied by the discourse of ‘security in close and known things’. This means that she feels better in her neighbourhood. She is more tolerant to its problems (e.g. drugs) or she does not see them (when directly asked). She notes that Roma are sometimes not welcome outside of their locality (‘...when you look at [concrete other parts of the city]. When they [people living there] see Roma there, they look at you badly.’).

My reflection on the story of Amanda and similar stories

Examples of experience with discrimination based on ethnic grounds in various situations are provided by many young Roma people. Discrimination is perceived in refusal and neglect, or a different approach which is not defendable by reasonable criteria and in setting specific additional conditions for approval. Because discrimination is based on an ethnic ground, some young people speak about racism (e.g. Robin).

From my point of view, there is a connection between the negative stance towards Roma and their discrimination. Respondents in the interviews often mentioned some widespread stereotypes about Roma in the Czech Republic (see, e.g., Roma claiming discourse described in the last chapter). This further contributes to the negative stance against Roma in the Czech Republic. Some Roma people (e.g., Melinda, Robin) mentioned that the situation of the Roma worsened with a very negative attitude of the majority a lot since 1989 and before the situation was much better.

The second argument is that Roma are often discriminated because they are perceived as one homogenous category, white people have a negative stance without knowing the concrete person first (Robin), and they judge according to the skin colour (Lars). Harrold spoke about other people 'disliking Roma because they are different'. Tobias described discrimination at the symbolic level when he spoke about the unequal approach and unequal conversations. Steve and Robin spoke about unequal treatment, judging the same acts differently according to who committed them.

"When Roma community does something, it is spoken about completely differently than when a white person does it. We see that racism both in the news [media] and in life. It is completely different when you know people personally." (R49: 51)

Discrimination deeply limits the chances of Roma to find work, there are refused on sight or even by name that sounds to be of Roma origin (Otto, Magda, Bruno, Roman, Melinda, Herbert, Robin, Sandra, Greta). For example, Greta said:

"I looked mostly for occasional jobs....It is great to look for work, but only a few people find work, are accepted. They [employers] care more about where you are from, and who you are than about your knowledge and skills...I was not accepted to the call centre even when they had free places. Then I applied to a cleaning job in the office and worked there for one week until the boss came and said that they dislike our race, that we are Roma." (R67: 141)

Discrimination is apparent also in stories of promised work not realised when the employer finds that the candidate is Roma (Herbert). Robin also spoke about the change of act due to context. In the following story, presented by Randolph, we can see how symbolic exclusion is converted to acts and consequences:

"I know a girl from our street who completed vocational training for a hairdresser, young and skilled, she was doing it very well and they [the boss] employed her. She [the girl] wanted to do it. However, older ladies of Czech origin, who came there did not

want service from her and so her employer was forced to release her. They [customers] did not want to have their hair cut from her [girl] and so the boss had to release her even when the boss knew that she is skilled because boss knew that nobody wants hair cut from her." (R45: 49)

These behaviours are in many situations humiliating. Roma were not allowed to enter some discos and other places (Herbert, Sandra). We also note that some respondents (e.g., Amanda, Steve, Melinda, Sandra) mentioned experience with racism, verbal, or even physical attacks, especially from people of neo-Nazi background ('skin heads'). Some Roma noted cases of false accusations of stealing (Laura, Randolph, Sandra, Trevor) or accusations from taking drugs (Bob).

We can reflect on concrete consequences of perceived discrimination from the perspective of Roma. They are lower chance to find work, lower chance to work in preferred professions, and worse access to housing. Young people comment that are refused 'on sight', neglected by employers or employers even refuse to talk to them.

Age of young people

Age appears among the main factors influencing the situation of young people in various ways. Major institutions are formally organized by age (Anxo and Erhel 2006). In different countries, young people enter the labour market at different ages. The way social events affect life patterns is influenced by how old people are when those events occur (Elder 1994, quoted in Anxo and Erhel 2006). EGRIS (2002) argued that the effect of age could be contextually both advantage and disadvantage. Age can be disadvantage in concrete contexts, when young people have to decide about their future profession too early or when they drop from the education system too early (see Bendit and Stokes 2003). For these reasons, measures of prevention and early intervention are realized to help young people at an appropriate (time) age and support their key decisions.

While the risk of unemployment is higher for young people (15-24) than for older cohorts, the probability of long-term unemployment is lower than for older cohorts and the probability of temporal employment is higher but not higher than for category 50+ (see Sirovátka 2009). There are two explanations for such results. First, young people are mostly too young to have a spell of long-term unemployment. Second, young people have better chances to leave the unemployment register than older cohorts have. Young people are relatively more attractive for employers because they are not as much protected by the employment and wage protection and welfare system. They are also often more willing to accept worse conditions and may have lesser demands (see Engbersen et al. 2006: 122). Still, they may not have the necessary work experience (Engbersen et al. 2006).

Story of Quido

Quido is a young man who lives with his mother (his father died before he was born). He finished vocational training for a shopkeeper, followed by a study in economy which he

dropped out and finally one private school where he has got an abitur. He also tried to study a private higher school (ISCED 6) but he ended after one semester. He admits that he did not pay much attention to his education. He was more attracted to sport than to studying. He worked as self-employed financial advisor for three years (with interruptions of activity and inconsistent interest) during school years and briefly after school. Finally, he found he did not want to do this job anymore. It was difficult for him to persuade other people for financial products. He explained that he had conflicts with management because he wanted to help clients more and not to provide them only products with the highest provisions for the firm. He also was not satisfied with self-employment character of the job ('I would rather be employed to have job security, income security').

Later he worked half a year in a manual job which he ended because the business bankrupted and he has been unemployed since then (for half a year), doing only occasional work.

The main discourse in Quido's story is 'youth'. He connects this discourse with the period of life ('young person who just left school') and the concrete consequences that it has or might have.

"I thought about it [financial advising], but I am a young person, and when I was with clients, they often asked me If I am not too young for this..." (R13: 045).

"...I am a young person, am only 22, and so I hope to return to education later..." (R13: 53).

He also repeatedly reflects his work position and lack of work experience (school experience is not enough).

„....and the second thing is that I am young and I lack experience. Because everywhere they want experience, when I do a work interview, they tell me, they look for someone with experience with this [job].“ (R13: 59).

„....I am a young person with zero work experience and so I cannot choose much, however I would like to..." (R13: 65). ...

“...offers are out of my field or they need experience that I do not have. I do not think it is so difficult to find work, but it is difficult to find work that you would enjoy and you would like to do.“ (R13: 89).

Quido argues that he cannot choose so much and compares offered conditions with his age ('The offer was great for someone young who just finished school'). Quido is afraid that his work career is going to be delayed and he is going to miss the opportunity of youth, when it is best to start the work career.

“...and the years are passing ...even when I am still a young person, but the longer I will be unemployed and it will last, for example, two or three years, the opportunities will be more distant, and I want to be self-sufficient, to stay no my own legs, when my mother needs help but I cannot because I do not have work.” (R13: 171)

Another apparent discourse is ‘not paying full attention’ to tasks done, such as education, looking for job, or even working (‘the problem may be with me that I do not do it fully’). Quido dropped from the school to be able to play sport. He also does not have a clear vision what we would like to do. His strategy seems to be ‘step-by-step’ (he himself describes it as ‘climbing a ladder’). Although he would prefer a career in a nonmanual job, his effort to fulfil his dreams is not very high. He said: „...*hint may be that I do not pay full attention to it.*“ (R13: 55). When commenting on the consequences of unemployment, he described:

“...I am nervous [about not being able to find work] but fortunately I have a hobby or the sport and friends there, and so it is that I am not particularly focused on it [not having work]. I have trainings in the evenings and now we have the season almost every day. Therefore, I am not laying at home. That would make me crazy. Or a friend of mine is reconstructing the house and he needs help, so I help him....and I do not feel so much that my psyche would be touched by it [unemployment].” (R13: 129).

He also reflects that he does not have financial problems because he is humble, lives with his mother, and has enough money for his needs.

My reflection: Quido did bogus work (pretended self-employment) as a financial advisor. He did not pay full attention to his study and work career and he has only a general vision about his job. His education and work experience were not enough to get him preferred jobs. His vision changed only lately when he reoriented himself more towards jobs and staying on his own legs. It is no longer sustainable for him to be dependent on his mother who is severely ill. However, he reflected that he was unable to get to his goal of independence.

Story of Randolph

Randolph is a young Roma man. Randolph studied elementary education with very good marks. He dreamed about being a policeman and studying a police school, but he was not enrolled there (although he passed entry exams) due to high interest of other students in the field and related high competition. He started to study car technology (his second-choice school) although he is personally not much interested in this field (he liked the possibility to get a driving licence for free). He said that the school he attended was mainly theoretical (had not much praxis in workshops). He was at the time of the interview at the end of his studies preparing himself for abitur. During studies, he preferred to study over occasional work. Now he still thinks about being a policeman because he ‘wants to change things’.

The main discourse of Randolph is ‘youth’. He enjoys life – doing his hobbies and meeting with friends and his girlfriend. The main advantage in his current situation is that he ‘has no worries’. Randolph spoke about this:

“I have to admit that I did not like [school] for a long time, but lately I started to think differently, and I started to like it in the sense that I will pass the abitur and do not know what will be next. I will go to work and I am really afraid of the stereotype. That I will go to work and I will work there for five, ten, twenty years. I do not know what is going to be, but I am now glad that I am in the situation, in which I am now.” (R45: 19)

Randolph did not hurry to adulthood:

"And I think that I am going to have a break for a year and after that I would try to go to university or I will go to be a policeman, there is one whole year of entry exams to get there. This or that. I will see. However, now 100 percent I am going to have a break, because I need to have calm from everything. And to do only occasional works, nothing permanent." (R45: 23)

Entry period for police work lasts with interruptions for one year. Randolph explains that he is going to find some work, because he does not want only to sit home for a year but on the other hand, 'he does not want to be stressed by anything'.

Another the discourse in Randolph story is discourse of 'security in close and known things'. He feels more secure in the locality where he lives because he knows it here and knows what to expect.

„...because I know what to expect. I know who to beware, who does what, who can I trust...and everyone here sees a human in me and I feel well here, but when I go to [other parts of the city] not everyone but one of ten people look at me as I were a killer or I did something very bad.“ (R45: 39).

Randolph told us that people from the majority are afraid of him. He has bad experience with the reactions (behaviour) of people towards him outside the locality where he lives. Randolph reflects that he does not make friends easily and he had to persuade his schoolmates to talk to him.

"They accept me ...it is unfair towards me because I have always to persuade others. No one takes me as his friend immediately. They have to get to know me, to start to talk to me." (R45: 41).

Randolph connects this also to 'anti-education discourse' which is presented in the last chapter (he thinks that it is hard for Roma to have visions and use their potential even when they have school).

My reflection: Randolph regrets that the period of being young and having no problems is going to its end. He wants to prolong it somehow and decide during that period what to do. In this aspect, we can describe his strategy as 'wait and see'. Randolph is clearly oriented towards his Roma community. He reflects that it is much more difficult to live or break through outside. He is able to identify problems that are typical for the community and people and he has personal dreams to change it.

My reflection on the age of young people

First aspect related to age is self-perception of young people about their life and the development of their personal strategies. Barbara argued that not childhood, but teenage years are critical in the life of many young people when deciding most often about their fate. Paradoxically, as noted by Greta, most young people use the services of local NGO like clubs until they are 15-16, but then they rather go to the park. Age influences self-perception of the situation as some young people themselves reflected. Teenage boys and girls do not care much about adult problems. For example, Rupert noted his changed life situation (see his story). This means that his life goals and general vision of current life has changed. Tobias spoke about enlightenment which came when he was older. We can see changing perspectives in the following statements:

"I am still young, only 20 years old, but I think that my life will change further when I were able to achieve this up to now. When I was 16 or 17 years old, I lived completely differently. I was like these young people going here around the streets and flanking, considering school, etc., but I found out after some time that [I need a change]...and my girlfriend was the motivation for me because I know that I want to stay with her." (R43: 299)

"I would like to find a normal job, somewhere in the office or something similar. Normal job where I could develop normally and gain better position and not all time seeking occasional jobs. I am not longer 17 so I could afford this." (R19: 150)

Second aspect where age is relevant includes legal and institutional constraints. Lucy was only 17 when she ended her education. Lucy reflected that not being an adult and being in another working regime (young people were not allowed to work at night) was a problem for employers who did not want to employ her. Similarly, Herbert could not work in the heavy industry until he was 18 years old. He started to work at the age of 15, but he had substantial problems to find work. For some young people (Jake, Lucy), there is a problem of being a fresh graduate which contributes to the low chance to find work. This is most often related to the discourse of 'lacking experience'.

Some people also named the advantages of being young for participation in the labour market. John mentioned that when he was young, he was more active and agile.

"For me it was easier [to find work in the past]...because I was 20 and not 40...I did not notice when I was young but now when I retrospectively analysed various situations when I was accepted to the job I think the great role played that I was a young person, who declared that 'young branch bows easily', I was not demanding much, was very adaptable, independent in aspect of time. These are factors why I always found some work." (R26: 185)

Health problems of young people

These include various physical, psychical, and cognitive problems (like ADHD) and problems connected with drug abuse. In some communities, drug abuse is common among young people (see, e.g., Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b). There are several dimensions connected with health problems (Hora 2008b, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018):

- Legal dimension (legal protection in the labour market),
- Limits to perform concrete positions or tasks due to health,
- Limits on school/work attendance,
- Stigmatization and statistical discrimination by employers,
- Limits to access education, limits to finish education, and limits to use previous qualification.

Story of Ellyn

Ellyn is a young woman who is single, childless, and lives in a flat shared with other young people. She finished vocational training for a cook. Work in this profession is limited for her because she is vegetarian and willing to work only in vegetarian restaurants. Later she studied studies in entrepreneurship and for confectioner, but she did not finish these studies. She described that she did not finish the entrepreneurship school due to its demanding character. She had then a lot of quarrels with her father who expelled her from home and threatened her and she moved to another town.

“My father wanted me to continue in further study and so I tried but I did not handle it. And so, I changed to a confectioner and this was the reason why he expelled me from home.” (R20: 31)

It was difficult to step on her own legs (she hardly survived) although part of the family supported her. She did not finish confectioner school after another two years due to her psychical collapse – again this was caused by family problems. She was at that time interned in a psychiatric clinic for six months. After release, she had a lot of economic problems and a very unstable housing situation. After one short job (which she was forced to leave), she sought psychiatric help again.

“Work was stressful, under pressure and we did not get on with the boss. It was a stressful job, and I am unable to handle it psychically to work under stress and pressure.” (R20: 49).

She was entitled an invalidity pension due to her psychical problems (in the first grade for people with the lightest level of problems). She has been unemployed for two and a half years. She was not able to find a regular job and worked only in temporary occasional works that she got through an employment agency. It was more advantageous to have an invalidity pension and work occasionally (it was better paid than job offers from Employment office). Occasional

jobs are insecure. At the time of the interview, she found a more permanent job at the place where she formerly did an occasional job through the employment agency.

"I advised with my psychiatrist and she recommended me half time job. I may not handle a full-time job...but I can do more shifts, almost full time" (R20: 67).

She appreciates that in her new job she does not have so much responsibility. She also thinks about returning to school to have an abitur. Her relationships with family are still very difficult. She reflects that, compared to her initial child dreams, it was a hard fall on the ground. She is glad that she has at least that little security she currently has.

Discourse used by Ellyn is to 'handle it'. 'Not handling it' started at school where she had problems in some subjects (math, accounting, and economics).

"I was unable to handle it. It was too much learning. It was with abitur. Too much learning and it did not get to me easily." (R20: 29).

She also described how she was not able to do some jobs ('I did not prove'). She is afraid she would not handle it without her invalidity pension. She also reflects that she has low self-esteem. She is afraid she might not be able to handle some jobs and school:

"I am afraid I would not handle it [job] due to my psychics, it slows me down. It is rather demanding to work at the cash desk. They would take me for occasional work, but I am afraid about my psychics that it would betray me. I check my health status all the time" (R20: 109).

...

"[It depends] if I am able to handle it or not. I am not good at math. I do not have such capacity to learn things that I am not good in. I am unable to pay attention for a longer time. However, I want to try it if handle it or not." (R20: 097) [She speaks about school]

Ellyn says that she is afraid of her psychics and she considers her health all the time.

My reflection: Psychical problems clearly constitute a barrier for Ellyn to find and keep work. It is reflected in her self-image as well as in concrete experiences with employers. For Ellyn, it is important to have confidence in the situation. Employment office did not help her and help from her family was also limited (partial from her mother). She adapted a lot and tackled difficult and unpleasant situations. Finally, she handled the situation with some help from her friends. However, her self-esteem is severely damaged.

My reflection of health problems and health care system

Health status was logically different between the young and middle cohort (NEGOTIATE) where some respondents (in their forties') said that their health was rather fair than good. Many of the respondents have some substantial health problems. Typical were respiration problems (Ben, Antonia), problems with blood circulation system (Simon), eye problems (Vendelín), and eczema (Sabina, Tony). Some respondents had psychical or psychosomatic problems which involved the need to avoid stress at work (Ellyn, Derek). While a minority of the respondents had problems from their young age (Ellyn, Clara, Derek, Tony, Melinda,

Doris), others have them due to their higher age (people in the middle cohort), car accident (Bruno), or (as they believed) as a consequence of conditions in previous employment (Magda, Peter, Helen, Sabina).

When considering health, we have noticed short-term and long-term consequences. Short term consequence was that people were distracted and unable to look for work, work, or attend school for several months, e.g., due to medical treatment or hospitalisation. For example, Sabina mentioned being ill for three quarters of the year. Betty was a long time in the hospital and then five months in convalescence. Melinda was ill for several years. Doris was ill for two months, but she was expelled from school due to it. (This is a very unusual case).

Other consequences were long term. Health problems somehow (in various scopes) limited many respondents in the profession they studied and/or in the work they could do (Antonia, Ben, Vendelín, Otto, Magda, Bruno, Peter, Simon, John, Clara, Ellyn, Helen, Sabina, Tony, Melinda). It included both restrictions of some professions (driver, cook, car mechanic, work in chemical industry, or other heavy industry), some activities (bearing a heavy load, walking upstairs), and some work regimes (e.g. long hours or night work – Clara). Sabina was unable to do the cook profession and she switched to shop assistant.

"I would say that it excluded me from normal life...up to now. I am not able to find work. I do not have any [formal status of] work disability. This is not included there. No one cares that no one is willing to employ you." (R25: 35)

Antonia studied vocational training for a cook, but due to her asthma she found that she had constant respiration problems and was unable to continue her training. She had to switch to a different field of study, and she studied administration. Sometimes respondents mentioned that they were not approved for concrete jobs by doctors (Ellyn, Helen, Magda, Ben).

There were various stances of young people towards their health problems. Magda understood the opinion of the doctor as a supporting argument for her decision not to do such work again. Some young people (like Ben) regretted that the doctors limited/forbade some possible work options and tried to overcome this (get permission). Melinda lied to employers about her health condition. Others themselves estimated that they are not able to do it (Simon). John wanted his formal health status to be changed. Ellyn had a cautious stance always checking whether her health is not worsening.

When considering the accessibility and quality of the healthcare system and the approach of concrete health professionals (doctors, hospitals), almost all respondents including most Roma from CITISPYCE interviews who were directly asked about it said that it was great or that they saw no problems. There were some rare cases when the concrete doctor hesitated or did not accept the concrete person as a patient due to full capacity, etc. (Tobias, Maria, Sandra) or when the concrete person was not cared for at an emergency in the hospital with toothache (Sandra).

Despite (in some cases serious) health problems, most respondents (except for Ellyn) were mostly not eligible for any kind of financial or other help outside the health system (e.g.,

Vendelín asked for an invalidity pension but he was denied). Sabina mentioned that her health status was not sufficient recognised despite having serious health problems. They were so discouraged that they did not try to achieve it.

Gender and family dimension in insecure trajectories

In the following section, we discuss aspects of the situation that are related to having children and family life. The following trends highlighted the importance of gender and family-related issues in the last decades (Schmid 2002a, Anxo and Erhel 2006, Scherer and Steiber 2007):

- A) Demographic trends may include postponing and avoiding family-related statuses and events including decreasing proportion of marriages, rising divorce rates, increasing proportion of single parents, and declining birth rates.
- B) Increasing women labour market participation (dual earners households), feminization of labour force. Growing work aspirations of women.
- C) Different approaches within welfare states, employment, and working time regimes to various demographic categories.

Wallace (1994), McNeish and Lacle (2003), and Down, Smyth, and Robinson (2018) referred that the world of work is clearly gendered, and men and women often enter gender-specific professions. In some cases, this may be shaped by opportunities and structuring in the education system (Behrens and Brown 1994a, McNeish and Lacle 2003). Wallace (1994) has shown that the choice of occupation for women was for some women in congruence with their preferences and female identity, however it may lead to blocked paths and worse conditions (McNeish and Lacle 2003). Hora and Žižlavský (2009) have found that men and women interpreted differently the importance of care and family factors for their potential employment. There can be also a discrepancy between the preferred occupation and conditions in concrete jobs. This may be also the result of different opportunities for men and women (Wallace 1994, Behrens and Brown 1994a). McNeish and Lacle (2003) and Häusermann and Schwander (2009) argued that atypical and precarious employment is clearly gendered because female participation in the workforce depends strongly on familial determinants.

Women tend to have more transitions than men do, but among men, there are greater differences in the number of transitions (Kruppe 2002, Anxo and O'Reilly 2002). Risks relate to unplanned or early pregnancy and absence of parents who are unknown, divorced, or died (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Combination insecurity may grow from both work-to-family conflict when work limits family life and family-to-work conflict when family responsibilities limits work life – see Byron (2005), Scherer and Steiber (2007), McGinnity and Russell (2013). Concrete factors and mechanisms are discussed below. Both concepts are strongly related, and this may be due to spill-over and congruence effects (see Byron 2005). For our analysis, both dimensions are similarly relevant. We category the antecedents of work-family conflicts into the following domains: family sphere, work sphere, and social policy (public) sphere. People have to invest time and energy (effort) to resolve the conflict by

copying to demands and using resources for the task (see McGinnity and Russell 2013). Most of these factors influence both family-to-work and work-to-family conflicts.

The policy and informal forms of support are somehow complementary (Walther 2006). It is important to note that combination insecurity may be rooted within a specific cultural context including national and family culture and expectations about the roles of family members (see Scherer and Steiber 2007). In addition, the level of public support may be in interaction with the scope of the problem, resulting in the fact that more support not always means less work-family conflict (Scherer and Steiber 2007). There are implicit criteria of gender equality (e.g., equality of opportunity in the labour market), gender contract, intergenerational contract, etc. (Schmid 2002a, 2002b). Still, the diversity of people, life situations, and strategies contradicts the easy search for one ideal solution.

Family sphere of situation

This sphere is about how situation in the family influences the more general situation of young people including their education and work. The argument is that young people without family support may be increasingly vulnerable (see Biggart et al. 2002). Young people who lack family support are often forced to take any job – including low-paid jobs, jobs with bad working conditions, in the grey sector, which does not protect them against social exclusion (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). We perceive that their opportunity set is restricted when they have family responsibilities, family problems, or they do not have time for looking for a better job. Aspects relevant to this sphere are:

- Caring responsibilities for children, ill and dependent: It may be dependent on the number of children and their age or the demanding character of care for an elderly relative.
- Different culture in Roma communities (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018)
- Family support: including help to care for dependent people and care for the household (Walter 2006, Triflajová et al. 2015)
- Role of partner: Includes division of roles, work (e.g., working hours of both partners), and home activities (Bendit and Stokes 2003, Scherer and Steiber 2007, Formánková and Křížková 2010). Egalitarian attitudes of the partner may reduce work-family conflict for women (McGinnity and Russell 2013). On the other side, the strict work schedule of the partner may reduce the possibilities to solve work-family conflict (Hora 2008b). Attitude of the partner and his/her pressure towards employment may be important for the decision to work (Hora 2008b). Hora and Žižlavský (2009) have found that the ability of couples to live with current income depends on the economic positions of both partners.
- Living without partner: it has more influence on family-to-work conflict Byron (2005), because there is often no one else to care for the children (Hora 2008b).
- The role of family and friends to help in finding a job may be limited to marginalized and long-term unemployed people (Hora and Žižlavský 2009).

Story of Otto

Otto, a man in his middle age, is from Roma family. His parents divorced and placed him in institutional care when he was a very small child. He studied school for children with specific needs until his 18 years. He was released from institutional care after he was 18 years old (it was during the last years of the communist regime), although 'authorities' considered his further placement in institutional care. He was given a job in laundry, but it ended after Velvet Revolution.

Otto wanted to find his mother after 20 years of separation because he felt very alone in institutional care. He was able to find his mother and lived with her since this time (his father lives in England and they are not in contact). His mother is now very ill. She is illiterate and she needs his help in many aspects. They together moved several times all around the Czech Republic due to the very difficult housing situation. Now they live in the rooming house.

Most of the time since his young years, Otto was registered at Employment office and he claimed social benefits. He had only a few jobs. He left his best job when he was young because he was repeatedly verbally attacked by his workmate. He attended several training courses provided by Employment office and he was deeply disappointed when they did not turn out to jobs. He also did public works (cleaning). At the time of the interview, he was in a particularly difficult situation because he was in the process of expulsion from Employment office and at risk that he would lose his social benefits (see last chapter).

The main discourse in Otto's story is the story of 'help, good contacts, and usefulness'. He describes himself as a well-ordered, decent person. He personally cares for his mother and for other old people living in the rooming house for a small reward (although he cannot do it formally, it is an undeclared income). Caring for elderly people is the job he would like to do. He also helps other people in the administration needed to claim social benefits. He wants to be well accepted and respected and often in his speech he refers to other people who might know him including social workers, policemen, and politicians:

"...I am known everywhere, at the social office I am known, at the municipality, by [names of workers], who are keepers. I am known everywhere, because these high gentlemen like me, because they already know me. We discuss together about our opinions, about our problems and things like that..." (R6: 69).

He often says that 'others are satisfied with him'. What he lacks most are more positive relationships in society and towards Roma. He speaks well about his abilities. Moreover, several times he repeats "...they were very satisfied with me." (R6: 103) ... "...they all like me, they all greet me..." (R: 266). This is also referenced to other people in Roma community ('I am able what others might not do'). Otto also sometimes speaks about discourses typical for the assessment of Roma community: 'claiming Roma' (big Roma families claim benefits and men works on the side), of 'stealing Roma' (when he comments that others do not have to worry about him stealing) and of 'discrimination' ('They take all together, not distinguishing who you are. You are Roma and that is the end'). Insecurity in his story is apparent in the

moments when he reflects the possible loss of social benefits or the future expected situation at his old age (he expects low income).

My reflection: The story of Otto is particularly unstructured, hard to reconstruct and with many sideways. It is a story of particularly difficult start. Otto grown up without family, he did not have standard education route. He has only limited personal contacts. Employment office was of no help to him and although his family and NGO helped him in some respects, most of the time he was alone to solve everything. Both cases of Otto and Magda show how difficult is your life when you grow up without the help of your parents. Otto fought for his place and respect in the community.

Story of Karin

The influence of family and housing situation is apparent also in the case of Roma girl Karin. Karin's mother was a single mother. Karin left school at the age of 15 (she has only elementary education) and she got pregnant at the age of 16. She commented on her family situation at those times (after dropping from school):

„...and then I was slacking, we had it not very good at that time at home because I were from Roma family, there were more of us...there were some debts, and other problems, and there was not time to prepare for school, or it was because the mother was alone to tackle us, and so maybe there was not some control and some respect.” (R2: 23).

Karin is now also a single mother (the father does not care for his child). She was on parental leave for four years.

“My financial situation was really horrible. I could not make ends meet. I think that it is not possible when you live alone, and you should pay rent. For me pay rent somewhere and feed the child is not an option and I do not have anyone, any boyfriend, it is just not possible.” (R2: 68)

Karin had problems to find work and she did not believe in improvement. Now she works in a publicly subsidized workplace (type of ALMP) in the field of social services as a social assistant. It is set for limited duration (one year). She likes it and wants to further develop her work career in social services. Karin perceived it difficult to combine work with care for her child. She said:

“I think that it is certainly difficult when I am alone and I have no one who would help me, but I live in a numerous family, where I have a grandma, she does not work...and otherwise I found that it is necessary to put the child into the kindergarten, so he attends kindergarten, my son.” (R2: 61)

Home environment is for her an obstacle for further development. She still has financial difficulties and debts. The grandmother was of great help to her financially, but otherwise she feels that support from her family has been low since her childhood. She also said that the worst consequence of her insecurity is the low ability to raise her son. This is because he cannot be raised in a calm environment and have peace and wellbeing. Karin reflects that

living with twenty people in the same apartment reduces her time to care for the child, because she is often distracted. She says that her general situation is difficult to change, although she would like to change it because of unsuitable housing.

In Karin's case, there is an apparent paradox of being (at least in some respects) alone in an overcrowded flat. The discourse most typical for Karin is the discourse of 'loneliness, being alone in everything' – she repeated this word on several occasions and in several contexts including care for the child, financial situation, housing, and she also reflected a lack of help from both family and institutions.

"It is definitely difficult when I am alone and do not have anyone to help me." (R2: 60)

Despite or because of apparent loneliness Karin wanted to live alone in a calmer place.

Another discourse presented in her story is the discourse of 'enlightenment', typical also for other stories ('I think that I realized it just now'). Karin reflected that early motherhood let her to be an adult and to find out that she does not want to live this kind of life. She commented on her situation:

„Maybe because I had a child soon, I found..., I matured and I found that I do not want to live this life... Maybe because I got to the circle of completely different people, I fully changed my thinking or my notion about the life, of how it really works." (R2: 117).

"For me it was falling to the bottom, where I fell, to realise this [having problem] and start to do something for it." (R2: 141).

This led Karin to be resilient (see the previous chapter). Being in the circle of other people at work helped her to change her thinking and vision about life and its functioning. She commented:

"For example, in my home, all are unemployed, no one has a school, and all have a lot of children and when I went to work I started to understand that the main thing is school, to raise children and be self-reliant and such things that should be and different people live like that normally." (R2: 125).

Karin mentioned also other discourses such as 'need of education', 'going in circles' and 'discrimination'.

My reflection: _Although Karin had her family, she herself described her home conditions as unbearable and the help of her family as insufficient. She perceived her inability to leave as a barrier for her future development. The situation was even more difficult because she was a single mother. In some respects, a very similar story is presented by Sophie, reflecting that having a child without the father involved in his/her growth and simultaneously the necessity to drop out from school for several years is a particularly difficult case of multiple disadvantages.

Story of Greta

Greta is a young Roma lady, 19 years old. She lives with her parents. She has some permanent health problems, and she claims an invalidity pension. She studied economics and administration at high school. She struggled with her study, but somehow, she was able to manage it. She likes the field of administration very much. In the fourth year of her study, sometime before her abitur, she suddenly got pregnant. It was not planned. She had to postpone the abitur to the next year (she plans to finish her education). She said:

“The child was unwanted. My life plans were...without children. I never thought about having a baby. However, when he [son] came, I let it happen and rather interrupted my plans and the child was born.” (R67: 121).

Father of the child started to live with her family. Greta's son was only one month old at the time of the interview. Her days were all organised around the child. Her parents helped her with the child and advised her on administrative procedures and other things related to the care of the child. Greta believed that it is possible to fulfil her original life plans with one child, but she does not want more children. She first really wants to finish her high school and go to study further (but she does not have a clear plan).

Discourse presented in Greta's reasoning is 'one child is enough'. She said that she is currently not very satisfied because she did not want to have children. She thought that with more children she would not be able to fulfil her plans. She said that other Roma girls often have children at the age of 15-16 and they are unmotivated to study. They stay at home, most of them do not return to school, and their options to enjoy life are reduced. In her personal situation, she argues by health reasons (connected with giving birth) and by financial reasons (children are expensive). She said:

“When a child is a baby, it needs almost nothing, to eat and to sleep, change nappy, and such normal practical things. However, as it grows up, it needs schools and those good ones. And this is the reason I want only one [child]. Because I can put all my effort into that one child. Rather than to have six [children] that have nothing.” (R67: 149)

...

„When parents do not have interest in the child or they have a lot of children and do not have so much time for one [child]...to speak with them or so, the children go out and do silly things, stealing, taking drugs etc.” (R67: 265).

Another discourse presented in Greta's story is 'to stay on my own legs' (be self-sufficient):

“I still live with my parents. However, I want to stay on my own legs once. Not only to be with my parents and use their legs for my support. To be the weight for them....I would like to care for everything myself.” (R67: 79)

This is accompanied by discourses of approach 'step by step' (her parent every time explained to her what is going to be next), 'Roma discrimination' and 'parents influence' (problems emerge where parents are not interested in children, there are no rules and children behave similarly as their parents).

My reflection: For some people, the child (unplanned and unwanted) can serve as a barrier to fulfil their plans. The situation in Roma community is in this aspect very different than that situation in the rest of Czech society. We perceive that early birth is the case when the child came before the 18th year of age or before the planned education was finished (leading to drop out). Early births are rare in the Czech majority, but they are much more frequent among girls from Roma minority. Among our respondents we identified several such cases (Karin, Greta, Barbara, Sophie, Melinda) and in some of these cases we saw that it had a great influence on their future lives and labour market situation. Relevant perspective is also that these children were, according to the statements of young ladies, not planned and sometimes even not wanted.

Story of Barbara

Barbara is a young Roma lady. Barbara studied vocational training when she got pregnant. She was ashamed to go to school while she was pregnant (due to her pregnancy) and so she dropped out. She said:

"It was in the first semester of my studies. I was really ashamed a lot in front of my girl and boy friends, in front of the teacher. Plainly said, it was a shame for me." (R58: 49)

She was at home for a long time (she had only one occasional job last year) and she did not return to school. Barbara still thinks about returning to school but only about enrolling in a distant study. She prefers working to studying. From her perspective, it would be very difficult to combine the need for money, school, and care for the children.

Barbara lives on her own for three years since she moved from her parents when she became pregnant. She has 2 children with her former boyfriend. They separated and this separation was for her a great relief and improvement of her life. Father of the children does not pay alimony for them. Barbara currently has a new boyfriend (she fell in love and she is happy). Most of the time during the day, Barbara cares for the children. Friends help her financially and by caring for children. Barbara tries to find an occasional job for herself. She said it would help her a lot.

The main discourse of Barbara is 'negative influence of the environment' accompanied with 'need for education'. She reflects that the main problem of children is low interest in school and inclination to negative behaviour. When reflecting on her life, Barbara said that she has good memories from school and if she could, she would like to change everything in her past (go to school, complete it, and not having children).

"I was 'dude', I did not like it [school]. Cigarettes and friends...and among Roma when you go to school, it is somehow strange. It is not good...because most of them do not care about it, they start to take drugs, stealing and bunk off from school. When you are like that, you are suggestible, even more at that age. I would like to change to another school, a different environment. Everything to be different. However, it is too late, or never is too late. It is not good to go to Roma school." (R58: 41).

According to her, the problem is in not going to school and the negative influence of parents and friends. Barbara said that she would never place her child in the school where she expects the negative influence of other children and low quality of education as a result of this.

"I would like to grow up my children differently, to be polite, to have school, to grow up completely differently than me. Or a different outcome for my daughter – not to get pregnant and not to finish school. [I will not allow it] By no means. To do everything or something different for it. I do not want them to end up like me that I got pregnant and was ashamed of myself, even to go out with the belly to school. I want something completely different for them." (R58: 537)

My reflection: Barbara also got pregnant 'by accident' and she was unable to bear it. Her former partner was not supporting her much. She reflects that the improvement in her life came only recently (also with life with a new partner). Somehow, she thinks that she is unable to catch up what was lost and to have a different life than the life typical for people living in Roma community. She believes that she can raise her children differently and to get different outcomes.

My reflection on family sphere

There are three typical 'problems' in the family which cause troubles in the general situation of young people: the absence of an important family member and the situation where family members are there but they are not functioning in a way to help or they themselves need specific help.

The situation may be more difficult for young people who lived during their childhood and adolescent years without both parents in institutional care (Otto, Magda) or without one parent (Quido, Jake, Simon). Considering the reasons for the separation of children from their parents, we noticed the following main reasons: death of one parent, parenthood because of random sexual encounter (unknown reasons), partnership breakdown, neglect, and difficult financial situation of the family.

Another important condition was the absence of the partner – father of the child. There were several girls (Betty, Karin, Magda, Helen, Alice, Eugenie) who cared for the children themselves because fathers of the children have never lived with them or because they left when the children were small.

"My former boyfriend does not pay alimony for children and so [social office] pays these money instead of him. Maybe he is going to be imprisoned for this, I do not know. He has not paid us anything for seven months. Therefore, I accused him and there was a trial, but he did not go there. I asked for alimony." (R58: 125)

In contrast, Gwen was helped by her partner and it contributed to realise her working and training plans.

"My boyfriend cares for the child too. I cannot say anything bad about him. When I was working, he cared for the child whole day...after work he let me sleep and he cared for

the child whole day. Even when she [the child] was still very young, he cared for her. I had no problem with this.” (R50: 204)

Magda described that her husband helped her in several ways including employing her.

Lone mothers often had financial problems and problems to get a job. There may be a strategy to find a new partner that is relevant for women (lone parents). I do not say that is a fully intentional strategy, but I noticed how much this helped in some cases. Betty said:

“I yelled at my son. I was dissatisfied all the time, unhappy, faint, closed, everything was against me and nothing was turning for the better. And I saw no way out, not a small one. I could think about it for months up to night how to get out of this, but I did not know. The only thing I figured out was to find a man.” (R22: 234).

She reflects how her situation improved after finding a new partner:

“I had got financial help only from my parents...but since I have a new partner, the parents stopped to financially support me...now I have a new partner who is responsible and who cares about us all.” (R22: 106)

Betty spoke about satisfaction with the financial situation.

“If I were alone, I would not be. However, I have a partner I can rely on. When I do not go to work, I know that he will care for the family.” (R22: 194)

Lucy commented about the improvement of her situation:

“...and then I met a new boyfriend, with whom I was for a year. They [family of the boyfriend] were very well financially situated. He was a lucky guy. My boyfriend had a flat, we lived alone in our flat. Thus, my situation solved itself.” (R29: 5)

The situation was difficult for families where both partners had problems in the labour market at the same time (for example, Tony and his wife, Gwen, and her boyfriend). Family situation was an obstacle for finding a job also in situations connected with illness, divorce, and specific care for children. It was a distracting factor in the ability to be focused on life outside the family. This can be seen in the case of respondents Quido, Simon, Eugenie, and Violet, whose relatives were severely ill or disabled. We see that some respondents cared for their elderly parents (John, Fred, Otto) or other elderly people (Otto). In these cases, it was not clear whether it somehow constrained them in looking for work. On the other hand, sometimes it provided them with financial or other indirect support, which could lessen the burden of their situation of unemployment.

Considering gender roles, we did not find much data. It is more discussed considering the work of both partners (see below). Some men, for example Bruno and Simon, repeatedly spoke about their responsibility for the financial situation of the family. Lucy and other women spoke about their responsibilities as mothers. We noted that especially some young people from Roma community have more traditional values about gender roles – Maria, Harrold ('men have to be responsible for the family').

"Men have responsibility. Or at least I think that every normal man is set on caring...about wife and family, about all. Not care about the household but about the money. He should not ask his girl to feed him, to go to work and earn money." (R57: 272)

Robin commented about the division of roles in Roma families.

"I will tell you. In Roma families, the man works, and the woman is in the household. Woman in Roma family does not work, she does not have to work. However, when it is a normal Roma family and the woman says that she wants to go to work to have more money, she goes...when the woman does not want, she does not go. She says: 'What, this is what I have my man here to earn money and I am here to care for the food, about washing and similar things'. This is Roma habit." (R49: 145)

Rosalie commented that generally women/girls do work in the household including teenage daughters helping their mothers. In some cases, we have identified a discourse of 'motherhood'. Women reflected what does it mean to be a mother through their role which is fulfilled when children grow up (Violet).

Help from family and friends

Family (especially partner and parents, sometimes siblings and grandparents) and friends were a common and strong source of support. Descriptions of various ways of help were present in most interviews. Family and friends were the source of:

- Money – small or greater, more or less regular money gifts or personal loans (Bonny, Magda, Bruno, Roman, Jake, Simon, John, Ellyn, Sophie, Fred, Betty, Helen, Sabina, Tony, Herbert, Ron, Amanda). Some parents gave their children bigger lump sum financial amounts to support their life start (e.g., to buy a flat, to move).
- Material gifts – clothing, food, free meals, etc. (Karin, Roman, Sophie, Ellyn, Jake, Eugenie, Sabina, Melinda, Violet). Sometime young people fulfilled their needs together with their relatives (common meals). Sometimes young people visited their parents for a meal, or their relatives brought/gave them food.
- Allowed young people to live a social life – e.g., inviting them for a drink (Fred, Ellyn)
- Psychical support (Magda, Jake, Peter, Derek, Clara, Ellyn, Fred, Tony, Ron),
- Emergent housing (Bonny, Otto, Roman, Derek, Clara, Janine, Betty, Fred, Helen) and providing housing for free or for low financial supplement. This is not automatic because in some cases young people returned to live with them when they were adults.
- Helped respondents with personal care about the children (Karin, Sophie, Betty, Helen, Eugenie, Melinda, Violet, Barbara). This allowed respondents to go to work or finish their studies (caring for children so that young people can attend school).
- Advising young people with concrete aspects (Greta)
- In looking for work (see the previous chapter)

Living with parents when you are young means that you need much less money. Helen explained this:

"I lived with my mother, with my parents, so I did not care, I did not have children...and it was enough to cover my needs...to go to the disco on Friday...for my personal needs, I gave them some money, I do not remember how much, for the household. [she counted to the conclusion that she gave about one quarter of the salary for household] So for my needs it was even too much, it was sufficient, and I managed well." (R23: 39)

Respondents often mentioned that this help was most welcome, or they would not be able to tackle it without this help (Derek). The principle of shared responsibility or reciprocity was sometimes mentioned in the interviews, including helping parents, contributing to the family budget, and caring for their needs, etc. (Fred, Herbert, Rachel, Melinda). Help from relatives was enabling (allowing to achieve development goals) and functioned for some respondents like 'cushion' defending against most harsh consequences and possibly influencing their job search strategy (Janine, Derek). In some cases, it was apparent that the family lowered the pressure that would be otherwise present in the situation of young people. Typical example is Lisa who was unemployed for two years and on the question about money she always replied: 'I get them from my mother'. This is also related to the age and general situation of young people. Leila e.g. argued:

"Young do not care. They need money to buy for their personal needs and otherwise they do not need to solve this." (R47: 57)

The family was a key support factor for respondents who would be otherwise in a very difficult situation (Derek, Bonny, Jake, Sophie). Typical example is Bonny:

"My family helped me that after my fall, after my dark period, they took me back and they gave without...they sometimes mention it...but even when they were not obliged to help me, they provided me housing, they gave me space to solve my things. I am convinced that it would not be possible without it, I would not manage it both psychically and physically." (R1: 110)

Despite the strong cohesion in the family and good friends, some of the respondents noted that the help from friends or relatives was limited because they are themselves in a similarly difficult economic situation, they had personal quarrels, or they were not willing to help them repeatedly (Lucy, Vendelín, Bruno, Derek, Otto, Ellyn). Some respondents also mentioned that their friends were not really interested to help them (Bonny). In rare cases, some relatives did not or refused to help or have even active strategies against providing help (Ellyn, Violet). Violet said that they have to care for themselves and her family did not help her except for her grandmother. Her father was occupied with his own interests. The fact that some of our respondents (Otto, Magda) have grown up in a children's home could have limited the possibility of family support. They are often even not in contact with relatives.

Work sphere and its influence on life situation

Work sphere reflects how parents are able to work due to their family situation and how both work and family life are mutually influenced. The following traits are relevant for the work sphere:

- Working organization, work allocation (need of commuting, time dimension, need of security), overwork, and time regime of employment may provide an opportunity as well as restriction when it is in interaction with the need to care for children and the working situation of the partner (Scherer and Steiber 2007, Hora 2008b, Formánková and Křížková 2010, Trlfajová et al. 2015). This dimension includes both nationally defined rules, sector and firm negotiated/set regulation, and concrete possibilities offered at the individual level. Key dimensions for individual level are scheduling (predictability), (un)social time, and amount of control over working time (see Scherer and Steiber 2007, McGinnity and Russell 2013).
- Intensity of employment, overwork and specific work demands may provide an opportunity as well as restriction when it is in interaction with the need to care for children and the working situation of the partner (Scherer and Steiber 2007, McGinnity and Russell 2013).
- Support from bosses and colleagues may reduce work-family conflict (Byron 2005).
- Attitudes of employers towards women may include screening questions, statistical discrimination, and different working contents and conditions (Hora 2008b, Plasová and Válková 2009, Formánková and Křížková 2010).
- Security and periods of employment can have an influence on the situation when children are born (see Formánková and Křížková 2010).

My reflection on the work sphere

Substantial part of the respondents had current or past caring responsibilities including care for children and care for the elderly (John, Betty, Eugenie, Fred). Care for the elderly was mentioned also by several men. These caring responsibilities are very life cycle dependent (usually when the child is small, and the parents become old and fragile). On the other hand, work is more possible when relatives are willing to care for the child (Betty, Eugenie). Mothers like Eugenie looked for work that would be compatible with needs of the child (caring needs) and possible offers of caring by other family members.

Mothers who did not finish their school or they never worked before having children may have been influenced by this. Lucy regretted that she did not have more work experience before having children.

"We started the family [when she was 20], but it is true that if I waited and had some work experience, it would be better. It was then more difficult to find work. When you complete vocational training and work for a while there and for a while there and then suddenly maternal leave and what after that. At that time [she ended maternal leave]

there were workplaces in a bakery, but I could not work for three shifts, because I had a small child at home." (R29: 19).

Some of the mothers thought that the combination of living alone with small children was an obstacle in their chance to find a work or to hold a job (Betty, Helen, Eugenie, Lucy, Alice). One group of mothers argued that employers do not want to employ mothers with small children, especially lone mothers. Mothers argued that risk of children being ill was problem from the perspective of employers (Betty, Helen, Lucy). Lucy described the period after when she divorced, and she was alone with two children:

"And then it was the worst to find work because I was divorced, alone with two children, and no one wanted me. I often went to Employment office, even when I did not have to, I went there all the time...It was very difficult to find work and I was unemployed for more than one year.... (R29: 29).

Alice explained about her experience with looking for work:

"It is horrible. In the meaning, how they start to behave to you, and even all surrounding people here in the Czech Republic as to outsider. Going to the Employment office was, I think embarrassing to me. Embarrassing a lot. I was able to reconcile with this, but it is hard to reconcile with the fact that you send an CVs where you have to write: Currently registered at Employment office, mother of three children. You are a lone parent, registered at Employment office and in this moment they all stop to care about the age of the children, your work experience, education, they spurn you. They take any candidate without these marks...it is really bad. And I think that it is because this mental state, when people look at you disdainfully, it is really horrible." (R28: 123)

Mothers also described perceived discrimination due to their situation of motherhood (having children and other aspects of family situation). Mothers thought that motherhood was a great source of discrimination (Alice, Lucy, Helen, Betty).

"Most of the time, the first questions were: 'Do you have children?', 'Are you married?' When I told them that I am divorced: 'We will notice you'. I became allergic when someone said, 'We will notice you'." (R29: 29)

Helen said about the chance of mothers to find work:

„....when you are 25, they [employers] do not want to take you because you can get pregnant, when you are up to 30 you have small children, and you can be ill with them and when you are 40 you are too old. I think that women are discriminated a lot in this aspect, because men do not have it this way." (R23: 178).

Betty spoke about 'having problems with parenthood' and concealing being a mother to have a better chance to get a job.

"No one wants you when you have a child, additionally when you are a lone mother. This was always the second sentence in the interview: 'Who will care for the child when it becomes ill?'" (R22: 126)

Some mothers (Sophie, Betty, Sabina, Alice, Lucy) reflected that having children limited them in doing the job because of the required long working time, shifts, jobs being far away (commuting) or night work. Lucy, for example, would be finally able after several years to find a job as a baker, but due to children she did not want to work at night. Betty had to temporarily switch from working as a waitress to working as a real estate agent. She was afraid that she will be not able to return to her profession of waitress because there are long shifts which she is unable to do. Sophie wanted to work part-time. Sabina said that it was impossible to find work which would be compatible with caring for children and the work schedule of her husband who is working as a driver in public transport. There is no such offer from Employment office.

"...if there was a job working on three shifts, manufacturing work, 60 kilometres far from home, it was so that as a mother of three kids, a lone parent, I could not do it."
(R28: 73)

The role of the partner was relevant in this. The situation was more difficult for those women who had no partners, or their partner worked on shifts and so it was not possible to synchronize the work schedule (to allow him to care for the children). In contrast, Melinda had a partner who worked at night and he was able to care for the child part of the day. This is probably also dependent on age of the children and other help available (see story of Eugenie).

Social policy sphere

This sphere shows how parents are enabled to reconcile work and family life with the help of a public or private caring institution or other similar options.

- Pre-school facilities: Structures of institutions for caring may provide opportunities for men and women caring for children (see Formánková and Křížková 2010, Trilfajová et al. 2015). This include the following dimensions: whether such services exist, whether they are accessible (usually there is a limit given by the age of the child and capacity of institution) and affordable, and whether the concrete conditions of such services (e.g. opening hours) are usable or acceptable. For some people, the purchase of services on the market may be an alternative to services provided by public policy.
- School hours and holidays: these may be restricting without further support (Clasen, Gound and Vincent 1998).

My reflection on the social policy sphere

Although there was no direct question asked on kindergartens, parents (mostly mothers) mentioned using kindergartens and some other facilities for smaller children in the relevant context (Karin, Sophie, Betty, Helen, Lucy, Melinda, Violet). Using of creches was mentioned

only by Violet, but this was reference to the past³³. Eugenie mentioned that crèches are not much functioning in the Czech Republic – it is probably because there were not so widespread, and they were abolished as state organised activity around the year 2012.

Kindergartens are an enabling factor allowing the mother to go to work (Sophie, Betty, Karin). For Karin, the kindergarten served as a replacement for missing help with care by her family.

“...I have no one to help me...I realised that it is necessary to give the child to the kindergarten and so my son goes to kindergarten.” (R2: 60)

On the opposite when kindergarten for the child is not available, it serves as obstacle. Maria reflected:

“When you want to enlist your child to the kindergarten, it is common that there is no free place, and you have to wait another year until the place is free for you because there are a lot of children” (R52: 135).

Some mothers (Sophie, Betty) mentioned that it was difficult to take a full-time job or work shifts because they had to place her child in the kindergarten, where attending hours are limited, and take it out every day.

“Kindergartens work until 4 o’clock, or half past 4 and it limits your work, and you have to take part-time shortened job...it reduces the choice of jobs that you can take” (R18: 168).

This reduces the variability or the number of offers that they can accept (Sophie). Working part time can mean to have too little money (Betty). This is highly relevant for the lone mothers who have to care for the family.

My final reflection on the family sphere

It seems to be necessary to discuss here why work-family and family-work conflicts are important for young people’s insecurity. First, these conflicts may produce situations when the balance between both spheres is unbearable or even impossible, effectively reducing the ability of young people to care for their children or maintain work. Second, even when such a balance is possible, it may be at the cost of reduced income, neglect of children, and limited choice of occupation or career. It may also bring hardly resolvable day-to-day conflicts and produce distress to parents.

³³ There was a substantial change in pre-school care system in the Czech Republic. During the communism period, crèches were available but after 1989 these were gradually abolished. On the other side, kindergartens for children aged 3-6 are (despite capacity limits) rather widely available as a basic standard of care.

Role of employers: selection process and job quality

The role of employers for young people is relevant in two aspects concerning interactions between young people and employers: when looking for a job and when working for someone. First dimension is connected to job-matching process and behaviour of employers within this process. Some authors argue that the strategies of companies in their selection of workforce have changed (see Cachón Rodriguez 2003). Unemployed described the behaviour of employers during job contacts both positively and negatively (Hora 2008b). People often declared various unpleasant experiences and consequent negative feelings (see Hora 2008b, Hora and Žižlavský 2009). Employers are quite selective towards potential employees. Some unemployed or marginalized people often refer to repeated refusals by employers (Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora and Žižlavský 2009, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a). Plasová and Válková (2009) have found that the subjective perception of refusal by the employer is for women connected to a period of typical transition from economic inactivity to work (when the child is 1-6 years old). The authors connect this selectivity with discrimination or scarring (Bojadzieva and Ilieva-Trichkova 2019). Employers often did not inform unemployed about the results of the recruitment process (Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora 2008b, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a). Other problematic situations included arrogant, discriminating and rude behavior, refusal on sight, and cancelation of workplace at the time of job entry (Hora 2008b).

The concept of job quality is another relevant dimension of our research. We understand here job quality as a direct or indirect result of interactions between a concrete young person and employer. Both qualitative (Hora 2008b, Trifajová et al. 2015, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018) and quantitative (Hora and Žižlavský 2009) research confirmed that job quality is important both generally (values) and for concrete decisions of people. In other words, perceived job quality is a potential reason for job refusal or for quitting a job. Young people may reflect the reputation of concrete employers (Hora 2008b). Research usually shows that there are some sectors of employment where the probability of insecure or low-quality jobs is higher than in other sectors. While we do not operate quantitative evidence, we can focus on the experience of concrete aspects of job insecurity, job quality in relation to concrete jobs in the interviews.

There are specific types of jobs that the unemployed often refuse. These include fraudulent, deceptive³⁴ and suspicious jobs, very insecure jobs, and jobs based on direct selling of specific goods (Hora 2008b). One important dimension of the role of employers is the perception of the type of contract and security. Young people in disadvantaged positions often find jobs with some substandard conditions, including temporary jobs, jobs without work contracts and subsidized temporary jobs in the public sector (Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a, Hajdinjak 2018b). According to Hora (2008b), people reflect that some employers offer only fixed-term contracts and that these firms typically are with frequent lay-offs after a short time. In

³⁴ Unemployed often described that employers did not recruit anyone in recruitment process and that the workplace is inserted repeatedly for a very long time.

addition, work trials without work contract are typical (Trhlíková 2017, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Some employers offer even fraudulent or untruthful job offers – these include payments for working and the risk of not being paid at all (Hajdinjak 2018b). All such job offers are perceived as suspicious or highly insecure. Work without work contract relates to low payment security – it is quite often that the promised payment is not paid or that only half of the promised money is provided. Engbersen et al. (2006) concluded that the prospects offered by part-time and flexible contracts are often too insecure for the unemployed, many of whom have social and financial obligations. Still, young people who have less of these obligations may be more flexible (see the part about strategies of young people).

Unemployed due to bad reputation refuse employers with perceived bad work conditions. People also sometimes reflect that employers in some firms do not obey labour law and that there is only limited help from unions and state authorities. This leaves people in a vulnerable position. They have to accept illegal conditions, or they have to leave (see Hora 2008b, Trlifajová et al. 2015). We should see in our research what aspects of job quality and how are going to be relevant for young people.

The role of temporary, short-term, and nonstandard work and especially work with low need of qualification in the accumulation of human capital is theoretically ambiguous. Young people also sometimes perceive this (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). What most young people are looking for is a steady job with an income that allows them not only to meet the most pressing needs, but also to allow activities specific to people of their age (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Other research showed that young people may prefer interesting and demanding work over income, job security, and promotion (Evans and Heinz 1994b). We should find how young people perceive the role of employers and what they expect from their work.

Dimensions of job quality relevant for young people in both above-mentioned situations may include, e.g., (see Jordan et al. 1992, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Gallie 2017, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018):

- legal character of the job: without avoiding law,
- legal character of the wage: without payments aside, which are harmful for future social security,
- pay conditions: including level of wage with reasonable base payment, regularity of payments, need to fulfil personal norms of production and paying sufficiently for all work done (including overtime),
- solid firm strategy, behaviour of bosses and employers, keeping promises, interpersonal relations, disciplinary strategies, and worsening conditions of the employers to force people to some kind of behaviour,
- work intensity: problems to adapt to a new work, pressure for nonstandard performance, long working hours, and difficult schedule (including enforced overtime work, work at the weekend, health damaging work, etc.).

- work autonomy (permanent control and surveillance of work, restricted behaviour, assurances of thefts, and related surveyance),
- possibility of training and skills update,
- reasonable level of work stress.

We will present several stories to show concrete examples and to discuss concrete aspects.

Story of Vendelín

Vendelín is a Roma man in his middle age, who lives with his current partner and has eight children (five of them are living in the same household). He had a child in relationship with a different partner, when he was young, but this relationship ended.

Vendelín has only elementary education because he was not accepted for vocational training. Since his young years he did earthworks. As a young man (teenager), he was sentenced to prison for doing 'duly things' for four years (from his age 18 to 22). After release from prison (as he said) he 'took a lesson from this' and he did not want to be imprisoned again.

"I live a decent life, no stealing, it is not worth it nowadays, I will tell you. You take something and you have to repay twice as much, it is not worth it." (R5: 19)

He went to register at Employment office, and he has been there continuously for many years (he said 'unemployed all the time'). He had only occasional jobs in the construction that are irregular and on demand (on call) and mostly without a work contract ('they will not give you a work contract'). He characterised himself as a manual worker without education ('working with shovel'). He said that personal contracts are the key to his work because there has to be trust.

"You do not have contacts and you have nothing because no one knows you. And no one can tell: 'Yes, this is a great guy who works hardly, you do not have to worry because he will not steal from you'." (R5: 117).

We can also see the discourse of 'stealing Roma' within this quotation. He reflects on the possibility to get a work contract:

"When nowadays you go to a private employer, he does not want to write an employment contract with you, only 'for a trial'. You work there and then he tells you, he does not want you there. These are nasty people. This is my experience and I know what I talk about...they only give you contact so they can release you anytime." (R5: 65).

This type of work is otherwise very accessible, because according to Vendelín, the employers do not care about his age or other things, they accept almost everyone who is willing to work. For the chance to get other (legal) jobs there is a limit that he is low educated. The main consequences of his situation for him are that he must look for work almost all the time, that sometimes he does not get paid for the work done, that he can be controlled by police when working illegally, and that the financial situation of the family is limited.

Several discourses are apparent in Vanderlin's story. This first discourse is the discourse of 'sameness and going in circles', reflecting that the situation is the same for a long time and the events are repeated and this course of events absolutely cannot be changed by him.

"I say, I am walking around like fool, saying the same all the time, and they [employers] all say it around and around." (R5: 97)

"The situation is the same, only that I am worse off because I have children and more trouble, but otherwise it is the same all the time." (R5: 107)

He would strongly prefer a more stable and predictable situation.

"...you cannot afford what others have without employment, and all the time you live from this, all the time you rotate the same..." (R5: 267)

Vendelín mentions both 'education discourse' (people with education would be preferred to him in job search) and a descriptive version of 'anti-education discourse' (some people with education cannot find work in their profession). Another presented discourse is 'enlightenment' ('As young I did not see things. I took life as it was'). He reflects that as a child or teenager, he did not care about the life and troubles of his parents.

My reflection: Vendelín and Fred are among the people who have the least predictable working situation. Their situation is complicated by the fact that their work is only occasional, it is usually not covered by a work contract and there is a great insecurity in the situation of work itself. Vendelín is locked in a vicious circle of insecurity and permanently looking for work. He has to choose between accepting what is available and having nothing, because legal work is completely restricted to him. From the perspective of labour market, he is very disadvantaged by many aspects mentioned in this story: age, Roma origin, having only elementary education, health limits, etc. I also noted that this type of undeclared work is often offered, and the state institutions tolerate it, or they are unable to restrict it and/or provide a more viable alternative. Vendelin got in conflict with street level workers but this has not changed his situation (see chapter 6).

Story of Betty

Betty is a young woman who got pregnant half a year after finishing her vocational school for waitress. Before the child was born, she worked occasionally in undeclared jobs. Betty was on parental leave for four years. The father of the child did not care for it (he even did not pay alimony for some time). Betty lived with her parents and after several years she got a flat as a heritage after her grandparents. She reflects how difficult it was to manage situation with the child financially when she was alone. She went into disadvantageous debts and it was very difficult for her to get out of these debts. She also noted that she had a feeling that she could not manage it. Betty at the time of the interview had a new boyfriend for some time and she was going to have a second baby. She was satisfied but she reflected that she is currently dependent on her partner.

Betty was unemployed for one year since the end of her first parental leave (partially also because she was ill at that time). During her unemployment spell, she claimed social benefits and worked on the side. Later she was expelled from Employment office register for not fulfilling her obligations towards the office (she did not come to the meeting and did not cooperate due to her illness). She reflected that the offers provided by Employment office are not advantageous because the wage is very low. She thinks that it is because the work is declared (legal) and she is willing to work in an undeclared job to get twice as much money.

Betty (with one exception of shorty working as a real estate agent) always worked as a waitress. She described that it was not a problem for her to get a job, but it was a problem to get an employment contract. She worked since the time of her vocational education including time on parental leave in several places, but usually it was without a work contract. Sometimes it was at least for short-term legal work contracts, but in other cases it was undeclared or partially undeclared. Employers always promised an employment contract, but it was never realised.

"Always there was a problem that the work contract was not realised, because I needed it very much, but everywhere it was delayed, 'It is going to be next month, next month'. Because I think that in this field owners of the restaurants are not willing to provide an employment contract. And so, it usually ended up that I left, because I told them that I need an employment contract." (R22: 51).

She also had other unpleasant experience from her previous jobs including employers not paying the money promised in the work contract, low money for the work done, threatened by the employer, having to work in a different profession than a waitress although she was recruited as a waitress and no positive feedback.

There was a problem for her to work as a waitress because she has to work long into the night and on shifts while she had a small baby (her parents had to care for it). She also thought that in the profession of a waitress she could not work any longer after having the second child because employers do not want women with children ('You have to be at work all the time').

"I have no plan [what I will do]. I really do not know. The only thing that I do very well, and I am better than others, it is waitress. And I know now that it is a job that I cannot do with children. Even if it were possible to think something out, the children are damaged from this, I see it with my first child. There were moments when he started to talk, and I did not even know when it was. Or I came and said: 'O my god, you have grown up'. Because I was not there" (R22: 152).

The discourse in the story of Betty is 'realism' mixed with some aspects of 'calculation' and 'masquerade'. When she explained her relationships with employers and street level workers, she reflected on two dimensions. The first one is that people cannot be trusted ('they did not keep their promises'), 'I was naïve and trustful', 'you cannot count that everything is automatic').

„You are in stress. Because you do not know what is going to happen. Because you have a feeling that can trust to someone, and you find after one month, after two months, that it is not true. That it is the same as the previous employer. That it is everywhere the same.“ (R22: 136)

The second dimension is about her reactions including adaptation and her not honest behaviour: ('I could not tell them', 'You could lie to them, think something out', 'From my work I have learned to get on with people that we do not understand each other. Such masquerade I think.')

"I had problems that I have a son and so I started not to tell them. Because naturally they want people without children in this field. I know that after a new birth I will not be able to return to my profession." (R22: 118).

She explains that she changed her attitude to work and works with much less enthusiasm ('I think I lost my taste to work'). She described that she came late to work and did work in a lower quality that she could. Betty also mentions minor discourses of 'managing the situation', 'claiming Roma' and 'going in circles'.

My reflection: Betty is one of the typical cases of an involuntary undeclared worker. Important is to note that in insecure jobs the real rights of workers are diminished and their real-life options are limited. This can be illustrated by the following statement where Betty explained how she is trapped:

"They do not pay you because you do not have paper. Or you have it and there is written 10 000 CZK. You want to have a day off, and the employer takes that paper, a says: 'You have 10 thousand written here, so if you do not want to go to work, you will get what is in the work contract and fine, you can have your day off'." (R22: 140).

This case shows how fraudulent and mischief the behaviour of some employers was and how this creates mistrust from the side of employees.

Story of Helen

Helen is a woman in her middle age. She completed vocational training for a shop assistant. She has a child (he is almost an adult now) but after separation from her husband (after one and a half year of their marriage) she returned to live with her mother and lived with her ever since. The father avoids paying for the child. They live a rather humble life although her son would need more money. They often go into debt.

Her story is based on personal experiences with many employers. In her first job, she sold vegetables and she had health problems there due to bad weather conditions and low protection and had no legal contract. In the second job (drug store), there was found a financial deficit (she said it was caused by the owner who took goods for his personal needs) and she had to pay it. In her third job in the shop, she found that the employer had not paid social contributions for her (it was found after one year).

"They [the employer] gave us money, and we had some scraps of paper, it was not a wage receipt...and then I received letter from the [social] insurance company that I have to pay...that for more than a year I do not have insurance paid...I said that I do not care that they [insurance company] should note me immediately as they find it...and I am not going to pay it instead of someone [employer] who buys cars and opens other shops, that is his duty...but she [social insurance worker] told me that I have to pay it or there is very high financial sanction and that they control it once a year." (R23: 7)

She had many problems until she managed to settle the situation. After two other short jobs (that were fine) and a motherhood pause, she found a job in a pharmacy store where she worked for ten years. However, the owner did not care much about the business and spent all the money on holidays and the drugstore had substantial financial difficulties (e.g., wages came late, not enough money for goods). Despite all problems, she said that it was her best job.

She changed the job to a chemist's store but there she was alone for everything. She stood all the time, and she could not even go to the toilet because she was there alone. She was very overworked (the employer refused to employ more people), stressed by the high pace of work, and had health problems caused by weather conditions.

"...as autumn started, October, November, there were two very small stoves [half working] and the door was between them which were permanently open, it was cold. I had three or four levels of clothes dressed, I was like a robot, work was difficult when I were so much dressed up. My rheumatism horribly worsened, I was standing all the day and I was finished...I had a backache and said to myself 'I have to end'." (R23: 19)

She left when she found another job in the making of cosmetics, but the employer, who repeatedly promised her this job, had not that concrete work for her and put her in another manufacturing position. There were conflicts between employer and employees who had work accidents with electrics and bad work conditions. She left and now she is unemployed for half a year.

The main discourses in Helen's story are 'low trust' and 'health consequences'. She reflects that in many jobs, the health problems of employees are caused by monotonous manual work or insufficient working conditions (including no breaks and dangerous equipment and breaking safety rules in her last job) and on the other hand, these health problems lately limit her in these professions.

"They want to destroy us completely. Because there are a lot of us, we have to die. We are going to go from the work directly to the cemetery, because I believe that they want to destroy us completely. Old age insurance is something that I really do not care about, because I am going to have invalidity, or I am going to die, and they will take me away. I have no chance to live to my 70 years in any way, in any way in this tempo no way." (R23: 37).

She describes the arrogant behaviour of employers and some of their practices (e.g., paying wages in food coupons, not keeping their promises, not caring for the fate of the employees, dismissal of employees absolutely without reason). She says that when she was young, she was very submissive and stupid, but she adapted in time with the ‘school of life’ and she started to fight not only for her but also for the child (she said ‘I am a tiger now’). She started to protect herself and her health and she is picky when considering jobs. She declares very low trust in employers:

“...you have to be careful, be really careful, because some of the employers or entrepreneurs, they are really brainy Smurfs³⁵, really big ones. And you have to pay full attention and to have a legal minimum and to be very cautious....May be it is low trust in anyone...everywhere I went, I went with the feeling that they are going to trick me to or it is going to be terrible...I try not to put things too close if it is not grave but it has consequences for my psychics, for the money, I had low self-esteem that I cannot...I feel it even now.” (R23: 152)

Other minor discourses present in Helen’s story are ‘claiming Roma’ (‘Roma know how to get benefits’, ‘Roma claim although they are rich’) and ‘calculating’. Calculating discourse is about assessing the job considering money and other conditions:

“I have got job offers...I cannot believe it. From morning to the evening, it is at [edge of the city, far away]. How much I will earn, as much I will pay for travelling there, it is about 3000 CZK for traveling pass. They are fools. I say no way to such travelling for one and a half an hour, three hours there and back. I would go home only to sleep.” (R23: 37)

My reflection: Two aspects are particularly important in tale of Helen. She worked almost all her work career in marginalised working positions where some critical aspects of the work contract were missing. She was very flexible and accepted disadvantageous working conditions, but it was not leading to improvement. The other thing is that she is deeply disappointed and her attitude to employers is very negative (see next chapter – changed attitudes to work).

Specific tale of Magda

We presented the story of Magda in the previous chapter. Here we focus on one aspect of her story: work intensification. She resolutely refuses to work in the factory because she had previous specific experience with it. She also disliked some other jobs she did (e.g., in the shopping hall) for similar reasons. The main reasons for her to avoid certain jobs are that the

³⁵ This word can have various meanings in the Czech language. In the original positive meaning, it is someone who is an inventor and is very clever. In negative meaning, it means someone whose work is innovative, but his ideas are not very clever or they are even detrimental. In the Czech version of the cartoon Smurfs, the Smurf with glasses (brainy Smurf) is named with the same name.

work is stereotyping, and shifts are long (12 hours and over). It leads to exhaustion and it has health consequences.

„....nowadays they [management] do not consider that you are tired and exhausted. They do not care, you have to work hard, you have to work hard until you collapse.“ (R7: 201).

When she worked in the factory, she accepted overwork even at the weekends (she wanted to prove that she was good) and she believes that it had health consequences to her. She said that even the doctor forbade her to work in the factory. The second aspect that she mentioned was the behaviour of the direct manager:

“...you have to be productive, because the more productive you are, it is better for the firm and you make less rejects...and also the behaviour of them [management] is relevant, because you like to go to work, or you go there with distaste and it has psychical consequences..” (R7: 205)

“She [boss] chased me. I do not like running around and leaving things half done, but the boss chased us all the time: ‘Come here and come there and come there’ and it was not possible to withstand it.” (R7: 211)

Magda also spoke about being humiliated by the entry test in some works.

Story of Ben and Ken

Ben and Ken are brothers. We interviewed them together. They live in the household with their mother. Both brothers studied vocational training for a locksmith, but they both dropped out of school after one year (due to bad school results, skipping school, and some behavioural problems). Ben has a son from his previous relationship, but he returned to live with his mother. He has debts because he borrowed money for furniture when he started to live with his former girlfriend. He also has to pay alimony for his child. Ken is younger, he is single, and he has no children yet.

Work situations and work strategies of both brothers are very similar. They look for manual jobs and their parents help them to find work. Both brothers worked mainly in manual professions in factories. Ben worked only in occasional jobs until he was 18 years old. He got one stable job lasting for more than three years which started when he was eighteen, but since then he had only shorter jobs. He reflected:

„Since the time I worked for three and a half a year, later I fragmented it. Awhile in work, awhile at Employment office, in work and at Employment office. It complicates my life a lot.“ (R3: 193).

He usually worked in various factories (car industry, rubber-making industry) and he is not very picky when choosing a job. Ben and Ken believe that their Roma origins negatively contribute to their chance to find work, but ‘no one will tell you directly’ (and not all employers considered this factor). *“I do not accept everything, but 90% you cannot choose. I take what is*

available.” (R3: 63). “You have to work somewhere because you need money for living”. Ben and Ken are unable to hold work for a longer time. They are often released from work after a trial period.

“I do not know if they [employers] have some business contract and they want to do it quickly. Sometimes they recruit. They dismissed a lot of people, they always recruit, and dismiss, recruit and dismiss.” (R3: 63).

Ken argues that the same employer is willing to employ him repeatedly, but he never gets a contract with unlimited duration. Ben says that these employers do not keep their promises. Ben reflects that these firms often employ foreigners and that there are not equal work conditions among various categories of employees.

Some employers are unwilling to give a work contract until they try the worker. Ken was forced to accept such a job by workers at Employment office. It showed up that the job was without work contract and payment of social contributions and there was an unacceptably low wage. When you refuse to do such a job, you are expelled from Employment office register. Ken was expelled from Employment office.

“You sign a paper when you register at Employment office. The lady informs you that when you are accepted to the job with a recommendation from Employment office, you cannot leave. And I stayed at home.” (R4: 334).

Income insecurity is presented in their story because Ben and Ken perceive various consequences of their current situation of income insecurity (unable to get independent living, unable to fulfil his needs without help or parents, unable to pay debts, limited expenses and feelings of low self-esteem, limited social contacts, and limited family strategies). We present more about this in the next chapter.

The main discourse shared by both brothers is ‘you have to be careful’. Ben best describes it in the following statement:

“You cannot trust people; everyone has to care for his own things. It is this way at work because the best friend will betray you. I see it positively that when I go to work somewhere, I already know that it was this way and it is this way. Most of the time. One has to be careful...when I was young, people asked me about my salary...I was asked by a colleague and I was warned by another colleague not to tell it. It is never told. You have to be careful. I think that I am generally more careful.” (R3: 439)

Ben discourses are ‘need of education’ (‘if I were younger, I would go back to school because it is bad without school’), ‘work to have money’ and ‘discrimination’ (Ben says that discrimination is somewhere but not everywhere). Ben presents a discourse ‘work to have money’ which is about the importance of work for living a normal life.

“Then I had various occasional jobs etc. I had to care about having some work. Because when you do not go to school, you have to live with something.” (R3: 26)

"Now when I will achieve this, I hope it turns for the better. When I will go to work for a longer time and hold that work. You can at least live somehow with this." (R3: 183)

According to Ben, you need money to live alone, not to be dependent on parents, and have money for common expenses and for long-lasting items and pay for obligations from the past (see next chapter). For this you need more stable work.

Ken presented the discourse of 'need of education' ('School is more secure, that is clear. When you give a vocational certificate to the employer, you surely have greater chances than some average person without vocational training', R4: 106.)

My reflection: Ben and Ken try to get more permanent work as manual workers in factories, but they are not very successful. However, at least they are able to work on legal contracts. One interesting aspect notable in their story is instability. This included frequent involuntary changes between work and unemployment. Ben repeatedly reflected that this complicated his life a lot. His was partially protected by unemployment insurance which functioned well in his case, although he reflected that the level of benefit was low. I have an impression that street level workers were not much concerned about the quality of jobs they offered or forced people to get.

My reflection on the role of employers

Employers are not with some exceptions assessed very positively in the interviews. We can see that some people have many concrete reservations towards employers. In most cases, these are based on their previous personal experience. It included descriptions of what was difficult or unbearable in their previous jobs or job applications. The following aspects were reflected in the interviews:

Getting job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers usually do not respond to job applications (Sabina, Jake, Vanda, Fred). E.g. Sabina commented that from 50 applies, there is one answer. The more advanced phase to applying of the job is, the more important the neglect is for some unemployed.• neglect or refusal. This is usually connected to going to 'occupied' workplaces (see chapter 6).• harsh and unnecessary entry testing (Magda)• Discrimination
Information about a job/ type of work contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low willingness of employers to provide a proper contract including undeclared and strange occasional work, undeclared work, and work on trial (Ken, Simon, Lucy, Betty, Helen, Vendelín). Some unemployed who refuse work on short-term work and not an employment contract (Sabina), others have to accept it.• Non-serious behaviour of employers, providing inaccurate information about the job in advertisements or personally (Jake, Betty, Helen, Violet) and/or usually not keeping their promises. Employing young people for a short time when long-term employment is promised (Clara), the same for part-time jobs (Fred)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers did not pay health and social insurance for the workers and the workers did not know it (Clara, Helen, Eugenie).
Type of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are specific professions, which young people are unwilling to do – especially telephone selling, acquisitions, and other work with frequent direct contact with customers (Sabina, Fred, Jake, Vanessa) because it is very physically demanding and working in caring professions in hospitals because it is very difficult and stressful (Antonia) and work in recreation services because it is very time demanding (Quido) Boring work, where there is nothing to do (Jake)
Behaviour of employers during contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of employers in the case of some respondents included also a low willingness to compromise their demands (Sabina). Rude behaviour, neglect, enforced obedience (Rachel). Released inhuman and unpleasant measures like control against stealing (Clara)
Working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not fulfilling legal conditions (Betty, Helen) Did not provide equipment (Clara) Bad or very difficult concrete working conditions (Magda, Clara, Janine, Vanda, Helen, Ron, Tony, Rachel), e.g., long, irregular, and unsocial working hours (with health consequences), physical conditions (heat, temperature), pace of work, monotone character etc. Very low wages, not paying promised money, not paying for invested time, not being paid for high effort or work done (Ken, Vendelín, Roman, Sophie, Janine, Clara, Peter, Betty, Ron, Tony)

Below we present the most interesting notes as examples how young people consider employers and jobs. One example is employing people without serious intention to employ them for a longer time. Clara, e.g., explained that the concrete employer employed many candidates and then he released half of them in the trial period.

For some young people, an opportunity could be seen also in doing professions/working for employers who are not too selective (Jake, Ellyn). Ellyn relates this to the concurrence effect among unemployed. Employers who are giving chances to young people are very appreciated. From some interviews I also noticed that sometimes the less appealing work is, it is easier to get it. The criteria of appealing that I deducted from the interviews are character of the job, work conditions, and money earned (especially part-time jobs and work on a work contract limited to 10 000 CZK etc.).

Another aspect is working in difficult working conditions. This explains why young people hesitate to work in some professions or in some concrete workplaces. Ron described how he

worked in the factory in difficult physical conditions. Very demanding is working in specific temperature conditions (heat, cold).

"...it was [a metallurgy work], it was stifling...50 degrees Celsius in the summer, 45 degrees Celsius in the winter, 12 hours shifts, and once a week you had to clear it [accessory maintenance], and it was really horrible work. It was relatively well paid and so I was there for some time and then they moved me to [different work position], and I really very much did not like it there and so I left." (R33: 3)

Working on long shifts is bearable but not preferable. Janine commented on working long shifts:

"I was working on 12 hours shifts. I do not mind working on 12 hours shifts, but I do not want to be there all the time. I had nothing from my life when I was all the time at work. From morning to evening every day, it was silly." (R19: 268).

We should note that working on 12 hours shifts without corresponding breaks (free days) is not legal. Moreover, monotonous work is very demanding. Vanessa commented on working in a call centre:

"Very bad approach towards people and mainly you sit there on the stool for eight hours and speak to someone, repeating the same sentences all the time, it is getting to your nerves." (R34: 77).

The above-described characteristics of the employers were often mentioned as the 'bag of knowledge' (in the phenomenological sense) of the respondents, which shaped their future decisions about jobs and other behaviour (see e. g. Quido, Helen, Violet, Alice). Quido reflected that he is not going to apply for jobs in organisations with which his friends had had bad experience. This confirms that the reputation of employers is included as a factor in the decision making of some unemployed.

There are several examples of refusing or leaving concrete jobs due to concrete conditions (Janine, Roman). Some of the respondents also mentioned leaving a job after about one week because they did not like the job or concrete conditions (Jake, Clara, Helen, Sabina, Ron). Ron, for example, explicitly mentioned that he is rather unemployed than to do 'the worst jobs'. In other words, job quality and wages were crucial in decisions about employment. For some of the respondents, the unsatisfying conditions in previous jobs were a reason to start his business or an intention to start a business (Peter, Tony). Some respondents spoke about liking to work alone, and the problems they had in work relationships. It is possible that the negative experience further strengthened the individualistic behaviour of the respondents (see discussion in the next chapter).

Other factors

We have found also other factors, which may shape the work careers of young people (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Engbersen et al. 2006, Trilfajová et al. 2015, Hussain et al. 2016, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Among other factors relevant for the employment chance of young people are debts and savings, lacking skills, imprisonment, and drug abuse.

Debts and executions

Being in debt severely constrains the ability of people to choose some of the strategies and reduces their privacy (Engbersen et al. 2006). Experts in the research of Trilfajová et al. (2015) estimated that more than half of social assistance claimants are in execution. This means that when they work, their debts are subtracted from their income. Here we discuss debts are a factor that further contributes to the worsening of life chances and life conditions of young people. The role of debts is most apparent in the story of Simon.

Story of Simon

Simon is a man in middle age. He lived with his grandmother since he was 15 years old because he did not like his stepfather. Simon studied two vocational schools (installer of metal construction, painter) but he did not finish any of these schools. He said he did not like these professions. After school, he worked in craft (making wooden and other floors). Although Simon does not like school, he is a good self-learner, he is skilled, and he learns craft jobs easily. He went to work abroad, worked there for some time, and earned good money. He returned from working abroad to the Czech Republic because meanwhile his first child was born in the Czech Republic and he married.

Simon went to prison for material delict when he was young, and he was imprisoned for almost six years. He thinks that he lost his best years in prison and that it is irretrievable.

“Because I think that I lost my best years in prison. It will never return. I was there for almost six years which was a problem...because I lost that work in Italy...although they wanted us to work there. However, due to imprisonment, I lost that work.” (R15: 153)

He also divorced due to imprisonment. After release from prison, he worked in garbage collection for two years and he went to prison again for driving without a driving licence. Later he was self-employed, worked in metallurgy for four years, and he did also other jobs. Simon feels that previous imprisonment severely limits him in finding jobs because he did not have the free ‘list of sentence evidence’ (see also tale of Steve below). For Simon, imprisonment had consequences that he is not able to change.

After several years of living alone, he met with his second wife. They started entrepreneurship together in construction. During the entrepreneurship, which lasted three years, they made substantial debts (all together more than 3.5 million CZK). It was because some customers did not pay them and they had not money for functioning of the firm, to pay for employees etc.

Simon has been unemployed for the last five years. The main reason of current unemployment is, according to him, his debt.

„I am registered at Employment office since 2012. Because I have executions, etc. and nowadays when everyone sends your salary to the bank account. That is a problem because executors take your money at work, accountants take your money and even freeze your account, and you have nothing to live from.“ (R15: 39)

Simon also reflects that the debts grow due to the specific behaviour of people managing debts. Offered wages are not high enough for him to maintain living after subtracting executions. Simon thinks that his debts including sanctions and fines are so large that he can never pay them back. He was retrained in ALMP, but he cannot do that profession due to legislative limits.

Simons' second (small) child is severely disabled. This is psychically demanding. It limits his opportunities to work for a long time or work too far away from home because his wife cannot stay alone with the child for long. Their family lived on social assistance benefits. Simon says that his family goes first and that he has to carefully consider the possibility of loss of social benefits. He refuses to accept jobs in the grey economy because he is afraid that he would be expelled from Employment office (it already happened to him once) and this is an unacceptable risk for him.

Discourses presented in the story are 'calculating' ('it is not real to go to work for 9000 CZK when you have to pay for the flat and child cost you...'), 'unemployment trap' ('I look for work where I will earn at least 13 000 CZK, because this amount that we would loss when I would go to work', 'I must look at the money that we loose and then I decide whether I accept work or not'), 'going in circles' and 'claiming Roma' ('Roma get everything, white get nothing', 'Roma goes for benefits with gold chains and in BMW').

Simons main discourse presented several times during the interview is 'family goes first'. He mentioned considering the family situation when he was looking for the job. Simon is not much willing to solve his debts because it would be very difficult, and he is afraid that it would have an influence on his child ('we have to consider that we have a child'). Although Simon knows that he is not behaving according to law and moral expectations, he puts the welfare of his family including the handicapped child first over these other aspects.

"I know that it does not sound good, that is clear, but I have to protect my family." (R15: 85)

"I think those who want to work, find work. Hoverer in the past I was not married, I had no children and so it was easier. When you have a family, you must consider how much money you earn, what are the working conditions, where you work, etc. It is not so easy as before." (R15: 43)

Simon stated the typical Czech traditional motto that 'It is better to have the sparrow in hand than pigeon on the roof' (it is better to have something little but sure than something that is

greater but unsure). Another Simon's discourse is 'reservation' including his age and health problems and willingness to commute to work, etc.

"It is possible to do something with this, but it needs time, because as I say, you cannot jump to everything you see, any work. You have to consider your abilities and your ability to handle it." (R15: 143).

Simon sees no perspective for him. He said that he is 'going in circles' and 'sees no way out'.

My reflection: Simon story shows a typical case of multiple factors influencing life situation. Some of them are personal (imprisonment experience, health problems, debts), some of them are rooted in the family (handicapped child, low willingness to commute to work), and some of them are structural (picky employers, law legislation for tackling debts, law legislation allowing/restricting doing professions). Among all his problems, debts seem to be the most important because they block him from getting any legal job (in the context that he is not able to earn so much to overcome the subtraction from his wage). This means that he is in the 'debt trap'.

My reflection on debts

Debts were widespread among the respondents, but their severity (manageable, unmanageable) and sources (friends, loan sharks) were very different. For Simon debts functioned as a barrier to find work due to two mechanisms. First, his debts would be subtracted from his income and this lowered his motivation to work. Second, employers and not very keen to employ people with debts, because this usually means for them various administrative problems. Besides Simon, Bonny had the most severe debts which he was not able to manage, and even with the help of others he had to repay them for a long time. Concrete consequence of debts for Bonny was that he had to live with his parents because he was not able, due to debts, achieve independent living.

The following aspects seem to be crucial: the level of debt, conditions of the debt including interest and payment conditions and sanctions, and the ability of young people to repay debts. Betty reflected how her insecure position on the labour market negatively contributed to her current and future life situation:

„The consequences [of my situation] were, for example, that I had to borrow money several times in very disadvantageous conditions because I had no work contract and up to now...I will have to solve my debts instead of building anything else. This is the worst negative consequence...It changes all your future life because you will be out of it for several years." (R22: 122).

Other type of making debts was borrowing for personal needs. Roman borrowed from his parents.

"I mostly borrowed from my parents. And this is good because when they lend me, e.g., 4000 CZK, they did not want everything back at once. Every month I returned to them what I could." (R9: 136)

Another example is Magda who borrowed from both friends and from formal non-bank loan providers. Debts make other debts (in her case because she had to pay for food and for invoices). Rosalie spoke about the difficulty to borrow money and this led to the situation when people had to borrow for high interest. Debts became problems in the context when they are unmanageable and have an impact on other life aspects including willingness to find and accept work.

Savings

We concern with the ability to save and its potential to change the lives of young people. Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) found that some young people are high spenders, and they are unable to hold money for a long time. Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) also argued that young people in a difficult situation are often unable to make long-term (financial) plans and they are unable to save money for them.

My reflection on savings

Previous savings positively influenced the economic situation of some people. Some people mentioned that during their unemployment they lived from previous savings (John, Vanda, Tony). This was possible because both John and Vanda had previously one or more stable jobs and Tony had periods with more and less commissions. This is yet another mechanism how functional employment can reduce income insecurity. Various sources of income are combined:

[After claiming unemployment insurance] I was without money for a while and then I went to the training course [during which there is financial support]. I got three months of severance payment in my previous job and I had savings from the past. And so, it was not for me as crucial, whether I got 5000 or 6000 CZK from Employment office. I had really enough savings." (R21: 173).

Respondents noted that saving was needed for achieving life goals. Ellyn struggled to save to be able to pay herself a language course. On the other hand, other respondents (Clara, Maria) reflected that inability to save was a clear limiting factor in the development of their lives. Maria contrasted her own situation with the situation of her acquaintances (another family), reasoning that the ability to save is crucial for change.

"They have social benefits and husband earns and so they are able to keep some money and then escape from this locality and find a normal flat. Because of the low money we have got, we cannot do anything, we have money only for basic living, to survive." (R54: 73)

We also noted that some young people have the need to save as one mechanism of future change in their discourse of a way to a successful life (Lisa, Natalie, William). Rebeca mentioned that she already saved money for her future. Example is also the following statement of Natalie:

„I would like to finish nine grades of elementary education and if they accept me to school, I would like to get vocational training. Then I would find some occasional job, and I would start to deposit, to save money. And then I would find myself a rent flat. And when I am older, I would possibly start a family, if I had a house and money.“ (R66: 212)

Other people like Helen mentioned that they were not saving much even when they could because they spent that money for entertainment and personal needs. This mean that saving was not a high priority for these young people. This was also reflected by Bob who noted that he started to save only after he met with his current girlfriend. There was usually a specific moment when young people realised that saving would be helpful to achieve their long-term goals.

Knowledge of languages, computer skills and driving licence, need of equipment

Young people with poor language skills (e.g., ethnic minorities) have restricted opportunities to participate and fulfil application expectations. Some young people may be discriminated due to their accent (see Clark and Kupka 1994b). Knowledge of foreign languages was a key factor for education and work opportunities including study and work abroad (Trhlíková 2017).

Story of John

John is a man in his middle age who is single and childless. He lived with a girlfriend for twenty years, but their relationship ended five years ago. Now he lives with his mother because he cares for her (she is elderly). John studied vocational training in machinery, but after school, he switched to work in electro technics and weapons, which was his hobby. He worked in several rather stable (each lasting for several years) and well-paid jobs, but now he has been unemployed for three years. He usually lost his previous jobs during reorganisations or closures of the firm. He now lives from saving from previous wealthy periods. It is possible because he lives in his own flat (he does not have to pay rent).

John has three main discourses when explaining his situation. First is the discourse of ‘age’ (he is too old now). He has also some health limits restricting him for doing some professions (e.g., he does not have driving license because of health problems).

His main discourses are ‘unsuitable education/education discourse’ and ‘lack of languages’. He argues that it is much better to have a completed secondary education (with abitur) than vocational training without abitur.

“[Education] was my basic mistake because I did not care about education and you find when you are forty, forty-five that it was the basic mistake. When you underestimate education from the start, it is all wrong.” (R16: 161)

John regrets his former education strategy.

“If I would not be slacking in school, because my marks were fine, and I could possibly go to university. Because nowadays without education it is all wrong.” (R16: 163)

However, he is not willing to return to school due to his age. Training courses in ALMP are not offered in the field he did for his whole life (electro technics) – only retraining is offered to professions that he is unable to imagine himself to do because he thinks that he does not have proper skills (e.g. cook, waiter, baker). He is also not keen to try less formal types of education.

He several times referred to the problem of not speaking foreign languages. Some of the jobs he would be otherwise able to do were unreachable for him due to lack of knowledge of specific foreign languages (German, Romanian). John, for example, explained:

“...and that was German firm and the first condition not mentioned [in the advertisement] was the requirement of German language, because most of the machines and equipment were in German, and not even in English. I would be able to tackle the basic machinery language in English, but these were German machines, all were in German, and ‘come and speak German now.’” (R16: 103)

John said about himself that he is ‘too dull’ to learn these languages. However, because as unemployed, he has a lot of free time and he studies languages now. “....*I improve myself in English gradually, and now a bit of German and a friend of mine persuade me to Italian and I read a lot....*” (R16: 149). For John, the languages were personally so important that he mentioned them when asked about his personal goals.

John as many other respondents saw his life as ‘going in circles’.

“I would say that I go from nowhere to nowhere and no direction. It is still. I stagnate in one place from nowhere to nowhere and I wait for something all the time.” (R16: 237)

My reflection: It was clearly more difficult to learn languages for the older generation of people who grew up in the communism period, when the offer of foreign languages (especially English) was often ideologically restricted. Nowadays, language knowledge is a standard in some professions and people can have problems to find jobs in the fields which they did for their whole lives (the job requirements are stricter than in the past). The issue is that they are replaced with younger people with less experience but more recent formal school knowledge. John himself has personal barriers, e.g., that he is not willing to try to get a driving license because he feels old for this. John also was calculating concrete conditions for jobs; he was not willing to accept anything.

My reflection on missing skills

We noted the following missing skills and equipment working as barriers to find work: language requirements, need of previous experience with the profession, missing a driving license, work with a computer, need to know concrete software, or to have an own car for the job. Helen, for example, said that she has deficits in all languages, and has not computer skills and driving license. Some respondents mentioned the need of language skills they do not possess at a sufficient level (John, Clara, Ellyn, Betty, Sabina) and the need to have a driving license (Roman, John, Clara, Helen). Young people usually missed better knowledge of English or sometimes German. Clara reflected on the importance of English language:

“What is hard when looking for a job is when someone does not have sufficient knowledge of English, it really limits you in looking for a job. When they found that I were epileptic, they also found that I have dyslexia and dysgraphia...doctors told me to learn German...which I disagree...I think that English is easier...and I had to learn it myself using internet. Now I have basic knowledge that I can use selling shoes. I think that if I had better knowledge... or if I have an entitlement for some course, I would go there without hesitation...because the doors are much more open...this I think reflects my work-looking experience that since I speak English I have better chances to find work.” (R17: 114)

Clara regretted that she learned German at school and not English. She also reflected that not having a driving licence limits her in finding a job and going abroad. We also noted that in some rare cases young Roma did not speak Czech language fluently (spoke simply with a strange word order structure), but it was exceptional. Young people mentioned situations when they were not accepted to jobs due to missing skills. Languages are also useful or necessary when they want to work abroad (Ellyn). Respondents reflected that their language skills were not on an appropriate level and they forgot a lot when the languages were not used (Betty, Ellyn). Respondents define deficits as the gap between what they know and what is needed by employers.

Imprisonment experience

Insecurity may be a consequence of criminal activity of part of young people, as documented by previous research (e.g., Hussain et al. 2016).

Story of Harrold

Harrold is a young man. He studied elementary school with a specialisation in sport. Even now, his main hobby is football, and he spends a lot of time in football training. After elementary school, he studied vocational training for a cook/waiter. He liked praxis but not much school. He was expelled from vocational education last year when he was in the third year of his studies. Harrold has no work (even occasionally) nor study for a year. Harrold plans to return to the same school in the next school year – he already enlisted there. He also said he would like to find some work in the meantime until the school starts. He started to look for work only shortly before the interview. He states that he ‘does nothing’. His girlfriend ‘feeds the family’ and he himself had some money left from previous heritage. Usually, he spends most of the time at home (e.g., lying, cooking, tidying), occasionally he goes out. He cares for the children of his girlfriend from the previous relationship.

When reflecting on his childhood and teenage years, he described that his family moved several times. He explained why they moved to independent housing and why he started with criminal activity.

„We lived there with my sister [in their own housing]; we are twins. I moved because my mother died, and my father was unable to withstand it and he started to drink heavily. We then lived with our grandmother, but she was also alcohol addicted. I

started to sell drugs to have money, because we did not have anything to eat at home and I wanted to care for my sister.” (R57: 177)

Harrold sold drugs all around and had a lot of friends who were drug addicted. He estimated that about half of the young people in the locality took drugs. He lost a lot of money he got from selling drugs in gambling machines. He was also stealing to have money for gambling. Harrold said that it ‘started to destroy him’. He explained that his lifestyle crucially changed a lot one month ago.

“I fortunately lived so so for the last month, but before I lived peculiarly...I sold drugs, I took drugs. I run around the town, played gambling machines, stole in the stores, etc. I calmed last month, because they caught us, together with my friend that I was doing it with, and they put us into the prison. It gave me a lesson...when I was there in detention [for two days] I said to myself... that if I should be in something similar, e.g., for a year, I would not be able to withhold it. And so I thought a lot there and became aware [realized].” (R57: 161)

One important discourse presented in Harrold’s story of enlightenment in prison.

“I thought about my lifestyle. When it started it was a piece of cake, I had a great amount of money. And I liked it a lot. It was a piece of cake from the start, then it was worse and worse, and I thought for a long time that this...that I want to have a family, to go to work, function normally and not run around the town doing silly things.” (R57: 185).

Harrold believes that he should care for the family. He said he had to abolish contacts with some of his former mates (who took drugs), otherwise it would be still the same. He also started to look for work, but it is difficult for him to self-motivate because he was used to earn much more money by selling drugs.

The second discourse presented in Harrold’s story is that there is ‘negative influence of environment’ on Roma young people. It is most apparent as the influence of parents and mates on young people. Young people are not going to school, they are idle, wandering around, and they are easily influenced by what they see. The third discourse is the negative influence of drugs on the health and behaviour of young people:

“Drugs damage their health. And the second thing is that man behaves completely differently. He endangers himself, because in some states [under the influence of drugs], he does things that he would not otherwise do. To other people and to himself.” (R57: 367)

Another presented discourse is connected to the ‘need of education’:

“If I had not school, I would not find work. Or maybe I would find it but for less money. Or I would get work without an employment contract, and so I would be afraid of not receiving payment. If I had no work, I would not be able to care for myself nor for my girlfriend.” (R57: 352)

My reflection: It is hard to say whether one experience of imprisonment changed the life of Harrold or whether it was a longer process. He is probably afraid to go to prison for the longer time. Nevertheless, he said that he found out that he must stop. Interesting is his perception how environments influence young people growing up in specific communities and create a very harming and dangerous environment. This vision is indeed very disturbing. It is interesting that Harrold was himself a significant part of the problem for a long time.

Story of Steve

Steve is a young man, aged 21. Steve had several problems during his elementary education due to his lack of interest in studying, bad behaviour, and highly emotional attitude, but it improved in the last years of elementary school. Steve did not go to any further education (second level), because he did not care.

"I was supposed to go to vocational training, but I started...I ended up in a bad party. I started to take drugs, smoked cannabis and it went with me...I did not care [about vocational training] but I regret it now that I did not do it. I would help me to get work and everything." (R56: 23).

Steve ended up in prison [it was not mentioned in the interview, but I suppose that he was about 17-18 years old] and he was imprisoned for two and a half years. He did retrain there (for painter?) but it is not enough to get a job. Rest of the imprisonment sentence is conditionally postponed for a period of five years (it is conditional on his behaviour) and he must attend to authorities regularly. He stopped to take drugs (he was in an institutional health program, but he said that finally he decided to stop himself with the help of his friends). Steve is unemployed and he lives on social benefits. They live together with the parents of him or his girlfriend.

Steve is not satisfied with his life, partially due to lack of money, dependency on social benefits, and difficult housing situation. Young couple switch living in the flats of his and his girlfriend's parents. Steve desires to have own housing.

"I would need some good work, to have money and flat...if you have your own things, you have completely different worries. You do not have to bother, to have bad ideas and nerves...you know and sometimes you have quarrels. If you do not have your own, it is difficult." (R53: 525)

Steve says that it is difficult to find a job when you do not have vocational training. He is only able to get occasionally some temporal work in construction. Imprisonment may be another barrier for him to find a job:

"It [imprisonment] somehow blocks me. If I would like to get some permanent job, they require you to have a clear list of imprisonment evidence, and I do not have it clear. It is difficult. I tried it at [ask for job concrete employer] but they wanted a clear list of imprisonment evidence." (R53: 109)

Discourse in Steve story is 'lack of education'. He several times regretted not having vocational training because he would have better work opportunities. Steve also reflects that he lacks some skills that he would have learned in vocational training. He did only the least qualified jobs in the past (earthworks, demolitions). Steve also believed that in many aspects 'people are doing it themselves' and have to bear the consequences of their previous behaviour.

Another discourse of Steve story is 'enlightenment'. He realised that even a small crime would have fatal consequences for him because the new sentence would be added to his previous sentence.

"[I was imprisoned] for two and a half years. I realised a lot of things. It [committing a crime] is not worth it [to go to prison again]. I have a girlfriend who waited for me and she would not deserve it...I am a good boy now." (R53: 61)

My reflection: The situation of Steve is difficult because he has no secondary level education (not even an unfinished one), and he has imprisonment experience (and already he has found that it does matter) and he has no contacts to people who would be able to find him a better job. He tries to live a normal life because he knows that 'Damocles sword' of being imprisoned again for a long time is a real threat for him. His ambitions are rather low (to work, e.g., as a storage worker), still he was not able to get any decent work.

My reflection on imprisonment experience

We have seen imprisonment experience in several stories. Barbara said that many young people end up in prison including girls. First group of reasons for imprisonment were various material delicts including stealing, cheating (frauds), and dealing of drugs. For young people it was sometimes easy way to get money. Alan saw stealing as a strategy made of necessity when some people are not able to get any jobs. Some people ended in prison for nonmaterial delicts like not paying alimony, driving without a driving licence, and being part of brawl. Melinda commented that her husband was sentenced to prison for one and half year for not paying alimony for children from the previous marriage and she stayed home with a small child.

Ray, a young Roma man, was 22 years old at the time of the interview. He did not go to vocational training and he did a silly thing with his mates. He was imprisoned for two years for violent delict. His father was still in prison. Ray does not want to go to prison again.

"I was in prison for two years and still I am... I will not do such things...I changed. I do not want any problems. When someone starts to do problems, I go away. I help to my mother and to my sister...I want to have a better life." (R38: 72)

Ray was 22 and had elementary education. He did not work, and he was not interested to get work until he will get qualification. Ray planned to start a vocational school for profession of the floor layer lasting for three years. He believed that having this qualification will help him to earn sufficient money. I have chosen this example to show how previous choices and imprisonment delayed key milestones in life of Ray. For example, he wanted to start his

vocational training eight years after the typical age when young people enter secondary level education.

It is striking how similar the imprisonment experience was in most cases (Simon, Vendelín, Herbert, Steve). For most people it does matter, leaving a deep scar. The following effects are visible in the imprisonment experience: losing years and delay of key life events, break of some family ties (e.g. divorce), threat of being imprisoned again, and worse chances to get work. Simon said that many employers wanted a clear 'list of imprisonment evidence' and it was mentioned in the job advertisements. Herbert noted that he is listed in the list for ten years and only after ten years he can ask for clearance. According to Herbert, 'the list of imprisonment evidence' is a work disqualifying condition without distinguishing contents of the sentence. Vendelín reflected that employers preferred workers without imprisonment experience and they always asked for the reason of imprisonment, but he thought that it did not matter because it meant an automatic stop.

Drugs and gambling

Drugs are a widespread problem in deprived localities (see 'Locality' section of this chapter)

Story of Mortimer

Mortimer is a young Roma man, 17 years old. He lives with his parents. He studied elementary school for children with specific needs (see chapter about education), but after seven school years he switched to normal school. He had to switch due to quarrels with his schoolmates and other his 'silly behaviour'. Mortimer already used cannabis during his elementary education. He admits that his behaviour at elementary school was influenced by smoking cannabis. He 'does not have any good memories for any school' (i.e., he does not like school). After elementary education, Mortimer started a vocational study for a bricklayer. He is in the second year of study and he likes it more than elementary education because he likes the profession of bricklayer and because there are good relations with schoolmates and teachers.

Mortimer is an active and frequent cannabis user. Although Mortimer still formally studies, he goes to school only occasionally ('only when he wants'). All day he spends doing his hobbies (computers, attending online social networks, gym) or with his girlfriend. When asked why he does not go to school, Mortimer answered that he is with his girlfriend all the time because he recently fell in love. He also does an occasional short job in the field of his study (undeclared work) instead of going to school. He earns enough money for his current life and he does not need money from his parents. He is very satisfied with his life and he has no need to change anything. He plans to do the same undeclared work after he ends his school (but more hours). Otherwise, he has no concrete plans nor dreams for the future.

Discourse presented by Mortimer is 'everything in my life is fine' and 'drugs are not problem'. When asked about the main problem of young people in the locality, Mortimer answered:

"Drugs, cannabis and alcohol...a lot of such people...and bullying and stealing...I have a problem with stealing, but about drugs I do not mind, and I do not care". (R51: 273)

My reflection: Mortimer is still in the situation when taking light drugs, not going to school, and having some money from small scale occasional jobs constitute for him the ideal lifestyle. Influence of drugs is notable in his communication style. This situation is typical for many other young people. Drugs constitute an important part and reference frame of his current life. He started to take cannabis when he was a child, and he does not see a problem in using them even when he sees how widespread their use among his mates is. I have chosen his case because he is a typical Roma actively using drugs who spoke about it honestly and felt no need to hide it during the interview.

My reflection of the use of drugs and gambling

Situation with using drugs was different between NEGOTIATE and CITISPYCE interviews. Among NEGOTIATE respondents, Bonny mentioned he took drugs for half a year during his wild period. Many Roma respondents (most of them from CITISPYCE interviews) often mentioned drug abuse as the most severe problem in their specific locality. It was widespread, e.g., Harrold estimated that half of the young people in the locality took drugs including mesh and heroine. These people are very active during the evening and night hours. Rudy speaking about the same topic estimated 30 percent, Bob estimated one-third. Some people according to Laura and Bob even abuse toluene. Even very young people (12-15 years) take drugs (Harrold). We have noted several cases of young people in interviews who more or less regularly abused drugs. Some young people (Leo) said that it is easy to obtain drugs in the neighbourhood. Taking drugs is often connected in concrete cases with selling drugs, with playing gambling machines and stealing. Being in prison or having some family members in prison due to drugs (directly or indirectly) is also widespread (Tobias, Harrold). Ray explained that his family is on drugs and that he wants to avoid them.

Drugs also change people and close some pathways for them.

“Some of my friends are OK and some are not OK at all...and this means meth [pervitin in Czech language]. There is a lot of it...some whom I have known for a long time...and when now I see them and speak to them, I say to myself: ‘Damn what happened to you? And it is because of meth. The change’.” (R58: 373)

“Young people learn taking drugs out, I dislike it. Cannabis. Children I knew and I loved them, who I knew well, we were going out together – how they look like now, how they are worn out, how drugs destroy them.” (R41: 181)

Laura and Harrold commented that people who take drugs or drink heavily are more aggressive, endangering both self and others. Barbara described that a friend of her stabbed himself on the mesh and he ended up in psychiatric care. Bob said that these people are psychically out (their intellect is lowered) and that they do not care about anything. Some of them die young (Rudy, Tobias).

Maria reflected on her view (discourse) on two main factors influencing the widespread use of drugs.

"I think that it is fault of the parents that they do not care [for the kids] as they should and due to this, they [kids] end up in some party who do this, and they get into drugs and they take it all together. It is also due to this locality...because there it is widespread. (R52: 79)

When considering measures for drug addicts, this was mentioned only by Steve who was in such program. Steve believed that other factors helped him more than this program.

Gambling was also presented among our respondents, but it was usually not presented as the main topic (the exception is Harrold who was stealing to have money for gambling). Gambling is presented also in the story of Robin. Robin says that his main and frequent hobby is playing gambling machines and that he plays them often. It costs a lot of money. He said: '*sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, that is clear and normal*'. (It is part of Robins personal discourse of 'seesaw' – one moment up, one moment down).

Other respondents spoke about gambling very negatively. They saw it as one of the main sources of problems in Roma locality (Rupert, Gwen, Rosalie, Nancy). Gwen mentioned that she hates gambling machines. It is because her mother was dependent on gambling and her boyfriend plays occasionally:

"First of all, I hate gambling halls, pubs with gambling machines, I completely hate them, really hate them. And they are at each corner...I would like them all to be cancelled in the future." (R50: 87, 302).

Nancy commented:

"I think that these [gambling machines] negatively influence young people. When they see these machines in the gambling halls, they are lured into it. They think that they are going to win and instead of buying ice cream, they rather throw it to the gambling machine, and they became gamblers...If I could, I would abolish these everywhere." (R72: 17).

Conclusion – Concept of multiple disadvantages

Some authors discuss the role of several disadvantages present in the living situation of concrete people (Plasová and Válková 2009, Formánková and Křížková 2010, Trlifajová et al. 2015). In this perspective, disadvantages are usually seen as individual deficits (Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003). Disadvantage points to the susceptibility of persons and groups most likely to be hurt, damaged, or otherwise negatively affected due to their position in the labour market (EGRIS 2002). The concept of disadvantage can be discussed in the inequality perspective and limited access perspective (see Bendit and Stokes 2003). The concept of multiple disadvantages is related to the situation of a concrete person, where several factors simultaneously may act as a signal of his/her low employability. These combinations of such factors may include, e.g., (Plug et al. 2002, Bendit and Stokes 2003, Plasová and Válková 2009, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018):

- *learning problems,*
- *health problems, physical or mental handicaps,*
- *low or unfinished education,*
- *parenthood,*
- *interrupted work career,*
- *being ‘out of reach’ or in a critical life situation,*
- *ethnicity and visibly different cultures,*
- *low work experience,*
- *inadequate competences,*
- *perceived low motivation,*
- *indebtedness,*
- *poor housing,*
- *and age.*

For young people, one obvious combination is young age in combination with low or unfinished qualification and sometimes early pregnancy or minority origin (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Plug et al. 2002, Krasteva, Jeliázkova, and Draganov 2018). On the other hand, the disadvantage may relate to concrete structural conditions (EGRIS 2002, Bois-Reymond and López Blasco 2003, Bendit and Stokes 2003) e.g. with.

- *living in a structurally hit region*
- *entering the labour market in the time of deep recession*
- *structural lacks,*
- *missing opportunities,*
- *uncertain rules of competition.*

Bendit and Stokes (2003: 263) argued:

“We can observe that ‘disadvantage’ and ‘disadvantaged groups’ are universally the outcomes of specific temporal and spatial combinations of structural and individual factors and of social challenges (expectancies) coming from society.”

Economists often link multiple disadvantages with the metaphor of queue where employers rank people due to their perceived employability (see Sirovátka 1995, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). Formánková and Křížková (2010) connect the concept of multiple disadvantages with discrimination. Young people may perceive that they are discriminated due to their skin colour, accent, or place of residence (Plug et al. 2002, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a, Hajdinjak 2018a). Important aspect is that multiple disadvantages are not only living condition and a precondition for tackling with the living situation. It is also multiplied by the outcomes of previous events, activities, experiences, and decisions.

From the social policy perspective, also other dimensions are important, namely, whether the concept of disadvantage is used in the social policy, how it is used (or even misused), what the approach is towards disadvantaged people and what concrete measures are realised (see

EGRIS 2002). One crucial aspect of the discussion is whether the most disadvantaged should be provided with specific programs tailored to their needs (see Bendit and Stokes 2003), see more discussion in the next chapter. Critics of the concept argue that in some versions of the concept there is an inherent individualistic perspective that may be inadequate and lead to cooling out (see Walther 2003, Walther and McNeish 2003, Bendit and Stokes 2003).

My reflection on multiple disadvantages

Multiple disadvantages are presented in many stories presented in this book. We also saw that such situations happen quite easily as a normal part of the life trajectory. In the case of Melinda, for example, who had problems and problems caused by her Roma origin or in the case of Steve, who had imprisonment experience and unfinished education. For a prime example, see also the story of Simon. We cannot work with this in the statistical sense, but we can see that these people often have very low chances for standard employment. We have also seen that sometimes one disadvantage may directly or indirectly contribute to the emergence of another disadvantage creating a new paid or set of disadvantages. For example, the health problem leads to prematurely ending original education and the young person has a substantial problem to strategically overcome such situation. We also noted that such disadvantages matter in several potential mechanisms of change.

- *Disadvantage limits the capability of young people and it limits the options that are available for young people. Some disadvantages are so harsh that they almost completely diminish the chances of young people to change their situation (they are blockers).*
- *Young people having a particular disadvantage are perceived more negatively and behaved to differently than other people who do not have such disadvantages.*
- *Young people are often not themselves able to overcome the disadvantage. They do not know what to do. They may not even notice that something may create a disadvantageous position for them in the future or they do not care.*
- *Disadvantages are leaving scars. They often cannot be overcome quickly, and they have long-term consequences.*

Specific consequences of the insecure position are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Personal consequences of insecure trajectories

In this chapter, we discuss the personal (for individual or close relatives) consequences of insecurity. Such outcomes of early job insecurity were mentioned in previous research relevant for our study (see Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984, Clasen, Gould and Vincent 1998, Sverke et al. 2002, Cheng and Chan 2008, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). We refer to the possible consequences of all four main forms of insecurity (job insecurity, employment insecurity, income insecurity, and combination insecurity). This included both insecurity during periods of work and during unemployment or economic inactivity. Literature shows that both unemployment and insecurity have similar detrimental psychical effects on individuals (see Gallie 2013a). It is meaningful to distinguish between short (more immediate) and long-term consequences of insecurity. However, we still lack a reliable framework for such exercise. We can assume that short-term consequences may include, e.g., changed work attitudes and long-term consequences, e.g., health problems and family breakdown. Percy-Smith (2000, quoted in Sirovátka and Spies (2018: 17) defined in the same context economic dimension, social dimension, political dimension, community dimension, individual dimension, group dimension and spatial dimension. Numerous moderators for relationships between insecurity and its consequences may exist, for example, age, family support and type of work contract, type of sector, union membership, and job tenure (see Sverke et al. 2002, Cheng and Chan 2008, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010). These constitute possible mechanisms of change helping to explain the relationship between insecurity and quality of life of young people.

We can see that some young people see more of these consequences present in their lives simultaneously (see, e.g., how Ben described these consequences). It is interesting and important to see how various consequences of the insecure situation are interconnected. Relationships in the lives of young people are complex, complicated, and heterogeneous (see Rogers 2008), effectively reducing our ability to fully cover and understand all factors and their consequences. Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) identified that low position in one aspect (resources) leads to similarly low positions in other aspects (education, work). Social worker quoted in Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora (2018b) spoke in this context about destabilisation of the family including debts, loss of housing, frequent moving, and consequences for school attendance of children.

Another relevant dimension includes the attitude of young people towards perceived outcomes of their insecure lives. Whether young people are, for example, bothered, worried, or depressed and how their personal attitudes change due to an insecure situation.

Changed life attitudes, work attitudes, and work behaviour

Some researchers assume that the attitudes and behaviour of young people change due to experiences with nasty behaviour or closed opportunities. Among other related consequences

are absenteeism, lower work satisfaction and lower organizational commitment, resistance to change, and higher turnover intention (Sverke et al. 2002). Hussain et al. (2016) noted that young people were more individualistic and cared only about their own interests. Hussain et al. (2016) also wrote about retreating as a process of relying more on themselves than on others.

My reflection on changed values and attitudes

We noted reflections of respondents on their changed values and opinions in comparison with the period when they were younger. This was extensively reflected in some interviews presented in previous chapters (e.g., in the story of Herbert, Melinda, Betty, Ben, Ken, and Helen). Despite reflecting giving more importance to employment and education and 'school of life' approach, we also noted changes in the importance of some values. Bonny said that he lost belief in values common in the society.

"It influenced me a lot considering trust to other people, to other people and the whole functioning of society and also my life values." (R1: 128)

Herbert commented on his stance towards his contemporary conditions:

„I would say that I hate these times. Really a lot. Really, I hate these times. Some of the other [people], they have, but I do not. I did not live much in communism, up to mine 14 or 15 years, I do not remember exactly, but I lived normally. I did not think about problems or if I have money for ice-cream. I always had money.“ (R31: 171).

The second dimension presented by young people is a reflection on their changed stance and behaviour. Strategy of unemployed is probably influenced by low trust and corresponding perception of insecurity. Some of the respondents said that they had developed an attitude of permanent mistrust (Bonny, Ben, Ken, Jake, Helen, Alice, Melinda, Violet).

"Sometimes what is said is definitely not the truth, everyone has his/her own truth" (R11: 161)

"I did not trust anything and anyone. The promised you 'mountains and mines' [in Czech language this means everything and great] or everything looked beautiful, but it was not so. I became already reconciled that it would not be functioning like that." (R32: 25)

Melinda and Eugenie spoke about having problems with being honest and telling the truth.

"My fault is that I trust people a lot and I believe that they are like me and that they are just. However, it turns a lot against me. My father told me many times...learn to live with this. Do not tell them the whole truth, they are not like you. I did not believe him and now I know what he spoke about." (R30: 55)

"If I could return time I would be silent and obey, do exactly what they wanted... 'Yes boss, sure boss, you are always right'...and maybe I could have that work and my life could be completely different." (R24: 135)

Young people say that their trust towards employers is very low (for example, they do not trust what employers say or that they will keep their promises), they have to be cautious and be careful what they say (Eugenie, Ken, Betty, Helen).

"You should not count that everything is automatic. That you get an employment contract, that you will get the promised money, that you will get work that is written in the contract etc." (R22: 116)

Betty's stance toward all people was her 'masquerade' and lowered effort towards disliked employers. Violet explained that she always verifies every information provided by employers and she seeks for information about their reputation. Alice commented that she checks on fulfilment of legal conditions such as paying health insurance. Some unemployed also reflected that their morale is low, and their effort is reduced (Betty, Ben), they were afraid to leave a bad job because they thought that it can be even worse (Eugenie) or they lost hope (Melinda).

"My attitude to work changed. I would never allow myself to come late and in my last work I regularly came three quarters an hour late because I knew that I were able to handle it. It will not be so well done as I can, but why should I when I have such money for it. Why should I work hard, you know?" (R22: 142)

"...and my hopes went down more and more, and more and more I did not know, and I did not believe. What is going to be tomorrow. What is going to be next. It brought me more trouble than opportunities....I thought about being without work and being kicked off flat....What I feared it all really happened." (R30: 75).

Last direct result was that some people like Tony after bad experience with employers preferred self-employment to employment (to have more freedom, avoid future bad experience from dependent employment). Tony explained:

"...that job where I worked for two and a half years, it marked me a lot, that behaviour of bosses, even now I say [I can try] to employ myself...but I have problems with authorities or commanding behaviour. I would not be able to accept it, I am used to having it this way." (R27: 189)

Tony described how his negative experiences from the first jobs influenced his decision to be self-employed and his problems with authorities. He even does not trust formal authorities such as social insurance.

Consequences on the labour market, enforcement to leave the labour market and future work prospects

The insecurity in the labour market can contribute to further losses of jobs or inability to find one. Some authors suppose that some of these outcomes can further diminish the labour prospects of young people (see Dingeldey et al. 2015).

My reflection on labour market consequences

We noted several specific consequences on the labour market. First of them was the scarring effect discussed in one of the previous chapters. In some rare cases, we noted that respondents were gradually losing their ability to participate in the labour market. It was caused more by health problems than by insecurity. More respondents mentioned that it was harder to find a job due to low education and lack of formal work experience (Janine). Low ability to get an interesting job blocked the future development of their skills. Some young people were concerned with losing the necessary time to develop their work careers.

"I would like to have a job where it is possible to have a career development and so the sooner I will get such a job, the longer time I will have to make a career. However, If I found such a job as late as when I would be twenty-six, it would constitute a problem for me." (R13: 137)

For some of the respondents (Vendelín, Fred) the substantial consequence was seen in permanently looking for jobs (because they worked only on short jobs or many jobs) or for commissions (Quido, Tony).

"You come home from work and you start it all over, constantly looking for work all the time. You look for work every day, even when I am at an occasional job, I permanently ask someone, if he does not know about some more permanent job." (R5: 259)

This permanent looking to work is related to insecurity (Quido, Tony, Herbert). Moreover, it was very unpleasant and for some people also psychically demanding. Another perspective mentioned by Janine was being disbalanced – frequently changing life situations contributed to the feeling of distraction and insecurity.

Lower or missing future social protection

Häusermann and Schwander (2009) argue that position of people on the labour market is interconnected with their future social security including unemployment protection and old age pension. Insecure positions may have influence on social rights including unemployment protection, pension schemes, and invalidity benefits (Häusermann and Schwander 2009, Davidsson and Naczyk 2009). Missing social protection relates to work in the grey economy – although this practice is considered as a strategy to cope with the existing financial difficulties, it increases the insecurity and risk of social exclusion for young people (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov).

My reflection on missing social protection

Immediate consequences in the absence of social protection were widespread among the respondents (see details in the next chapter). Jake, for example, noted that he was not given Unemployment insurance benefits because he had worked on the ‘agreement for a specific task’ with an income lower than 10 000 CZK. Considering more distant effects, Otto reflected that his future protection would be limited because he was unemployed for a long time. Otto expected that his old age pension is going to be low or it is not going to be paid. He knows this situation well because his mother is not eligible for old age pension. Tony also knew that his old age pension is going to be low, but he was not able nor willing to pay more into the old age insurance system. Tony refers to the situation when he, as self-employed, recently received a letter from the public social insurance company about his current and past contributions and future entitlements.

“...they wrote me a letter that I should pay two thousand [CZK] more to have a pension about ten thousand [CZK]. Otherwise, I will get around six or seven [thousand] or something similar they wrote me. However, I do not understand them, and I do not trust them that when I will put two thousand there, they will give me a bigger pension. In three years, there will be other political garniture and different situation. I enlisted into the pension supplement scheme and I pay for my pension and I do not trust the other [scheme].” (R27: 197).

The future income insecurity is in Tony’s tale connected with uncertainty about future development and low trust to state. For people, it is sometimes very difficult to consider all the circumstances of the offered schemes and to be able to build a coherent strategy. It would require a really sophisticated calculation and also a crystal ball to be able to see whether it is more advantageous to put scarce resources into public social insurance or to private supplement funds. Tony himself did not go to adventure with such exercise. He was more driven by intuitive judgement.

Financial situation and low ability to maintain living

Insecurity brought problems for young people to manage their lives with current income and to pay both regular and unexpected expenses (Clasen, Gould and, Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Hora and Žižlavský 2009, Trilfajová et al. 2015). This may include both severe material deprivation (including lacking food, any suitable clothes, and missing healthcare) and low ability to keep the expected social standard, e.g., having fashionable clothes or attending social events (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). For some young people, even in employment, their income may not protect them from material deprivation (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). People with low income from work can assess their income situation similarly as unemployed (Hora and Žižlavský 2009). Among other factors that influence the ability to maintain living is lone parenthood and situations when the other parent is not paying alimony as in the case of Betty.

For some people, material need means that they have to change their overall strategy to stop studying or to go abroad (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). For others, lacking money

means blocking opportunities, e.g., they cannot choose their school freely (Behrens and Brown 1994a), cannot to go to university or to start an own business (Krasteva, Jeliazkova and Draganov 2018).

Story of Bruno

Bruno is a Roma man in his middle age. He successfully completed vocational training for a bricklayer during the last years of communist times. Although it is more than 20 years, he was formally employed only for one month during his whole life (he is permanently unemployed). He admits that sometimes he works in undeclared jobs (it is insecure because sometimes he is not paid for the work done) or he collects scrap metal and old paper to earn some money. He attended five retraining courses, but it did not help him (at least once he was not able to do the final tests). In the year before the interview, he was a participant in a car accident, and he has health problems since this event. He was expelled from Employed office last year for six months and this had deep psychical consequences (see below).

When Bruno was young, he lived with parents until the age of about 25. He had the first child with his former girlfriend. After they separated, he took the child into his care because his former partner did not want to care for her. Although the former girlfriend left them, her income was still counted towards family income and they (family) were without social assistance benefits. They also had debts because she did not pay rent.

Now Bruno lives with another girlfriend and they have two children (all together three). One child is handicapped, and one is small (about one year old). He must care also for the girlfriend because she has a low ability to care for herself. In the past, the children were placed into institutional care until the time he could take them back.

The main problem for Bruno is the financial situation of his current family. All goods are costly, and small children have specific needs. His daughter has health problems and medicine for her is very expensive. They (family) are just surviving – ‘it is not possible to feed the family for social benefits’ (R8: 48). They are often going to debts which are of high profit and very difficult to handle.

“I am going to debt. When child milk costs you four hundreds, nappies cost you four hundreds too, and the child milk is for five days and what next?” ... “They will lend you money for profit. From five hundred you have to repay three hundred more” (R8: 169).

He reflects that the only help he got from the authorities is social assistance benefits and sometimes lump sum benefit as a loan, which he has to return latter. He must use part of the benefit which is formally dedicated for personal needs to pay part of the rent (for housing). This is all together a very unpleasant and stressful situation for Bruno.

„Last year I was totally out. I had to undergo medical treatment....I was unable to bear my psychics because I was not able to handle children [financially], I could not bear it any longer. (R8: 248).

For this reason, the financial situation also has deep consequences for his psychics. Bruno is deeply depressed. He said that 'it is a horrible life'.

There is no one main discourse in his story. Instead, many partial discourses are mentioned and they all together constitute the story of Bruno. The discourses present in Bruno's story are connected to work: 'having no chance' (I did not have a chance), 'lacking experience' ('they all need experience and where you should get it when no one will take you') and 'discrimination'. Bruno described discrimination in the following way:

„They found there are free vacancies. I phoned there and they said: 'Come, everything will be super'. I think for myself that [later refuse] is due to Roma people, to say it as it is. It is because I am Roma that they are not going to take me, but they do not tell you [that it is due to being Roma]...they tell you that the job is full, and you can do whatever you want..“ (R8: 100).

Bruno said that employers normally accepted other people who came at the same moment ask for the job, because they were white but not him. Bruno reflected his situation as 'going in circles' ('is all around, it is the same all the time') including both looking for jobs and repeated ALMP retraining courses. He also argued with aspects of 'calculating' discourse ('I would have to travel far, and the base wage is 8000 CZK, and I would suffer a loss'). Different discourses are connected to his family situation: 'hard work' and 'breadwinning' ('I have to care for all it myself', 'I was not able to feed the family').

My reflection: In the story of Bruno, financial hardship is connected also with the difficult family situation – having children from the previous relationship in care without the help of the previous partner, having a current partner with limited capability to care for herself, one handicapped, and one small child. On the other side of the equation is his limited ability to sufficiently care for the family due to inability to get a normal job despite long Employment office registration. Financial hardship of the family is apparent and social benefits are not enough to prevent such hardship. For example, medicine costs for the handicapped child are very high compared to family income.

My reflection on the ability of people to maintain living

When we asked young people about their economic position in the society, I was surprised on many occasions that they place themselves in relatively high positions despite apparent problems and insecurities. There are various explanations, which were present in their reasoning. First, it may be self-presentation because it would be humiliating to place themselves in a low position. Second possible explanation is that their reference group may be limited to the people they know (this was, e.g., the reasoning of Ben). The third argument was that they place themselves high because they can live according to their values and lifestyle that they themselves prefer.

In contrast, in interviews we can reflect many situations of extreme poverty. For example, in the story of Melinda, Ellyn and Harrold. These include having nothing to eat, starving, sleeping in the park, and collecting food from dustbins. Karin mentioned that she walked to work a long

distance every day because she could not afford to buy tickets. We include in this category also respondents who claimed that their financial situation was very bad, horrible, etc. (Sophie, Bruno, Karin), respondents who regularly borrowed money to survive and respondents who lost children for some time due to unacceptable financial situation or living conditions (Bruno, Magda).

Another group of people lived from hand to mouth, spending immediately all spare money (Lucy, Josephine, Sabina). People sometimes reflected how expensive concrete things or services were for them or how they were much more expensive than before (Bruno, Laura, Simon). Roman and Amanda mentioned that having a child and family was expensive and their ability to manage the financial situation of his family was unstable. Sabina and Amanda said that often there were not enough money and they needed help from relatives. Vanda explained that they had to postpone the buying of some things. Tony said that his budget is tense, and he is not able to save much. When he occasionally saves something, he spends it almost immediately. Credit card functions for him as a financial reserve. We present here the statement of Josephine, reflecting typical financial problems:

"I earn about 8000 CZK a month. I work for almost 200 hours and I earn only 8000 CZK. Half of that money I give to my mother because we have expensive rent. There are 4000 CZK left for me. I have to put aside money for snacks, I have to pay for my transport pass every three months. It is not very nice when you want to go to the city, and you look in your wardrobe asking yourself: 'What I am going to wear?'. And then you go around the city and suddenly you see something, and you want to buy it. You have the money with you, and you do not think, and you buy it for your pleasure. And then you see that you have no money left." (R42: 94)

There was present immediate financial pressure which according to some of the respondents (Vanda, Roman, Clara, Ellyn, Otto) pressured on activity and acceptance of 'anything available' and it had detrimental psychical consequences (see below).

Some respondents (Clara, Ben, Ellyn, Jake) also mentioned the influence of low income on social activities (going out with friends, buying gifts). For them, this was related to feelings of being embarrassed or inferior for not having the standards common in society. However, according to Ellyn, this can be managed by various humble, alternative, and saving strategies (buying less, buying worse quality/second hand, going without).

Family structure is relevant for coping with financial issues. Karin and Melinda noted that their difficult situation was caused by the absence of partners. Young people who lived with their parents were often able to tackle the financial situation only with the help of the parents. Jake explained:

"Considering [parental] support, they feed me still. Not now when I have work, but in periods when I was at Employment Office or when I had these call centres, it was mostly work on 'agreement for doing a specific task' and there, yes, I was able to earn on rent, but it was not possible to feed myself from it or give something from it." (R11: 139).

Young people with low incomes are unable to save and are not able to fulfil their dreams or to buy things which are common for their mates or that they were used to buy when they had a job (Vanda). Ben spoke about not being able to buy a second-hand car. John, Clara, Janine, and Maria could not go abroad on holidays or long-term work visit. Maria explained that she would like to ‘go to see the sea’ which she had never seen. Although this dream is not as expensive (it is something that many people do every year in the Czech Republic), for Maria, it is currently unachievable. In this regard, she is not able to live according to the standards common in the wider society. Jake, John, and some other respondents mentioned that they were limited in doing their hobbies (e.g., doing sports, buying a new computer).

This is starkly contrasting with people like Ellyn who despite low income, do not have a feeling of hardship or do not feel concrete bad consequences. Ellyn reflects that she adapted her behaviour to reduce expenses by buying clothes second hand, cook by herself, avoid going to the pub, and travel by hitchhiking. She was also able to save for more expensive things. Various saving strategies were mentioned also by other respondents (e.g. Otto). They present a humble lifestyle of coping rooted in their financial hardship.

Going into debts

Debts were often caused by the limited ability of people to pay for necessary expenses (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora 2008b). There are several quite different situations. Clasen, Gould, and Vincent (1998: 187) described how going into debt was a deliberate strategy used to survive in the situation of insufficient income – “being in debt had become a way of life”. However, unemployment is also a key factor in low ability to pay previous debts (Trlfajová et al. 2015). Some people were trapped due to low ability to tackle previous debts (Hora 2008b, Trlfajová et al. 2015).

My reflection on debts

Debts are a typical feature in the life of respondents which is both the cause and consequence of their life problems. Consequences of debts are highly influenced by scope of the debt and from whom did you borrow. Some debts are not caused by borrowing money but by other specific behaviour (entrepreneurship, travelling without a ticket, or not paying social insurance). Debts may be also caused by the necessity to pay bills and sudden lack or drop of income, i.e., paying bills late (Tony). Tony argues that it is stressful when you are not sure whether you would be able to pay. People usually borrow from their relatives and friends (Magda) but also from people in their networks who lend money for high profit (Bruno) or from non-bank financial institutions (Magda). Some very difficult debts were also debts on social and health insurance caused by various situations (Ron). Some young people owed for insurance because they had irregular income (Ron), some young people had debts because their employer did not pay insurance for them, and some because they were expelled from Employment office, and they did not find work quickly. Magda mentioned that she went into debt because she was not able to live on social benefits and to pay the year balance of the bills.

In addition, debts were significant constraints for some people because they had significant debts or even executions on their potential income and the conditions in 'the debt trap' were hardly manageable (unmanageable) for them (Bonny, Simon, Betty). Betty said that debts were the worst consequence of her situation:

"The consequence was that several times I had to take a very unfavourable loan because I did not have any employment contract and up to now...I have to solve my debts instead of building [household?]. This is the greatest and worst negative consequence...because it changes all your future life. You can try to get from this for several years." (R22: 122)

The role of debts is also notable in the story of Ben who made debts to buy furniture for independent living. Later, he had problems to pay for alimony because he did not have a stable income. Other respondents (Karin) mentioned debts which they perceived as manageable. Karin said that managing debts improved when she got stable work.

Limited housing options

Consequences of insecurity for housing situation are apparent when young people cannot move, have to live in the rooming house, have to live in unsatisfactory conditions, live together with a former partner etc. (Hora 2008b, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b). Young people can have very different housing aspirations including ownership, renting, and living with parents (Brown and Roberts 1994). For young people, common living with parents can be also advantageous, because they have a higher income at disposal and have to care less for themselves (see Brown and Roberts 1994).

Different aspects of the difficult housing situation are shown in the following two stories.

Story of Lucy

Lucy is a woman in her middle age. She studied vocational training for a baker and finished shortly after Velvet Revolution. She worked in the field of bakery only for a short time after graduation. It was difficult for her to get a job as a baker. She explained that at that time there was no need for bakers and older workers were preferred because they could work on shifts. She enrolled in further study, but she did not finish it due to absences caused by working.

Her parents had seven children and she could not stay home because there were four other children younger than she. Lucy described how earnings were important for her housing situation during her first years of living alone. Parents could not support her. She has to 'stand on her own legs' and care for herself. She left her parents and her hometown when she was seventeen. She started to live in a rented flat with two friends from school, but later they were not able to pay for the flat and they invited other people to live with them to share the costs.

"...I had a boyfriend at that time, but we quarrelled a lot about it [about work], we quarrelled a lot due to work, because I was at work all the time to earn some money. Rents were not so expensive, but compared to the money we earned, they were relatively expensive. We lived six of us in one flat to be able to pay it. We floundered

and it was a wild period, we could not save anything or buy anything. We just went in circles” (R29: 5).

Lucy described that living in a flat with five other people helped financially, but it was crazy, because various people with different needs were living there (both people studying and people working). They lived six people in two rooms.

“You went home after work, you wanted to have peace and go to bed and at the same moment the other group decided to have a party and enjoy life.” (R29: 17).

She needed to find something better and calmer. Her situation was solved later when she met another boyfriend who had his flat. She was pregnant at that time and had a baby. She cared for it for three years. After parental leave, she was unemployed. She did retrain for the accountant profession, but it did not help her. She had another baby and was again at home for four years.

She found some shop assistant jobs and later other jobs in coffee house and plastic window making. Most of these jobs were low paid and/or she lost them due to closing of the firm (concurrence effect). In the later period (after divorce), she was a single parent with two children.

„Lady [at the Employment office] every time raised her hands up and said that she does not have anything for me that no one wants a single mother with two children. Because you have small children and they can be ill with them and that is wrong.” (R29: 7).

To have at least some work, she had to accept an undeclared job and worked long hours. She was very afraid because the children were home alone and that she would lose social benefits. She said that this was the worst period of her life because no one wanted to employ her. After two years, she found a job in catering lasting for three years until she married again and had her third child.

Lucy could not return to bakery work due to children (because it is shift work). Now she works as a cleaning lady in the house for the elderly. She thinks that she decided to put having children first and she has to do manual work now.

First discourse present in Lucy's story is 'need of work experience' mentioned when she spoke about looking for a job after school and after the retraining course (see in the next chapter).

“No one wanted to employ us [graduates]. They said that they have enough or their own people and that we do not have work experience.” (R29: 9).

Another discourse was 'need of education'. This is apparent from the following short quotations: ('I regret not finishing studies', 'It was deadening to do such [unqualified] jobs', 'I force my children to have education', 'it is hard to find work without education', 'educated have more chances'). The following statement is typical for this discourse:

“I force my children to have education. My son studies university and the daughter is at high school....I would certainly not allow them to fail their education. As how I failed

it, I do not want them to fail...I really think that nowadays when they will have education, they have better chances at the labour market than we who do not have it. Because always they ask: 'What school do you have?'." (R29: 67)

Lucy explained how her life is difficult in the discourse of 'going in circles' ('going from nothing to nothing, from left to right', 'hard life' and 'legal employment' (see part about employment protection in the next chapter). She thinks that education is necessary for good job chances and that she missed her chances when she was young. It was very difficult for her to accept an undeclared job but once she was forced to do it due to her situation. She said that for her, the vision of an employment contract and being legally employed was more important than making money. She wants to avoid Employment office. She also wants to have more stability in her life:

"I am embarrassed that I had so many jobs...I was like ping-pong ball...I do not want more changes to other fields." (R29: 67).

"We were unemployed and went in circles. Now I want to find something more stable. I do not want experience that period again when you go everywhere and ask for work. I need more security. At my age, [I need] some security [workplace] where I am going to work until my pension time." (R29: 43).

My reflection: Although there are many interesting aspects in the story of Lucy, I have chosen to highlight her early period of leaving parents' home and living with low income in provisional and low-quality housing. She was in a very difficult situation because she was forced to leave her parents and live on her own when she was very young. She lived in shared housing, but it was not suitable due to two aspects: her life situation changed, and she was in a period when she needed more privacy and more control on the situation in her flat. Her situation partially improved only after finding a boyfriend (her later husband) who had his own housing and it worsened again after she divorced.

Story of Maria

Maria is a Roma lady, who is 21 years old. After completing elementary education, her teachers helped her a lot to find further education. She studied vocational training for a baker, but she dropped out after half a year due to unwanted attention from one young man who stalked her. She said that there was also a noncomprehensive stance from her schoolmates. She switched to a different school, but after another half a year she became pregnant and she ended her education. She did not return to education later.

Maria did not work much yet (she did only some occasional jobs before she was pregnant for the first time). Her boyfriend is unemployed (He did some occasional jobs in the past, he had a current promise of job attained due to the help of NGO). Maria cares for her child and for the household and she claims parental benefit. She has a traditional view about the division of family roles (man earns money, she cares for the household and the kids). They all count together in social benefits. Half of the money she got from social benefits she must pay for housing and the rest go to food and other expenses (it is enough but almost nothing is left).

Maria lives with her boyfriend and their child in the rooming house for two years. They live in one rather small room and the kitchen is common for all rooms. They are limited in what they can themselves do with their living (decoration, etc.). Quality of housing is influenced by the negative behaviour of other people living there who have an impact on the common living space. Maria explained:

"I am pissed off by some other people who are not able to behave normally and they do not keep the rooming house in the proper state. When you enter a rooming house, you say to yourself: 'My god, that is horrible, I would never live there'. However, when you are here for a longer time, you stop to notice it.... You are used to it. Because you have nowhere else to go, you are glad to have a roof upon your head, but it is not as it should be. The people are not good. Mainly cooking is [a problem?] you have to go cook down in the kitchen." (52: 223)

Maria was going to have a second baby at the time of the interview. She wanted to have her own housing which she can adjust according to her taste. Own housing is for Maria her main need. She commented:

"I am not satisfied how I live. I did not expect my life to be like this, live in a rooming house for two years and to be there with the family. I would like to have my own flat and start my own life with my two children and my boyfriend whom I love. However, it is not possible, when you do not have money, you cannot do anything." (R52: 33).

Not having spare money (no saves and no ability to save) is a barrier for her family for moving to better housing.

"I do not have money to pay for the deposit, because they want 8000 CZK for a room and kitchen and another 8000 CZK in addition [deposit]. Where can someone like me get it? He would have to live for a month in the street or I do not know...when he [her partner] does not go to work, it is difficult." (R52: 37).

"...I would like my boyfriend to find work finally and earn money for other things and we could start to enjoy life." (R52: 213)

Discourse present in the story of Maria is 'traditional division of roles'. Marias's mother is a housewife. Maria sees partner roles as traditional and given (she, e.g., expects her partner to be financially responsible for the family) although she does not personally completely agree with it in all aspects. She commented on the division of roles.

"...men have a better life than we women have. They do not have to care, but their main responsibility is to go to work and nothing more. The rest is on women who care, who care about cooking, they care about children, they care almost about everything" (R52: 167).

Another discourse presented by Maria is 'discrimination'. She said that Roma are often refused on sight ('employers say that they have bad experience with Roma', 'they put all Roma

in one sack', 'maybe it is due to my colour', 'they could not employ me because other people would not be glad to see this').

"I want other people to behave to us as to people and not as to animals. I have to say it like this....because there is horrible racism to say it precisely." (R52: 233).

Racism is, according to Maria, typical not only for the place where she lives but it is widespread. Maria reflected that racism is also in healthcare.

Maria also presented a widely shared discourse of 'need of parental care' (children take drugs because parents do not care for them).

Another her discourse is a mix of 'need of education' and 'work experience', and 'own fault' for not achieving it. Maria generally thinks that education is important, and it depends on your own effort.

"When I attended high school, some schoolmates did not go to school or they did not want to learn, and they did what they wanted. However, then what happened? They were not able to get a vocational training certificate and they can thank only to themselves, because they do not have anything and look at others who have but they do not have. However, this is all their fault, because if they completed vocational training, they would have the same as others and would be well as well." (R52: 141).

...

"When you go somewhere to look for work, they look at you completely differently, when you bring a certificate about completion of vocational training. They assess you completely differently, that you had an effort to reach something..." (R52: 143)

Maria's discourse is also based on her personal experience with refusal ('they told me that I am not a suitable person and I am not an experienced person').

My reflection: In the story of Maria, 'lack of money' relates to the need to work and save as pre-requisition for quality housing and better life. Although her current housing is not of sufficient quality, the family is hardly able to pay for it. We can identify following aspects of lowered quality:

- *Problematic locality of living: need calmer place with good people*
- *Lack of space: one room small for the family of four*
- *Common utilities: kitchen, lack of privacy*
- *Surroundings: their rooming house is messy and dirty within the common space*
- *Problems with other inhabitants: they are noisy, she would rather avoid them*
- *Lack of freedom: their options to improve housing are limited.*

For people living in rooming houses, it means letting the problematic environment into their housing. Maria expects her boyfriend to improve the situation, she cares for the kids, and she plans to go work for half-time job when the children are older and will go to kindergarten.

My reflection on housing

We can divide our respondents into four groups concerning whether they live alone or not and whether they have housing problems. One rather small group of respondents had almost no housing problems. They used step-by-step strategy to achieve their own housing. We understand success as ensuring stable housing without the need of living with parents (if the respondent did not want to live with them due to other reasons). John bought a flat when he was young in privatisation and he was glad because it saved him latter a lot of money. Tony was able to live in a small flat and after several years he bought a bigger flat. Violet was supported by his father and they bought a flat and later they changed it for a bigger one. Tobias has got a stable job and he was able to move to a small flat. Betty got a flat after her grandfather.

For young people living with parents, the situation of parents is relevant. One interesting part of the interview with Antonia was when she explained about her housing situation. She said that she is not afraid to lose housing because she lives with her parents. However, her parents are old people and she said that they have minimum chances to get a job. Social benefits help them a lot. Although they live in state-owned flat, the rent is high. Half of the rent is covered from social benefits for housing and the second half they have to pay from benefits for living. Living with parents provides people like Antonia with security.

There were several stories where respondents had substantial difficulties with housing during certain periods of their life. The situation of Roma community in housing issue is specific and more difficult. Otto moved several times because of various reasons (e.g., the house, where he lived was demolished) and he lived with far relatives in overcrowded and dirty housing. At the time of the interview, he lived in a rooming house and had his post address at municipality at the other end of the country (typical for homeless people). Magda described her very insecure housing situation:

"It was wild. I already had children at that time, but I was looking for the background, it was hard for me. I wanted not to look for some rental housing or asylum house all the time. I was very bothered by living in asylum houses. I went to achieve my goal which was to have my own flat or to get a flat from the municipality to settle down and start to do something." (R7: 91)

Roman had a very unstable housing situation and he said that it was the main consequence of his insecure situation. He said:

"When I was unemployed, it was worse. It happened that I almost ended on the street, I was able to step on my legs only due to my parents. Because when I did not go to work, I had no money, I did not claim any social assistance at that time, I had only a few occasional jobs, and so I lost my flat. I lived with my parents for a while, I got another flat, I was able to save something, and so I had another flat. However, there I was only for half a year and then I had nothing again, I was out again. I ended up living with my father-in-law and mother-in-law, and I was able to find this work and now I live differently." (R9: 224).

For some young people, the low stability of housing constituted a problem. E.g. Ellyn noted that she already moved eight times. Melinda told us a tale pointing to the insecurity of rent housing:

"Flat owner expelled us from the flat in two days. He came on Friday and he said: 'I need this flat free on Tuesday'. We paid the rent right. He was satisfied with us...but he himself had nowhere to go. He divorced with his girlfriend and needed to return to his flat. We could not hold him this flat because it was his flat. And so, we ended up on street. One night we spent sleeping in the park." (R30: 15)

Antonia explains that young people generally have problems with housing. One problematic aspect for young people is low access to get their own, i.e., independent housing (mentioned, e.g., by Philip and Lisa). From the financial perspective, they need help from their parents, and it takes a long time before they move. Some young people do not have enough money (enough income) to live separately from their parents (e.g., Steve, Gwen). Some of the respondents (Karin, Benn, Qido, Derek, Janine, Lucy, Bob) mentioned a consequence of not being able to get their own housing due to low income or due to expensiveness of housing. Gwen commented on the situation of her family:

"I am displeased that we are without money, without work and that I am still here living with parents. This is the flat of my parents and they live here with us...I want to have my own housing, but we do not have income for this, to get my own flat. I would like to achieve a lot, but it is not happening." (R50: 75)

...

"I have a lot of friends who have nowhere to live and they are living in asylum houses. However, at least they are there but I am still here. I asked for an asylum house too. They told me that in three quarters a year. I simply do not know. We will have to move from here because the whole house is going to be renovated." (R50: 105)

Some young people used the shared housing mentioned above (Bonny, Lucy). It can be a way how to lessen expenses. However, Rachel argued that shared housing is not good in the case of Roma people. There is also a possibility to ask for the municipality flat (mentioned by Bob, Natalie, Nancy, and Steve), but it was not very certain and short-term strategy. Natalie mentioned that young people wait for two years and then they may not be successful. Bob explained:

"I enlisted [for a public flat], it is already a year and nothing yet happened. It is about waiting...one lady told me that she waited 10 years for that flat until she got it. It is three years for someone, one year for someone else, and yet another one ten years. Therefore, it is wild." (R46: 109)

It is essential to plan expenses well, pay rent regularly and in time in municipality-owned flats (Barbara, Nancy) because there was a risk of losing the rented flat. Maria mentioned that the municipality realised activities aimed at helping people from deprived families to attain or hold housing. There are also emergency housing options of which asylum houses for mothers with children were sometimes mentioned (Nancy, Magda).

Young people often have to pay substantial amounts (e.g., three rents in advance as deposit) in advance to get a flat owned by a private owner (Harrold, Laura, Lisa, Rosalie). For many young people, this itself is a decisive barrier. From another perspective, Roma are often unwanted and refused inhabitants (Antonia, Josephine, Robin, Bob, Tobias) and landlords often hesitate to lend flats to Roma.

"It is hard finding housing here. I found my flat with the help of acquaintances, but when I sought alone, I was calling there, and they [landlords] asked me on the phone whether I were from the [Roma] community. If you are Roma, the landlord is not interested." (R43: 210)

According to Robin and Bob, it is because Roma people have a bad reputation of not paying rent and doing noise. Sometimes landlords have other additional criteria that discriminate the other group, e.g., they refuse families with more children (Lisa, Pablo, Rosalie). Because the offer of housing for them is further reduced, they have to accept disadvantageous offers (Josephine). Rooming houses are more accessible than flats (Lisa).

Other problematic housing aspects include low quality of housing (typical for rooming houses), high prices for low quality (mentioned by Pablo and Rachel), and overcrowding of some Roma families (mentioned by Rebeca, Karin and others). Melinda commented the quality of housing in the following statement.

"We went to the rooming house for the first time in our lives. We were afraid. We have never seen a rooming house even from a distance and suddenly we should go there with so many children. Children were shocked because it was only one room. This room was catastrophe. Dirty, messy, horrible walls. When I went there, I cried all the time." (R30: 15)

Community aspect of housing is also essential. Nancy commented the difficulties of living with some neighbours:

"There are drug addicts all around. People who harm us in the house. We were burgled six times in three years than we live there, six times, we had matches in the lock, the mailbox was stolen six times. We were not receiving post. It is not so bad in winter, but it is horrible in the summer." (R72: 59)

We also noted that insufficient housing may constitute a barrier for other important life aspects. Interesting remarks came from Karin who reflected that housing acted for her as a barrier to solve her school situation. She said:

"They do not have possibilities to get somewhere and housing matters a lot, because when someone does not have housing, does not have shelter, you cannot do anything else...if I had better housing, I believe I would finish school, that it would be different." (R2: 167).

Leaving parent's home - delayed or reduced economic independence

In the following part, we reflect on the ability of young people to care for their needs themselves and to live independently. Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) were concerned about the autonomy and independence of young people. They used five categories: housing autonomy, economic autonomy, psychological autonomy, autonomy and social exclusion, and autonomy and state policies. Autonomy of young people may be influenced by legislation and social norms that may be specific for young people (EGRIS 2002). Young people often have sufficient personal autonomy including personal life and lifestyle and independent decision-making (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). There are several reasons for housing autonomy including finding a partner, moving to school or need to be independent from parents (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Reasons to live with parents include economic difficulties, need to care for relatives, or assessing living with parents as cheaper and more comfortable (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Economic autonomy is based on personal income and people with whom young people share their expenses, and the necessity of other support and reference frameworks (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Other dimensions of autonomy include autonomy to look for work, to have contact with friends, to go on a holiday, and to care for children (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Some young people connect autonomy and independence with happiness and wellbeing, because of the feeling of personal achievement (see Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018).

Some literature also reflects that lack of autonomy related to dependence (Walther 2006, Hora 2008b, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). This may include both dependence on relatives and dependence on social benefits. We refer to dependence here in the meaning that individuals "would be lost, would hardly do anything without it..." (Hora 2008b). Young people may be most probably more often dependent on their parents or on their partner, because social benefits are often not available to them (see Hora 2008b). According to Hora (2008b), there are several aspects typical for young people: (return to) common living with parents, economic dependence (lower than proportional financial contribution to the family budget), lower pressure when parents have sufficient income but higher pressure when parents have low income (the case of interdependence).

My reflection on economic independence

Many respondents left the home of their parents at the age of 20-25 years. Leaving the parental home was usually the respondents' decision. Stated reasons why young people started to live alone were very diverse and included:

- Need to try to be independent (mature), to live alone (Roman)
- Going to school/dormitory (John),
- Need to find work (Lucy), go work abroad (Alice),
- Getting housing offer (Betty, Sabina)
- The need to live alone – e. g., to have more privacy and personal space, reduce the negative influence of family (Sophie, Fred, Violet, Antonia). In some cases, the situation

in the primary family was difficult or there were conflicts with parents, or parents wanted their children to leave for financial reasons, contributing as a push factor to the decision to live alone (Ellyn, Lucy, Violet, Fred, Simon).

- Finding a partner and/or starting a family (Ben, Vanda, Fred, Tony, Herbert).

There were a lot of people who (still) lived with parents for various reasons (Bonny, Karin, Jake, Quido, Derek, Janine, Eugenie, Josephine, Ron). The first relevant aspect is whether respondents wanted to live alone or not. For some young people, living with parents was welcome because they liked the 'provided service' (feeding, washing clothes) and did not want to be an adult prematurely (Josephine, Herbert). Some contribution of working young people to the family budget was standard. Alice, who in the past wanted to live with her parents, argued that her possibility to stay home was conditioned on her contribution to the family budget.

In some cases, young people did not want to move because they lived in the same house, but otherwise, they had separated housing (in the meaning that they lived in separate flats) and there were in some respects less dependent or they were used to living with their parents and they welcomed it (Eugenie, Fred, Ron, Violet). Important factor was the availability of accessible housing for the future (Jake, Betty, and Sabina who were given or promised housing originally belonging to their grandparents). Jake commented:

"I am lucky, my grandparents were active, they bought a house, they rebuild it, repaired it and once I will get it as heritage and so I do not have to be afraid about housing any longer." (R11: 157)

This group of young people counted on living with their parents and/or grandparents for a longer time because it was much easier than achieving other housing.

Limited income (even when stable) and not having stable work blocked people from leaving parents' homes when they wanted to do so (Ben, Karin, Janine, Jake, Quido). This means that they would like to leave in a short time if they could.

"Because I still live alone [i.e., without a partner] and I have a basic wage about 10 000 CZK, I cannot go to live alone, I cannot." (R2: 87)

"I have occasional jobs. Being a hostess is not permanent. Therefore, I have to live at home until I find something normal...If I could, I would leave immediately." (R19: 120)

For Bonny, debts were the key obstacle for independent living. When asking whether a lack of money limited his life, Jake answered:

"I do not want to start a family right now but considering being independent in housing [which I want] sure that I am limited by my salary, I know the rough cost of rents here in town. And living in a room with three more people is not something that I want." (R11: 67)

Laura noted that she wants to earn and save some money first and then live alone. In some cases, parents helped young people financially to be independent (in transition).

It was difficult to achieve stable independence. Sometimes the respondents lived alone but later they returned to live with the parents again. There were two main reasons: financial reasons (severe financial problems) and relationship breakdown or other conflicts including quarrels, separation, or divorce (Bonny, Ben, Roman, Clara, Helen, Fred, Herbert). In the later period of their lives, some respondents lived with their parents also to help them and care for them (Fred, John).

For some respondents, economic independence related to fulfilling particular life stages of career goals (Bonny, Derek, Ben). This was mentioned by Ben as being unable to 'jump out'. Bonny argued that due to his life stage, when he lived in a squat, everything in his life like finishing school and finding a good job was not stopped but it was slowed and delayed, and he regrets it now.

"I would say that it did not stop me fatally. Rather, it delayed me to a great extent. When I consider that my sister is twenty-two and she has already been living abroad for a year and she studies university. I think that in these things it delayed me rather than stopped me because who says that I cannot do it now. I regret it a lot, but I would not say it was a fatal stop or it would knock me down. It is a pity, I regret it, but it already happened." (R1: 186)

Decision to go live alone is in the case of some of the respondents based upon good conditions. Derek mentioned that sometimes he thinks about what would happen when he had decided differently. He links it to the life stages of both partners:

"...and the partner, we want to start the family, to live alone, but it is dependent on finishing my school, luckily she studies as well.... When I had a stable job, I could even study with it, but [need] to have financial security to go alone and make the next step in the life" (R14: 254).

For young people without high education and work career aspirations, the independence related to finding a reasonable job. Young people wanted to be independent, but it was not possible due to not having a stable income. Quido, e.g. noted:

"I am unemployed for some time or I do not have such money [as when I worked] and it blocks me from living alone. Even if I were able to find housing, I do not have security, so that I would be able to pay rent every month...but it does not have influence for me on having partner..." (R13: 79)

Quido is afraid of the concurrence effect of young workers whose career is not delayed and who would have better opportunities to develop. Ben, another young man, commented on his limited options for independent life with the following statement:

"From my point of view, it complicates life a lot...he cannot be independent, he is at home, parents maintain him most of the time and even when now he is limited in what

he can buy. He has to live for something. It is not only about being at home. He is totally [missing word], to be closed at home all the time. He is inferior when he does not go to work. You do not meet many people....To give an example when I live here with my mother and I find a girlfriend where I will bring her, here to this flat? You need to build your own. In addition, when you do not have work, you cannot build your own. E.g., you have debts from the past, you have to pay them. It is all complicated when you find work with difficulties.” (R3: 155).

Later during the interview, he added:

“I would like to live alone. If I get to work, to have it. I hope in it. Who would like to listen to this all the time? With my mother speaking: ‘To what age you are going to stay here, go and find a girl’. I have enough of this. I feel not well sometimes, I would like to live alone. However, it is not possible without work.” (R3: 458).

There are factors that directly contribute to the ability to get housing. We noted stories of young people like Clara who found a stable job and were due to it able to move to their own housing. Other respondents (Sophie) commented that the transition was realised because they saved some money. Sophie also reflected that the housing benefit helped her to live alone. For Vanda, housing was not a problem because she had a financially well-situated partner.

For some respondents, their current life course was linked to the concept of totally missed opportunities. These are pathways that were not followed and there is no way back, these doors are closed forever. For most respondents, this included traveling and working abroad (Betty) or having a better job (Lucy).

Family formation, having children, family conflict or family breakdown

Postponed family formation is related to the need to offer the new family some security and sustainable financial conditions (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). There may be also problems in partnership (arguments), isolation and breakdown of partnership (see Clasen, Gould and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Gallie 2013a, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010). On the other hand, there may be no such problems when the family has a realistic and supportive stance to unemployed member (Hora 2008b) and there may be even positive effects such as more common time (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998).

My reflection of family formation

We noted that having children is related for respondents to a wider life change concerning partner, work, and independent mature life. Some respondents (e. g., Ben, Betty, Ellyn, Magda, Vanda, Fred, Simon, John, Lucy) mentioned that the feelings of young people (when they were young) about life (concerning mainly work and partnership) were positive, optimistic and maybe a bit naïve, but it changed in the latter stage of their life.

“I had a completely different imagination. When the school will end, you immediately get a job, an employment contract, and you work there for several years. Nothing was functioning like that...I ended up on Employment office...I was naïve a lot.” (R22: 114)

[I thought] that everything will be easy, but it is not. I was seeing it all pink [optimistic], that I will find a boyfriend, marry, we will live together, but not. It is all completely different.” (R7: 189)

“It is not automatic to have a good work, you have to chase it or fight for it. Everything is not natural.” (R21: 253)

With rare exceptions, economic and security reasons were not mentioned among the reasons causing start or end of the partner relationship. Some respondents even explicitly mentioned that despite their relatively difficult situation, it did not have an influence on their chance to find a partner or existing partner relations (Ben, Quido). Exception is Helen who said that the problem with housing contributed to end of her relationship. However, good partner and economic conditions are a key for starting a family (see below). Steve commented his life goals:

“I would like to have a good work, to work, have money, flat...to have your own things, completely different thoughts. Not to be distressed, having this idea in your head all the time, being on nerves, quarrelling sometimes [with the girlfriend]. When you do not have your own, it is bad.” (R53: 263)

Partners were during partnership an important source of support for respondents. Magda described how she was able to settle down due to her former boyfriend. It is important that many partnerships of our respondents have separated/ divorced later (see below).

My reflection on decisions on having children

If the respondents from the middle cohort had children, it was usually at a young age – about 20-25 years-old (Tony, Simon). This was the normal age of the first child in the society for the middle cohort (having children around 1990-1995), for the youngest cohort, the average age of the mother when having first child increased compared with the middle cohort by six years – see CZSO (2014). In older cohort there were some people who stayed childless (Fred, John) and well as people who had children later (Herbert). Herbert commented that in the previous period his partnerships were unstable, as well as his housing and economic situation. Concerning the reasons for being childless, Fred said that he missed the right moment and John mentioned that he cared for the child of his partner from a previous relationship instead. One respondent also mentioned that she wanted a child, but her partner could not have children and had the baby much later with a different partner.

Many young people in the youngest cohort were still childless (Bonny, Jake, Peter, Quido, Derek, Clara, Janine, Ellyn, Ron, Robin, Josephine, Bob) and not planning children in the near future. Robin, Josephine, and Peter, e.g., said that they would like to enjoy life first and have family (much) later. However, most of these respondents wanted to have family and children in the future.

"I want to settle things later. Now I want to enjoy things and postpone having children to the last moment when I am twenty-five or twenty-six and to have a family house. I would like to have a feeling that my parents and my family have wellbeing." (R42: 185)

There were also respondents (including Roma) who had children at a young age around 20 years or even sooner – in the case of Roma mothers at the age of sixteen or seventeen (Karin, Roman, Simon, Sophie, Betty, Melinda, Gwen, Maria). From their stories, we can conclude that early motherhood usually was not intentional. For Roma mothers, it often led to the ending of school attendance. Alan described a common situation in Roma community:

"When she [Roma girl] is pregnant, or she thinks that she will become pregnant. This is more difficult for girls with these problems. They consider whether he [father of the child] will continue with her or whether he only slept with her...when this happens, what to do. Maybe she does not want to interrupt the pregnancy and he wants it. Whether they will keep the child and they will be together. In this it is more difficult for girls, no fun." (R73: 365)

We also noted that early motherhood meant for some mothers a negative experience leading them to postpone the birth of their other children (Sophie).

Moreover, from the statement of some other respondents (Vendelín, Simon, Tony, Violet) we estimate that having children was not always an intentional matter (at least not for all the children). When people spoke about it, they sometimes reflected that some of their children were planned while some were not planned (the first one was usually not planned). Some respondents noted that it crossed their original plans:

"When my first son was born. Sure, I had different plans: complete school, build something, to have a house, everything all right, career, and then children. I started from the opposite direction." (R22: 226)

When respondents reflected that their family planning for some of their children was intentional (Peter, Derek, Clara, Sophie, Ellyn, Fred, Lucy, Violet, Ron), it was based upon the assessment of good preconditions: a good partner who can support, finished school, stable employment, enough money (enough saves), living together etc. Some respondents also considered the situation of their partners or they referred that both parents have to agree with parenting (Fred). For some respondents (e.g. Peter), parenting was also connected to proper time or age ('when I will be thirty, we want to wait several years').

We have some potential gender differences in stances towards parenting. For some girls, having a good partner was the most important. Ellyn mentioned:

"I do not really plan to find a family yet. I think... I do not have a boyfriend and I wait for the right one. And I do not hurry...I think that once I will feel ready, I will start a family...until I will find someone whom I can rely on, who will love me...I think that work is important but more important is to have a fine man and some background. If I do not have this, I will not have a child despite having work or not." (R20: 193)

Considering the preconditions for parenthood, Clara explained:

"Because I do not have a boyfriend, there is no reason to plan a family, there are absolutely no thoughts about planning a family. Additionally, until I feed myself and we are not two for this I could not plan anything, any family, because the child living on my salary would be poor and I would be poor too." (R17: 112)

Sophie said:

"My perspective changed a lot. I will definitely wait with the second child until I will have school finished, until I will have good work, sometimes later." (R18: 78)

Lucy mentioned that she was calm when she saw she lived with well-situated partner and started to think about the baby. She thought that later she would be too old. Vanda explicitly refused the influence of the insecure situation on their decision of having/not having children. However, Vanda lived with a wealthy partner.

Considering the stance of men, there was a group of respondents who refused to have children in the near future because they did not feel financially secure and able to care for the family (Fred, Derek, Bonny, Ron, Bob) or who recalled this situation from the past (Herbert). Fred said:

"...when I had a relationship, a girlfriend and I thought about starting a family, she did not want because she was much younger than me...and later when I changed the partner and she wanted to start a family, I did not want, by the way because I was not employed and so I did not feel that I could take care about me and the family and then I had no girlfriend I could start the family with. I ended up being single and with no children." (R26: 57)

Bonny said that he would not be able yet to give the children what they need, and it might be detrimental for the children.

"I love children. I would have children immediately, if it were possible, but I perceive it as unfair towards the children at this time because I would not be able to give children what I want." (R1: 101).

Similarly, Derek replied to the direct question about planning children:

"Sure, but I do not want to start a family, if I do not have security, that family will be secured, and that the child will be secured" (R14: 133).

My reflection on partnership and family breakdown

Partnership breakdown was described in many interviews. Very high share of the respondents divorced/separated, or they had divorced/separated parents. The financial and personal situation often gets much worse when the partnerships depart (Vendelin, Bruno, Helen, Lucy, Melinda). For example, this means a very bad economic situation for lone mothers (see also economic consequences). Notably, very difficult was the situation of Lucy who stayed after

divorce with two relatively small children. In case of separation, one of the partners often loses housing (Bruno, Helen, Melinda). Melinda described a typical such situation:

"The flat where we lived belonged to my former husband. He automatically asked for it. We had to leave that flat, he moved in and we ended up on the street." (R30: 15)

There were several cases when both parents (fathers, in one case only mother) abandoned their children (They were gone, they were no longer interested in the children; they did not pay and obscured paying alimony for the children) and they ended in the care of the other partner or in the children's home (see below). We have noticed some cases (Magda, Melinda) when grandmothers cared for their grandchildren (being a foster caretaker for her grandchildren) because mothers did not want to care for the child. Moreover, Simon has grown up with a grandmother due to problems with his stepfather.

Influence of economic and family situation on children

The children were essential in the life of many respondents (especially when they were young, and the children were still at home). Children were one of the central values in decision making. Financial aspect of upbringing was mainly relevant for households whose members were living on social assistance benefits but not only for them. Household income was very limited in some cases because social benefits were not enough for the family (Magda, Bruno, Vendelín). Various saving strategies were used (Roman, John). Especially expenditures on children were demanding (Roman, Vendelín, Violet).

"It is a little money for so many people. The children need something costing money in school all the time, they need money for clothes, for food. You have to buy things all the time. It is not that you buy it, and it lasts for a longer time." (R5: 145)

Some of the parents (Vendelín, Eugenie, Sabina, Melinda, Violet, Sophie) mentioned that children are a priority in the expenditures. They do not want them to suffer due to the bad financial situation of the family.

"First of all, you care about the needs of your child – to have all that he needs according to his age, to go to the cinema at school, to the theatre, etc. and you do not have time for yourself." (R25: 141)

"I think that children did not suffer, to have a lack of something. I have always tried them not to feel extremely. Not to have everything but not to be the target of mockery in the school due not to having brand things." (R24: 59)

Respondents said that the economic situation provided an important limit in their ability to buy things for the children and this was recognized as an important consequence of unemployment or insecure position (Magda, Helen, Bruno, Herbert, Violet). There were also special necessary expenditures (such as medicines, fees for hobby groups, mobile phones) for the children that were very stressful for the parents (Bruno, Violet). Especially parents of

severely ill or handicapped children (Bruno, Simon) are in a very difficult position. Children may have problems with the 'saving attitudes' of their parents. Helen explained:

"...I am trying to be rather down considering expenses and my son disapproves...he tells me that I should find work...he is not able to understand that I am unemployed and that I have little money...that we are alone, we have debt, an ill dog...he would like to have fancy clothes, cell phone for 10 000 CZK [she refused to buy it] ...he really fights with this....He understood the value of things, he said: 'I do not want it', and I regretted him...he is not able to understand it at the moment because he has friends, whose parents are entrepreneurs, living in super villas and we have ruined all house. I told him: 'It is your turn now'." (R23: 59)

Magda described how her children were temporarily placed into institutional care because the family became homeless. The placement was on the initiative of Magda and it was realised with the help of a concrete NGO. After some time when the situation stabilised, Magda took the children back to her care. Similarly, Bruno lost housing, he had to place the children into institutional care, and he took them back later. It is important to distinguish cases when the parent did not want their children (Otto, Magda as children) and cases when the parent lost their children due to immediate financial or housing crisis, but they were able to take them back latter (Magda, Bruno).

Mothers sometimes wanted to live with their children in a separate household (aside from their relatives) to have a better influence on their children's upbringing, reduce the influence of others and have more control on the household (Sophie, Karin). Karin said that the greatest impact of her situation was on her son. She said:

"I think that the greatest impact was education or upbringing for my son because he could not raise in a calm environment. He could not have quiet and wellbeing, it is apparent from upbringing. It is different when you live alone, and you can spend more effort on the child than when you live with twenty other people in the flat and you do not have time for anything, and you do not know what to do first. When you are alone, you solve your own problems. When you live with twenty people, you solve their problems even when you do not want to do it because you live there and listen to it." (R2: 94)

Betty spoke about missing childhood of her son due to working long shifts. She said:

"Even if it were possible to think something out, the children are hit by this. I see it with my first son. There were moments when he started to talk and I did not even know when it started. Or I came and said: 'Oh, my god, you have grown up'. Because I was not there." (R22: 152)

Low self-esteem, feelings of shame, inferiority, and embarrassment

In this section, we open three related topics: self-esteem, psychical consequences of insecure position, and relations with other people. Inferior feelings or even psychical problems are often mentioned as a consequence of unemployment of insecurity (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Walter 2006, Engbersen et al. 2006, Hora 2008a, Hora 2008b, Hora and Žižlavský 2009, Trilfajová et al. 2015). People, for example, say that they feel hopeless or useless (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b). Feelings of stigmatization are rather rare due to the understanding and supportive stance of the neighbourhood, but they can be strongly connected to the claiming of social benefits, especially social assistance (Hora 2008b). Clasen, Gould, and Vincent (1998) have found that sometimes relations with unknown or less known people and officials are the ones most difficult to handle. We are thus interested in noting situations causing such feelings.

My reflection on the feelings of people

Some people have unpleasant feelings due to the mere fact that they must attend Employment office. Tony and Alice said they were really embarrassed to have to register at the Employment office. Tony also said that he would not go there again. Lucy commented in a similar meaning:

"When I was at Employment office, I was ashamed. It was unpleasant for me to go there among these people. And always when I looked around, and I saw that, and I told myself: 'My god, do I belong among this bunch of people?' However, it always kicked me on that I must find work that I will not be there." (R29: 43).

Clara, Sabina, Ben, Vanda, and Helen reflected that they felt less worthy and looked for guilt in themselves (not being able to find work, being stupid, not being able to do anything, being useful for nothing, being nothing and worthless). This is as Vanda reflected about self-accusation for the negative situation. This low personal value was for Ben connected with his low ability to live a normal life like going into the pub (without money). Some respondents also argued that finding work worked in the opposite direction (Magda). They were proud of their achievements and glad to have social contacts.

Sadness, unpleasant feelings, and connected psychical problems

Unemployment and insecurity may cause discouragement, stress, low mental and physical health, depression and anxiety, substance abuse, headaches and sleep problems and suicide attempts (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Sverke et al. 2002, Kieselbach 2003, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010, Trilfajová et al. 2015, Tryfona et al. 2018). Several factors contribute to psychical distress. These are often in the form of psychical costs of tackling a concrete situation. They include: a) economic situation including financial problems, responsibility for other household members, negative feelings due to dependence on the partner and negative feelings due to debts, b) negative feeling due to job search process, c) low possibility to realize themselves, d) interaction with institutions of the welfare state and e) loneliness and boredom (Hora 2008b). On the other side, finding work had a positive impact on the feelings of

previously unemployed (Hora 2008b). Still, some people do not have such feelings, they are satisfied with unemployment, or they rationalize about it (Hora 2008b)³⁶.

Unemployed people perceive unemployment insurance and social assistance very differently (Hora 2008b). Claiming social benefits relates to administrative barriers and a feeling of stigma, which for some people leads to avoidance of social assistance at any cost (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b). People who live on social assistance try to avoid as much as possible any activities which may lead to their identification as social assistance claimants (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b).

My reflection on psychical consequences

Respondents described unpleasant feelings, dejection, distress, sadness (unhappiness), depression, and other psychical consequences. Most respondents talked about themselves, but some (Vanda) mentioned also psychical consequences for their family members. First, the situation of insecurity is stressful for some young people (see the story of Betty). She reflected:

„Everyday stress, bad visions about the future. Every day feeling, I am not going to manage it. That I do not manage it...I shouted to my son. I was all the time dissatisfied, unhappy, faint, and uneasy; everything was against me and nothing was going for better. In addition, I saw no way out. I could think about it all the night for several months, but I did not know how to change it.“ (R22: 230)

Ben and Ken were distressed every time they lost work. Some respondents mentioned being unhappy and seeing no solution (Magda). The aspects that were detrimental for people's feelings included an unknown future, not having work, money, and housing (Betty, Magda, Helen, Bruno, Ben, Vanda, Ellyn). For Helen, the unknown future ('where will I go, what I am going to do') and irregularity of income was particularly stressful (see also Herbert, Ben, Ellyn, and others). Often respondents had also feelings of despair and discouragement from repeated refusals by employers (Karin, Ken, Magda, Bruno, Quido, Melinda, Herbert) or negative psychical consequences of the behaviour of employers during the job (Betty). Stress was caused by insecurity or detrimental position.

“You are used to having some money and have a stable healthy wage and you know you have wage next month and you do not have to care. However, when they release you from work, you say to yourself ‘What will I do?’ This is your first idea. This is the moment when you feel the worst.” (R4: 402)

To give another example, the most difficult situation for Bruno was when he was promised job on the phone, but it was not realised. Magda connected this to the feeling of being helpless without money and to specific situations of rejection and being given no chance (including feeling humiliated and having to beg for work). This was similarly described by other

³⁶ Hora (2008b) has found several reactions: good withstandng of unemployment, anger, rationality and realism, and powerlessness and hopelessness.

respondents (e.g., Melinda, Lucy). Herbert reflected on similar feelings in the following statement:

"That is catastrophe. Every day you have to go somewhere to pray for work. I had to pray for it. Moreover, they tell you: 'no, no, no'. Alternatively: 'call later'. It is all going in circles. I wanted to slash my wrists. I had this up to now. I had such depressions that I could not find anything, that they tell me 'no' all the time...It is a waste to talk about it, I would cry." (R31: 181).

Similarly, Ellyn said:

"Because it is insecure. You go to an occasional job and the next 14 days you have nothing, because there are no workplaces. I think it did not add much good to my psychics." (R20: 173)

Some respondents (e. g., Karin, Vanda, Helen, Lucy) mentioned explicitly that feelings about unemployment are not only about money but also about the fact they liked their work, it gave them a sense in life and the need to be in collective (to belong somewhere). For some people (like John, Fred, and Roman), bad feelings relate to the lost organisation of the day, staying home, and having nothing sensible to do.

"I am sitting home, I feel like a parasite sitting home, sometimes I enjoy it...but on the other side...I say to myself I am completely useless...it gets on my nerves...walking from nothing to nothing...thinking about it...I am entering a phase when I need people, to communicate...it is such a stereotype, I do not have money, I cannot even go to town shopping..." (R23: 178)

Some respondents mentioned deeper psychical consequences (Vanda, Magda, Bruno, Melinda, Eugenie, Herbert). Bruno said that he had to undertake treatment due to his psychical problems. Eugenie collapsed and ended up in psychiatric care. Vanda described how in her case the depression was somatised to have psychosomatic consequences.

"I had migraine and headaches all the time. It was leaving its health consequences, even when I did not notice it, to the level when it had to go out and it was going out like that that my head was in pain all the time. And I was tired and exhausted from nothing." (R21: 73).

Magda has also related psychical and psychical conditions:

"For ten years my body was telling me. It is genetic, or it is from my psychical condition. I have a few magnesium in my blood and so I am more exhausted and when I am the more exhausted, more tired I just collapse." (R7: 253)

Some respondents also mentioned that they did not want to live or that they thought about a suicide.

My reflection on the stigmatisation of being unemployed / claiming social assistance

Another aspect that contributed to negative psychical feelings was the attendance of Employment office and social assistance offices (Peter, Eugenie, Violet, Lucy). Peter commented that he was influenced by the negative stance of street level workers. Violet said that it was unpleasant to attend Employment office because the waiting corridor was always overcrowded. Alice and Vanda connected negative feelings to the fact of 'being registered' and/or 'being unemployed'. Eugenie mentioned that this gets her down and that she does not like going there. Lucy tried to avoid Employment office. She felt depressed:

"That was really depressing. That is the feeling that you do not belong anywhere, only to Employment office. I had a feeling all the time that someone is controlling me if I go to look for work or not. That it [the situation] is not upon to you, but you have to be responsible to someone: why you do not have work, why you were not accepted in a concrete workplace, why did you not try that retraining course and try this one. It was in the form that you went crazy from it. I told to myself: 'My god, that is not possible, I am not going to find a normal work'." (R29: 45).

Some respondents felt that asking for social assistance was humiliating (Melinda). John commented about the possibility to claim social assistance:

"No, no, no. I would never allow myself [to claim]....I never was a sponger to take from others. I live with what remained to me from the past...from my saves...to claim social benefits would be a shame for me...There are other people who are more in need." (R16: 89).

Some of the unemployed looked at unemployment with a pragmatic/unruffled stance, trying to be resilient to such feelings (Vendelín, Otto, Roman, Quido, Jake, John, Janine, Vanda, Tony, Violet). Some of them referred that they do not feel so bad ('it was bad but OK') or that they do not feel any hard psychical consequences. They accepted their situation as reality. Very interesting example is Jake who spoke about himself as about 'phlegmatic who does not care much'. Jake commented on the consequences of his insecure situation:

"I would say that every work gave me something, I learned something there, I found something, I realized how things are functioning, that sometimes what is said is not true, everyone sees it his own way. Otherwise, I think that it did not influence me...I still believe, and I must trust to myself. If I thought that it did not have a point to do something, it ends up that it will not have a point to do it...I am phlegmatic, I do not care.... I am not stressed, I do not like to be sitting at home, doing nothing."

"I do not feel any negative consequences. I do not care. I am not much attached to this. I have work or I do not have work. When thinking about it, it upsets me a bit, but I am able to accept it for some time until I find another work. However, I cannot say to have stress or other problems. No, I am not so concerned." (R11: 221)

Later in the interview, Jake also explained that his self-esteem was not hit by his situation. On the other hand, he said that he was just surviving, and he was not enjoying his life much. I conclude that for Jake, not having serious psychical consequences is still far away from being satisfied.

In some rather rare cases, respondents had no economic problems, they were able to find something to do, and were in some periods somehow not much concerned nor dissatisfied with unemployment (Quido, Janine, Fred). Janine was for a long time satisfied doing occasional jobs and having occasional income. Only later in another stage of her life she realised that it was not satisfying.

"Before, when I was without work, I was telling myself how I would live for so many years and how horrible it were going to be, and it was disturbing me. And then I changed it. I told to myself that I cannot think like that, that I will improve it, I planned it and I dreamed about a better future. I am happier now that I fulfil my plan." (R19: 200).

Very similar story was told by Fred.

"I subjectively perceive it that I was satisfied, I was not [word missing]..it was because I did not have any existential problems which is given by my family background that even If I were not working for the whole of my life, I would not be going to be homeless, I would not die. My parents are very nice people who sustained me...there was no Damocles sword above my head...and maybe it is why I was approaching it like that. From my point of view, even when I was unemployed...it is true that I did not travel around the world but on the other side I was living happily in that period." (R26: 81)

On the other hand, in other parts of the interview, Fred spoke about ritualistic behaviour and about being desperate during some phases of the job search.

My reflection on psychical feelings of the unemployed

We have seen that young people spoke about various contexts in which they felt negative consequences. They also differed in their perception of the situation and in their ability to bear a negative event without severe psychical consequences. Still, we understand that most of above-mentioned situations can easily bring severe disdain. We also noted that psychical consequences were mitigated by the help and psychical support of others, notably friends and family as it described in previous chapters of this book.

Influence on relationships and reduction of social contacts

In this chapter we reflect how relations with former colleagues, schoolmates, or friends may be influenced by an insecure position (see Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Hora 2008b, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). This influence may emerge due to the reduction of common time, due to distance or due to limited financial resources (Hora 2008b). Reaction to this situation is differentiated. While some people are bored and depressed, others just do not care (see Hora 2008b).

My reflection of social relations

Generally, many respondents explicitly refused the negative influence of their situation on relations with others (e.g. Ben, Ken, Qido, Vanda, Ron, Sophie, Jake, Clara, Fred, Herbert). Young people mentioned the following reference groups: family, friends, former colleagues, neighbours, and other people.

Respondents mostly reflected that their situation did not have a negative influence on their family relations (Vendelín, Sophie). Family relations are typically more influenced by other factors. Sophie said that having a child changed relationships. Bonny explained that he was grateful to his parents and their relations even became stronger. On some occasions, it led to a change in the roles. This is connected also to maturing and the situation when parents became old.

Some of the respondents (Roman, Jake, Ellyn, Sabina, Alice, Violet, Ben) reflected some specific social consequences of unemployment in family. There were some specific situations when there was a conflict through a specific aspect. Usually, parents and grandparents were not able to understand the situation of their children and they pressured for finding work (Ben, Betty, Violet, Derek). Parents also lied to others to hide that their children are without work for a longer time (Ellyn). Betty commented:

"For my parents it was absolutely not normal that I do not have an employment contract. They were [?] due to it, it was a real shame. It was not acceptable to work somewhere and not have an employment contract. Thus, I listened to this from the beginning. Therefore, it was contempt from them that I work in the field, where this is normal." (R22: 196)

Violet told a similar tale:

"My grandmother, she was very unhappy because she was working in one firm for 40 years. When she found that I worked in two firms within one year [she told me] that I should go to a psychiatrist, that I am not normal. That mistake is within me. And it is hard to bring new information to the old person, who do not understand." (R32: 83)

Similarly, other respondents reflected that relatives were dissatisfied with their situation, but it was mostly not crucial. What we can see is a linked pressure from parents to look for work and this was a source of inherent conflict (Roman).

"Yes, it had an influence [on relations] because when I was a year without work, my parents [repeated] all the time: 'Why do you not find work, why is it not possible, why are you not going around' and similar things." (R9: 186)

Betty mentioned that it was not pleasant to be fully financially dependent on the partner.

"I am starting to feel that I was used to having my money and suddenly I do not have them. It is a horrible feeling that I am dependent on someone. It is nice that I do not have to work but it is not much entertaining. And I have to submit to my partner.

Considering money, I cannot say that I will buy this, and I will buy that. Because I did not earn that money." (R22: 272).

Negative consequences on the relationship with friends were almost not mentioned. Some young people like Ron even noted that they had more time for friends when they were unemployed. Ron mentioned that his relations with friends improved because he met them more often. Violet argued that most of her acquaintances were also at least once unemployed and that it was so common that it could not lead to negative attitudes or behaviour. Herbert and Violet said that unemployment is so common in their social networks that it does not bear any negative stigma. Clara argued that her relationships with friends did not change because they know her well and they know her true traits. Friends often supported young people, but it was a bit different type of support than family support (spending time together, buying a drink, psychical support). Magda and Ellyn spoke about their friends very highly, but Bonny mentioned that he was displeased when he found that his friends were not really interested in his problems. For Ellyn, it was about finding the right friends because a lot of people around her perceived her negatively. However, she found true friends who, e.g., lent her money and did not want them back, who paid a drink for her, spoke with her even when she was out of money and intentionally looked for doing (together) financially inexpensive activities.

Some of the respondents reflected how lack of money acted as a barrier for having friendship relations due to reduced social life (Sabina, Jake, Ben, Ellyn). For Sabina, the financial situation worked as a barrier for maintaining friendship relations.

"When you lose work, you are without money, without means, have nothing, you cannot go anywhere, even for a glass of wine with girlfriends or for a cup of coffee or to the disco...I have no friends...because we did not go out. We did not have means to go anywhere. Thus, maybe it is the result of this all." (R25: 143)

Ben commented:

"I feel less worthy. I do not go out much. Why should I go out when I have no money? Go for a walk? When I do not have money for sitting somewhere. When you work, you can spend some money. I feel worthless, that it is." (R3: 414)

Furthermore, Ellyn spoke about dilemmas connected with the financial dimension of social contacts. She knew that going to the pub with her friends may mean to be without food for two days.

Another situation mentioned sometimes was when respondents reflected on the more general stance of people who were not friends or close relatives. Roman thought that social relations generally worsened. Vendelín mentioned that his neighbours are jealous because they are a big family, and they buy a lot of food. Some people had bad experience with the reactions of other people related to personally being unemployed, attending Employment office or claiming social benefits (John, Helen, Alice, Violet). John, for example, stated:

"I tell you that people sneer at you a lot. It is not that you are excluded, but they look at you awkwardly because they think that you live on social benefits. It is not worth to

explain it to them. They think that everyone who is registered at Employment office claims benefits to the end of his life.” (R16: 121)

Helen said:

“The longer you are at Employment office, people look at you that you are feckless, that you are problematic, that you are this and that, and they are cautious when dealing with you.” (R23: 164)

Vanda mentioned that she was not telling people whom she did not trust to be understanding about her unemployment. Alice also mentioned that being registered at Employment office creates some stigma for people in the eyes of the employers ('they act on you as an outsider'). This is situational (different experiences and situations) and it is based also on self-perception. Many respondents also said that it does not matter.

Another interesting aspect noticed by some respondents is that some people think that you should not have money or property when you are unemployed. Peter reflected on his visits to Employment office.

“When you go to the Employment office and you have a great cell phone, nice watch, skirt and beauty jeans and you see a lot of other people there who probably cannot buy this, it looks silly you know. However, I am proud of me, because I have earned for all of this myself and I never asked social assistance nor Employment office for anything, this was for the first time.” (R12: 147)

Moving, going abroad and migration

We may expect moving within the country or abroad because of economic insecurity (Erhenberg 1994 in Gazier 2002, Hussain et al. 2016, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Chrabaścz et al. 2018, Michón 2019).

Concerning moving within the country, it was mentioned by respondents, but it was not moving due to looking for a better job (exceptions were Lucy, Bob). Respondents mentioned three dimensions of moving with corresponding reasons to move: locality and out of locality, bigger cities and smaller towns or villages, and the central or peripheral character of the settlement. Some CITISPYCE respondents wanted to escape the locality (e.g., Bob, Lisa). Bob explained his intention to move:

“...I want to move out of there for sure. There is no future there, no. The wages there are very low, due to the financial crisis. I know that it is everywhere, but nowhere it is as bad as here....they pay less and less money...40 CZK per hour, that is silly is not it? They do not appreciate that you do craft.” (R46: 19)

Later in the interview, Bob also mentioned that the locality is not a good place to raise children.

Other respondents rejected moving due to target place reputation and financial reasons (Herbert, Bruno). Bruno argued that in the places where he could move situation is the same or even worse. Herbert explained his reluctance to move:

"You listen that it is also bad there. 'There is nothing, do not go there'. You listen to such talks all the time. Where you want to go when you are without money? You must have something to go somewhere. If we packed and went to a different town, you have nothing. Where would we go to sleep? What I would give them?" (R31: 111)

Next, we reflect on moving abroad. It is hard to distinguish between migration and working abroad only for some time, but most people wanted to work abroad and return. Emigration was almost not existing phenomenon in the interviews. It is logical because we only could speak with people who never left or who later returned to the Czech Republic. Some respondents were working abroad when they were young. They perceived working abroad as a great opportunity to see the world, to get work, and to make money (Simon, Ellyn, Alice). Alice e.g. argued:

"I had a vision of money and work. I could not study, and I wanted to work. And I could not work here [in the Czech Republic], it was not possible [to achieve] any change and so I went to Italy." (R28: 71)

Alice described that it was a completely different world and she had to learn language on the job. Alice and Simon said that they earned unbelievable money compared to their options in the Czech Republic. Alice even regretted returning home to the Czech Republic. Respondents returned home for family reasons (Simon) or because their perceived it better for raising children (Alice).

Some respondents from the youngest cohorts mentioned considering the possibility to work abroad for some time (often not permanently). Respondents believed that it would be better than to work and live in the Czech Republic. Leila would like to go abroad but she is not preparing herself yet:

"I would like to finish school and after I am eighteen, I would like to go out of this town. I would like to go to Germany. I would like to find work and start my life there... But I am not in a hurry, everything has its time...I always wanted to live in USA, but a friend of mine lured me to think about Germany. Teachers said that there [in Germany?] are more money than here, you can earn a lot there. It was very interesting for me. I would like to go to one of these countries, go out of there." (R47: 135)

However, often there were some constraints or fear of going abroad or fear of unknown, etc. (Ben, Ken, Ellyn, Quido, Ron, Lisa, Jake, Janine, Clara). These constraints most often included lack of money (you have to save first), low knowledge of languages, missing a driving licence, restriction of entry to other countries, and being afraid to live in an unknown and 'strange' environment. For Ben, the decision of going abroad was dependent on his current situation (when he found work, he stopped to consider it). Specific case is Sophia who wanted to go abroad but she had to abandon her plans due to pregnancy and lone motherhood.

The reasons why most respondents did not want to go abroad included refusal to separate from the family and friends, preferring living in the home country environment, perceived low ability to own adaptation, low knowledge of a foreign language and low preference of speaking a foreign language.

Learning and getting experience

There was also a rather widely shared and interesting opinion that the experience of unemployment and difficult situations on the labour market helped young people with life orientation and somehow strengthened the respondents (Karin, Derek, Peter, Magda, Jake, Sophie, Janine, Ellyn, Vanda, Lucy, Violet). People reflected that they have got a lot of experience in hard times (Bonny, Ellyn, Derek, Magda). They learned what they want from life, learned new skills, how to be self-sufficient (care for himself/herself), rely on their skills, they learned about laws, and how the system is working (their rights and duties within the system), they learned the value of money, how to live on low income and save money, to be able to set priorities and to adapt to changing conditions. This can be linked to the ability of the respondent to be resilient in the future/to be ready to better tackle future problems (Derek). Ellyn said:

"Short-term consequence was that I learn how to manage money. When I have little money, I learned to be thrifty. And in the long term I think that I got experience, that I worked in various factories, I had various occasional jobs, about 30 jobs, factories, supermarkets, storages, food shops, restaurants, printing, farm, in such various places. I got a great experience and I met new people." (R20: 213)

"And I think that I am glad for the experience of not having a job for a long time. Or not glad, it could have been better to have a job, but it advanced me in other things. Therefore, I try to perceive it positively. And I think that it helped me to determine what I want, what I would like to." (R20: 221)

Vanda reflected on the consequences of her long-term unemployment.

"It had a great importance for me. I realised various things, which are not self-evident, work, etc. Such things I realised that it could happen in life and it can be demanding. That it is not that you cannot survive it and that it pushes you further. I take it as some further experience. I take it positively and not negatively, that it was awful. It gave me something new, some new view of things." (R21: 133)

Vanda thinks that she has grown up mentally and that she got to know herself better. Bonny used his previous experience within his work in NGO working with children.

"I use experience from these times in my work and I think that the great change for me is in the approach to other people and in the assessment of their problems and when I am considering the problems, I can imagine how it is." (R1: 166)

Derek and Ellyn spoke about this repeatedly as about ‘school of life’. This, together with the widely shared character of this set of ideas, is the reason we interpret this also as the discourse of ‘school of life’.

Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter is mapping short-term and long-term consequences of insecurity. It shows how the insecurity and its consequences are in some cases closely interlinked, how insecurity influences individual and family life, and how it relates to future of the respondents. It was very disturbing to see how difficult the life conditions of some people were. People themselves (e.g., Violet, Herbert, Roman) often note how their live was difficult, how it was hard (I interpret this as ‘discourse of hard work’). Many of the respondents at least at some point of time did not see any opportunities in their lives and any chances for the change for the better – they spoke about ‘vicious circle’ or about missing their chances (Bonny, Karin, Otto, Jake, Simon, John, Betty, Lucy, Melinda, Herbert). They did not see any way to solve this and their low self-esteem may play a role limiting them in trying some things. Young people sometimes noted their low ability to plan their future activities and future lives (Peter). Some of these people were slightly over forty, but they felt ‘finished with their lives’.

Difficult situation was mitigated by several factors. Besides the influence of personality, family and friends played a positive role in the life of the respondents, showing in concrete cases that without such help the life of the respondents would be much more difficult and with harsher consequences. On the opposite, when these factors were not functioning, or young people refused help, it led to the most severe cases of misfortune (Otto, Bonny, Ellyn). Another mechanism we noted was ‘building’, a situation when young people accumulated some capital helping them to improve their situation or they at least were able to better adapt to it.

Third group of intervening mechanisms was related to clashing of personal interests. We saw in many cases that the perception of individual interests by important others were different from the interest of young people and that caused the emergence of key structural barriers for improvement of the situation or for lessening the worst impacts of insecurity. In fact, these may be the key factors both causing insecurity, maintaining it, and contributing to its consequences. These are most visible in interactions at the micro level. For example, refusal of employers or landlords is based not only on the assessment of skills but also on other factors (low trust, low interest, low willing to risk). Others even use the difficult situation of young people to improve their own position, providing inferior housing for high prices, abusing offered work, or not paying for it. The situation of young people may be more difficult also because they are not sufficiently developed, helped, nor protected from the side of public institutions including both state-provided services and public and private sectors of services of public interest. This is the issue that we will among others discuss in the last chapter.

Chapter 6: Institutional determinants of early job insecurity

In the last chapter, we discuss the institutional determinants of early job insecurity. Our explanation of transitions is neo-institutional. Labour market is not fully competitive. There are institutional rules, norms, directives, regulations, and unwritten habits that redefine conditions in the labour market (Brožová 2016). Big firms and trade unions do key decisions according to their own rules – there are not fully market driven, information is limited, and opportunities are unequal. There are also limits for entrance to specific professions (Brožová 2016). Many states changed conditions within their social systems. Working conditions and social protection of various cohorts may differ due to differences in regulation, approach or due to development of the system. The concept of ‘youth labour markets’ refers to the fact that the entrance of the younger generation to the labour market may be regulated in a specific way, e.g. by youth specific wages or labour protection and apprenticeship systems (Walther 2002). Institutional settings and public policies play a prominent role in influencing the transition from school to work (Zimmermann et al. 2013).

Institutions such as the education system, social protection, and active labour market programs shape opportunities for young people. They function as specific conversion factors (Hora et al. 2019a). They may be enhancing and supporting structures, bridges, and mediators as well as barriers, obstacles, and mediocre pathways leading to dead ends. In the NEGOTIATE project, we were interested in answering question: How policies influence young people’s scope for active agency, strategies, capabilities, and resilience as responses to job insecurity (Hvinden et al. 2019a). According to Standing (1999: 184), job security (although often mixed with employment security) “*arises from the existence of institutions, regulations and practices that enable people to obtain and retain a niche and to pursue an occupation or career.*” We understand such institutional determinants as something natural and embedded in the lives of young people, as something that just happens to them (there always is or is not some social policy), as something that is often ‘built in’ rather than ‘bolt on’. However, it does not mean that young people are always interested or engaged in offered activities or that they always obey set rules.

In the first part of this chapter, we discuss the normative discourses aimed at social policy toward labour market integration. Later, we can confront various perspectives confronting the institutional approach to assessment with the knowledge of young people about the most relevant policies. In the last part of the chapter, we reflect on the relationship and interactions of young people with the policies that are offered to them.

Normative underpinnings and discourses of policies towards young people

In this section, we provide a more academic perspective on policies relevant for labour market integration. We reflect that there are several academic/political discourses more or less

attached to the situation of young people. These discourses are sets of ideas, theories, and underpinning ideological assumptions that are shared by some groups of people. To the greater or lesser extent, they can be sources of stances toward the situation of young people or toward the emergence of real policy. We reflect that many theories which are presented in this book often have their own ideological underpinnings (Walther and McNeish 2003) – i.e., they may be used with the aim to present the view of reality as ‘natural and normal’ (see Serrano Pascual 2003). Serrano Pascual (2003: 86) even argued that:

“The construction of social categories, such as that of a person being ‘unemployed’, has a central function not only as an instrument for describing reality, but also for changing and transforming it. The dominant notion of youth unemployment shapes the experience of unemployment, contributing to the way in which the difficulty encountered by young people seeking to enter the labour market comes to be viewed as normal.”

Discourses are seldom presented in a coherent way allowing for ‘copy paste’ approach. Instead, their portraiture in this book are mere reconstructions performed by the author of this book. Among the problems connected with discourse reproduction or analysis is the ability of the author to sufficiently distinguish between ideas about the concept proposed by its proponents and critics and to avoid ‘caricature’ of the concepts.

Presented discourses present various partial theoretical systems of social policy. In the traditional view, social policy may protect individuals from the negative effects of the market, i.e., against labour market risks (Withagen and Rogowski 2002, Boeri, Conde-Ruiz, and Galasso 2003). This protection links to various types of insecurity as they were defined in the first chapter: a) job insecurity, b) employment insecurity, c) income insecurity, and d) combination security. It may also aim to find an appropriate balance among various vested interests. Some ideological schools aim for less support and less protection, preferring other goals, instead protecting young people against the perils of the market.

The role of the discourses in our analysis is threefold. First, we believe that discourses can have a real influence on the goals and realization of social policy. Second, we want to understand the contents of the discourses to see how they are motivated and what main ideas they propose. Third, we would like to see how these discourses are reflected in the stories and arguments of young people scattered through this book.

In the next section, we will discuss the contents of some of the most prominent discourses.

Transitional labour market approach

Transitional labour markets are linked to critical points of the life cycle where transitions can lead to labour market inclusion or exclusion (Kruppe 2002). Social integration means participating in various productive social networks related not only to paid work but also to family work, cultural activities, and voluntary work (Gazier and Schmid 2002). Youth transitions are interlinked, and transition policies should be also interlinked (Du Bois-Reymond et al. 2002). The system should be based on negotiations and bargaining among stakeholders,

especially at the local level (Gazier 2002). It should be realized in a way, which does not support the creation of various pathways with sharply different outcomes for various segments of young people (see Gazier 2002). The better the transitional system is, the less people end up in a clearly marginalized position. The evaluation of transitional labour market policies needs to consider their impact on lifetime trajectories and not simply the impact on current employment level (Detzen and Rubery 2002). Some of the more concrete arguments of the discourse were formulated as follows:

- There should be appropriate training and career guidance (Gazier 2002). Training should be a real and supported option for unemployed people and other people in need (Schmid 2002c).
- Policies should be formulated in a way that allows for taking risk and flexibility (Schmid 2002c).
- Policies should be formulated to allow for freedom of choice including, e.g. part-time work and self-employment (Schmid 2002c). This may be enhanced by individualization of entitlements for all people in the relevant situation, including both men and women (Schmid 2002c).
- Policies should offer a wider range of ‘real opportunities’ for all categories of workers and even for workers facing critical events in their lives (Gazier 2002, Schmid 2002c).
- Active labour market policies should allow for the combining of work and other productive activities, allow for the combination of various income sources, provide legally enforceable entitlements, and fiscally support employment rather than unemployment (Schmid 1998 quoted in Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003, Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003).
- Policies should be formulated differently to solve different problems (Schmid 2002c).
- Barriers for labour market integration should be lowered (Gazier 2002)
- Wanted types of transitions should be enhanced.
- Precarious employment should be avoided.

Integrated transition policies approach

This set of recommendations for policies for young people was formulated in the work of Du Bois-Reymond et al. (2002) and Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco (2003). Van Lieshout and Wilthagen (2003) argue that the specific distinction between integrated transition policies and Transitional Labour Market is that the former is aimed only to the transition of young people while the latter seeks for a universal approach. There are two main objectives of ITPA: preventing transition risks from becoming risks of social exclusion and assisting individuals in coping with transition risks. Transitions are interlinked and require interlinked transition policies with joined-up or cooperative approach. Attention has to be drawn not only to labour market needs but also to the individual motivations and experiences of the young people concerned. Policies have to be realized in an appropriate context. Institutions should develop reflexivity about the implications and consequences of the instruments they apply. There are the following principles proposed:

- The biographic perspective reflecting the needs of young people should be incorporated, allowing also for gender and cultural diversity.
- Young people should be supported in activities that allow fulfilment of their subjective live plans.
- Balancing flexibility and security (defined from young people's biographic perspective)
- Active participation allowing young people to make autonomous decisions about their transition pathways, including the change of the route. The system should help young people to manage their trajectories, to be negotiators of their own affairs and prevent decisions under pressure.
- Communication structures should be open and balanced.
- Education: Education system should be open to all, support intrinsically motivated learning, broaden contextual competences, allow for sensible life-long learning and a lesser divide between general and vocational education, and lower barriers between formal and informal learning, directing to informal learning.
- Labour market: respect to youth policies of informal development, transforming informal activities to paid activities, sustainability of jobs, using of part-time arrangements, wage subsidies for worthy and real jobs, appraisal of family work and support of parents, and support of self-employment.
- Security: providing individual welfare rights, linked to other activities, balancing rights and responsibilities, securing basic income and housing policies.

Flexicurity approach

Traditionally, there have been on one side advocates of flexible labour markets (flexible work organisation, strong adaptability to change, work intensification, minimum employment protection, minimum social benefits, strong activation, and workfare). Advocates of flexibility recognise the main benefits of the flexibility approach in easier adjustments to external shocks and internal needs of firms and in improving economic performance, competitiveness, and job growth. Employers achieve numerical flexibility by placing an increasing proportion of employees on nonstandard contracts (Gallie 2007b). On the other side, there have been defenders of the social dimension of work, who try to protect workers from the arbitrariness of the market (need for social security) and who believe that security is the cornerstone of necessary social cohesion. According to both these groups, there is a potential inevitable trade-off between flexibility and security. Growth of flexibility (embedded in the form of nonstandard and less protected employment) leads to the growth of insecurity (both structural and connected with the economic cycle)³⁷.

³⁷ We reflect that the dilemma between flexibility and security is not discussed only at the labour market, but also within the education system and at the individual level (see Stauber, Kovacheva, and van Lieshout 2003) and in the training system (Walther 2006).

The third group consists of people who believe that the positive aspects of both previous approaches can be somehow combined to a new model with strong positive aspects maintained and their weaknesses restricted to key actors on the labour market – ‘win-win solution, positive sum gain’ (see Wilthagen and Tros 2004, Viebrock and Clasen 2009, Muffels, Crouch, and Wilthagen 2014). Flexicurity is about combining flexibility of the labour market and organisation of work, conformity to the market (preferred by employers) and employment and social security aspects of the labour force situation (Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002, Muffels, Crouch, and Wilthagen 2014). Van Lieshout and Wilthagen (2003) argued that the flexicurity concept is aimed at providing both workers and employers the basic security they need.

One crucial aspect of flexicurity lies in the distinction between job security and employment security (Muffels, Crouch, and Wilthagen 2014). Life-time employment is replaced by the ability to stay in secure employment for one’s entire career (Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002, Muffels, Crouch, and Wilthagen 2014). This may be achieved through education and training that are themselves the best security and contribute to workers’ flexibility (Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003).

Some confusion may root in the fact that different authors used the word flexicurity for both ‘type of public policy’ and ‘condition of labour market’ (Viebrock and Clasen 2009). Viebrock and Clasen (2009) argue that there is not one universal approach to flexicurity. Instead, various mixes of policies may highlight different flexicurity aspects – these include, e.g., Danish and Dutch models of flexicurity³⁸. The role of social partners is crucial in most flexicurity systems (Viebrock and Clasen 2009). Wilthagen and Tros (2004) highlighted that not any combination of flexible and security policies is a flexicurity strategy. There may be a high difference between policy proposals, rules, and laws and the reality of their real outcomes. We expect that the situation has to be analysed in detail and specific context in concrete countries to assess whether flexicurity is or should be a viable political strategy.

Critical normative assumptions of the flexibility approach may include (Viebrock and Clasen 2009):

- Flexible and reliable contracts: Employment protection is reduced to a level that is not a barrier for enhancement of employment. It is realised in a way that is transparent and predictable.
- Offering transition security: The lack of employment protection is balanced by the protection of income security during periods without employment provided by reliable social protection systems. Negative effects of social security on job search are counterbalanced by activation strategies including increased enforcement, control, dependability on activity, and use of active labour market policies (see Viebrock and Clasen 2009).

³⁸ The *Flexicurity regime typology* (Muffels, Crouch, and Wilthagen 2014) distinguished the uncoordinated liberal model, from the traditional security model (advantageous mainly for insiders).

- Tackling skills and opportunity gaps: This includes increasing employability with reasonable education, training, and active labour market policy. Some countries use also ‘educational leaves’ to provide an opportunity for life-long learning. There should be appropriate targeting to ensure that the policies are not creaming towards more prosperous people.
- Tackling contractual segmentation: Policies must guarantee an acceptable level of economic and social security to all, including those who enter the deregulated labour market (Viebrock and Clasen 2009). This may also enhance the use of opportunities in the formal instead of informal labour market.
- Trust among partners and dialogue: When trust is low, flexicurity strategies can be expected to meet with opposition and mistrust (Wilthagen and Tros 2004). This remark may be relevant for both individual strategies and stances of social partners such as employers’ organisations and trade unions.
- Universal of anticyclical character of the system: Wilthagen and Tros (2004) argue that the need of stakeholders for flexicurity policy, as well as their bargaining position, willingness to change, and potential policy outcomes may be different in recessions and booming economies. This is clearly a relevant remark for the Czech Republic when comparing the completely different situation in 2009-2013 and 2014-2019.

Critics of flexicurity often argue that the implementation of flexicurity is patchy, the promotion of flexibility (deregulation) is much higher than the promotion of security and the social rights may be reduced (Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002, Viebrock and Clasen 2009). To be more concrete, e.g. a) the position of insiders is worsened to a greater extent than the position of outsiders is improved or b) the security of workers is enhanced only in the aspects where it is also potentially (more) beneficial for employers. Another important question is whether and to what extend is a successful implementation of flexicurity dependent on compatibility with concrete cultural and other specific conditions in a given country – it must be context specific (see Viebrock and Clasen 2009). This argument is highly relevant in central and eastern European countries including the Czech Republic.

Activation approach

Serrano Pascual (2003) argued that the activation approach shifted the attention of public policies from Keynesian political perspective to focusing interventions more strongly on the factors of labour (motivation, employability, and adaptability). De Koning and Mosley (2002) and Sirovátková and Spies (2018) define activation as giving priority to reintegration of the unemployed and ending passive income maintenance benefits (interpreted as dependency). For some, activation is considered a policy reaction born as a consequence of policy in previous periods when some categories of unemployed and inactive people were completely neglected except for provision of benefits (see Serrano Pascual 2003). Activation is realized at three levels (dimensions). At the individual level, it relates to balancing individual rights and duties. At the second level, it relates to harmonizing benefits, wages, and taxation. Third, this requires the connecting of three previously sometimes separated activities: job placement

(matching), benefit provision (especially social assistance), and active labour market programs (Koning and Mosley 2002, Sirovátka and Spies 2018). According to the above quoted authors, the following principles are proposed in the activation approach:

- Aspiration to autonomy, self-sufficiency, and agency of (pro)active actors (positive view of activation) – see Serrano Pascual (2003)
- self-responsibility for individuals in attaining success or failure (quoted in Walther 2006)
- The intervention should be provided early in the unemployment spell.
- There are conditionality requirements related to various decisions (restricting choice) or activity (enforcement, external motivation).
- Social protection is conditional on the ability and willingness of an individual to display ‘positive attitudes and behaviour’.
- People must work in return for social assistance benefits (workfare).
- Accepting any job or programme as soon as possible, partially irrespective of its quality and sustainability and potential to improve people’s situation.
- Centrality of job obligation irrespective of other possible options (education, training, care).
- Needs, capabilities, and aspirations of young people are only marginally considered.
- Threat and screening measures (and effects) are a legitimate part of activation. Young people have to prove their job seeking activities.
- Sanctions, expulsion, or neglect of those who are not compliant with requirements.

Critics of the activation approach point out that these measures are not effective in the long run (people return to the employment register or leave the labour market) or that the outcomes of such policies are suboptimal (people work in low quality, dead-end jobs or they work illegally). Participation in low quality jobs or measures may further diminish future work chances of young people due to stigmatization and negative signalling effects (see Sirovátka and Spies 2018). Activation usually neglects participation approaches within realised measures (Davelaar and Spies 2018). There may be also individual consequences for participants including, e.g., low income, demotivation, negative self-image, and mistrust (Sirovátka and Spies 2018).

The literature usually distinguishes between two basic styles of activation policy (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a, Dingeldey et al. 2019). First model is defined as ‘workfare approach’, ‘work-first approach’ or ‘demanding approach’. It is aimed at quick acceptance of the job, it requires young people to accept any job or program, irrespective of its quality and sustainability. It uses mainly incentive reinforcement and employment assistance. The second is called ‘enabling approach’ or ‘insertion approach’. It is aimed to support young people in finding and keeping a sustainable, meaningful job that allows for human capital development. It uses mainly upskilling and individual counselling (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka, 2019a). We reflect that certain aspects of the enabling approach are present in Youth Guarantee (YG) strategy. The goal of YG was to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 would receive

a high-quality, concrete offer of employment or training within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed (Dingeldey et al. 2019).

Relevance of above-mentioned discourses

We noted that there are differences in above-mentioned discourses because they are aimed at various aspects and levels of the policy. In addition, we noted some basic normative principles that may be interesting in an attempt to assess the functioning of policies. These normative criteria as implicitly defined by Detzen and Rubery (2002), Schmid (2006), Walther (2006) include:

- The extent to which the system can offer some possibilities to every young person in need,
- The extent to which measures respect their individualities and subjectivities, and provide ‘human approach’,
- The extent to which the system is negotiated in broad consensus and accepted by the stakeholders,
- The extent to which the measures help young people to understand the choices they are going to face,
- Whether they allow for choice,
- Whether they offer a real change towards some wanted goal: e.g., unwanted job offers with bad conditions,
- Whether they support the development and maintenance of aspirations,
- Whether they support the balance between flexibility and security,
- Whether they allow for reconciliation between work and family life,
- Whether participation in activities leads to a type of stigma.

Our strategy is to confront the above presented discourses and approaches with the personal experience of Czech young people with the policies. This will be done in the conclusion of this last chapter. We believe that the stories of young people can lead to reflection, how systems, concrete measures, and their quality and lived interactions with street level workers contribute to the functioning of young people in the society through labour market integration. To illustrate our approach we present here one statement from the interview with Fred.

“I always felt some disproportion or unbalance in the fact that the Employment office is called Employment office, but I have never met there with any work or work mediation or recommendation to some workplace...I never met with this and this could happen. May be there are people who welcome this because they are there only formally and they do not want to be employed, but I wanted. I was desperate, when no one answered me for a long time and I would welcome if they [Employment office] send me...somewhere with a recommendation, at least you have some work habit, the regime of waking up and doing nothing for a long time does not prosper to anyone...I said to myself I would not be against if they would sent me somewhere even under my qualification or to work that would much identify myself with...but I never felt any

pressure if I look for work or not and control was formal, if I would cheat with the list offirm I visited I felt it would be the same. It would be super if Employment office could recommend me some work.” (R26: 209)

We see here that Fred interpreted in this case the lack of activation as neglect. In this context, we can well understand why some people want to be activated, what their needs are, what they are able to do with and without the help of social policy. We also saw that Fred had some reservations according to the concrete means of activation, providing feedback which is relevant for understanding the strong and weak sides of the policies.

To conclude above-mentioned discourses are relevant at least at four levels. We can reflect how these discourses correspond to lived experience and discourses presented by young people. When they correspond to concrete aspects, we can discuss in which aspects they are functioning well, or they are not functioning well. We can also try to explain why these discourses are corresponding and functioning. At least we can use them to propose changes in the system based on reflection at above-mentioned levels.

Employment and transition regimes

In this chapter, we discuss the role of employment, unemployment, and transitional regimes. It is relevant when we want to characterise the transition system in the Czech Republic. The notion of regimes is important as it allows for a more general view of the system of social policy in a given country and allows to see how the measures are interconnected. First, we will discuss the general relevance of employment and transition regimes. It allows us to set the arena that we focus at. We want to join some criteria of above-mentioned systems to provide one coherent picture of the basic situation in the Czech Republic.

Gazier and Schmid (2002) and Schmid (2002a) defined employment systems as sets of institutions and policies that are relevant for the level of production, level of employment, and unemployment. Gallie (2017) in this context referred to a specific analytical perspective highlighting that:

“...long term patterns of historical development have led to distinctive institutional and cultural configurations that not only mediate the impact of changes in production techniques and labour market structures, but also influence the forms these take. The interdependence between institutional structures and their embeddedness in distinctive cultural frameworks means that they are relatively resilient in the face of external turbulence, adapting to changes in their environments that preserve or even consolidate their core principles.” (Gallie 2017: 228)

Gallie (2017) argued that there is a high degree of variability in the levels of job insecurity among advanced countries, reflecting long-term differences in their employment and labour market structures. According to Detzen and Rubery (2002), the employment regime is related to the concrete labour market and its institutional settings which are relatively stable within a specific time and space. Schmid (2002a) characterizes the employment regime as one

concrete set (configuration) of policies which is open and may be subject to change. According to Schmid (2002a), labour market systems include:

- household economy,
- tax and social security system,
- industrial relations,
- and general and vocational education system.

Employment systems can to different extend secure transitions, provide risk management, secure income, and support employability (see Schmid 2002a: 40). These systems also more or less support the existence of legitimate alternative roles including caring responsibilities. At the individual level, employment systems are functioning as filters making some pathways more possible while restricting other theoretically possible options.

The measures within the employment system are often interconnected (in some kind of equilibrium) and it is not always easy to change one rule (or measure) without influencing other measures and balance in the system (Gazier 2002). Change in given institution will not necessarily lead to global change (Anxo and Erhel 2006). First, there may be other more important factors (even outside of social policy) resisting the chance. Second, the choice of pathway depends on other available options. Some characteristics of the system may even effectively block the change (Viebrock and Clasen 2009). Another important issue is that the same or similar policies often have different effects in different countries (Viebrock and Clasen 2009). Avdagic (2015) argues that the effect of one concrete measure can depend on the overall institutional set-up and the interaction between the labour market, social policy, skill regimes, and product markets.

Employment regimes (Gallie 2007b, 2013a) are embedded in the institutional structures of employment and industrial relations policies. According to Gallie, there are three employment regime types: (a) inclusive regime, (b) dualist regime, and (c) market regime. While the situation in Western Europe has been examined many times, the situation in Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic is somehow ‘uncharted water’. Gallie (2013a) argued that central and eastern European (transitional) countries including the Czech Republic could not be easily integrated into the employment regimes classification. Still, some features can be distinguished: low level of bargaining coordination and coverage and low unemployment benefit coverage and expenditure. It seems that the Czech Republic can be classified as a specific mix of liberal and dualistic regimes.

Some authors discuss regimes more specifically as unemployment regimes. Cinalli and Giugni (2013) define the unemployment regime as a set of coherent measures that response to the problem of youth unemployment. This includes unemployment regulation and labour market regulation. They distinguished four basic regime types due to the level of labour market regulation and unemployment protection: a) social protection (flexicurity) model, b) economic protection (corporatist) model, c) full protection model, and d) precarious model. Cinalli and Giugni (2013) have shown that the position of young people may be different from the position of older people and that specific approach to analysis is necessary. For example, they

classified Germany as a country close to the precarious model due to the different position of young people and older cohorts. Gallie and Paugam (2000) suggested a typology of un/employment policy regimes in relation to young people. They reflect the role of unemployment protection, active labour market policy, and the role of the family in supporting youth and the interaction with social policies. They distinguished four types of employment policy regimes: sub-protective, liberal/minimal, employment-centred, and universalistic. Gallie (2013a) latter classified transitional countries as an extreme version of sub-protective regime.

Typology of transition regimes (Walther 2000, quoted in McNeish and Lacle 2003, McNeish and Lacle 2003, Walther 2006) applies the results of previous typologies to the situation of young people. Transition regimes are aimed at a complex system of socio-economic structures, institutional arrangements, and cultural patterns that structure transitions between youth and adulthood – models through which young people's lives are regulated (see Walther 2006). Transition regimes include the aims of transition policy, school and training systems, employment regimes, and how the concepts of youth, unemployment and disadvantage are interpreted. Post-socialistic/transitional type was not originally included because it was not previously subject to systematic comparative research (Walther 2006). This type was added in Pohl and Walther (2007), but the Czech Republic was not included there. They argued that countries in Central/Eastern Europe followed different trajectories.

In our comparative research (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2016a, Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a, 2019b), we included assessment of education, ALMP, employment protection and unemployment protection. We concluded that countries within the transitional regime can be characterised by:

- Education: preference of general education, accessible but with some differences in access and quality of schools.
- Active labour market policy: Weak, some dualism, young people less in focus but incentivised.
- Employment protection: Weak or medium protection, some dualism, young people less protected.
- Unemployment protection: Weak, some dualism, young people are disadvantaged.

We expect Czech Republic to have a rather comprehensive education system, but weak institutions securing transitions to a more stable work status including all three remaining types of policy. See both texts for more details.

Typology of transition regimes

	Universalistic	Employment-Centered	Liberal-Minimal	Sub-protective	Post-socialist/transitional
Example countries	Sweden, Denmark	Germany, France, Netherlands	UK, Ireland	Spain, Italy, Portugal	Poland, Czechia
School and training	Not selective / flexible standards	Selective / standardized	Not selective / flexible, low standards	Not selective / low standards and coverage	Not selective / standardised, low standards and coverage
Employment regime	Open, low risks, female employment high	Closed, risks at margins, female employment medium	Open, high risks, female employment high	Closed, high risks, informal work, female employment low	Closed, high risks, informal work, female employment low/medium
Responsibility for social security	State	State/family	State/Family	Family	Family/State
Concept of youth	Personal development, citizenship	Allocation (adaptation) to social positions	Early economic independence	No clearly defined distinct status	Mixed
Concept of youth unemployment	Not foreseen (education)	Qualifications, Individual deficits (disadvantage)	Culture of dependency / exclusion	Segmented labour market, no formal trajectories, lack of training	Mixed
Concept of disadvantage	Mixed (individualized and structure related)	Individualized	Individualized	Structure related	Mixed
Aims of transition policy	Education and youth policy, activation	(Pre-)vocational training, qualification	Employability	Comprehensive reforms for recognized status (employment, training or education)	Mixed

Source: McNeish and Lacle (2003), Walther (2006), Pohl and Walther (2007), own adjustments.

Important institutions and their expected role in the life of young people

The question arises, which institutions are important for the transition of young people to the labour market and for the latter stabilization of their career paths. We could focus on transition measures, i.e., measures that operate within the great transition from school to work (Cachón Rodriguez 2003). However, Goglio and Riza (2017) argued that we should also consider the situation of young adults. We believe that to understand the longer influence of the policy we have to include a longer period. This also means that young people often refer to the past. We note that reflections of young people about various social policy instruments and approaches are from various time points. Some of them are historical in the sense that these policies were abolished or significantly modified later. We believe that this approach allows to focus on a particular problem, discourses used, goals of the policy, set rules, and link policies around the problem. We also noted that specific measures are more relevant in specific life periods of young people. This view was shared also by some respondents as 'discourse of aiming to the young people'.

Discourse of aiming to young people

Some respondents mentioned that it is necessary to work with young people. At the individual level, people mentioned that they work with their own children and advice (enforce) and support them not to repeat their own mistakes concerning education (Violet, Herbert, Melinda). Parents did not believe that their personal situation can be changed, but they wanted a better future for their children. Other respondents had a more general stance which included the belief that the situation of children can be more influenced than the situation of adults. Karin said:

"I think that it is best to start from the basics, work with the smallest children because when they are adult it is difficult to tell them to enforce them to change their view. The root is in the smallest children, what you seed to them that you harvest." (R2: 187)

Antonia, who works as a pedagogic worker with children, commented:

"Because it is best to work with children, because children grow with it. And they see life as it is. They learn from now. And you can see here that work with the children that they learn something for life. You can hardly anything change with adults. I do not think that it is as bad with adults, but you cannot change it. However, you can change it with the children." (R63: 162)

"Adults will not listen to me, but you can say children to think about themselves. That they cannot behave like that...because they will not be included in the majority. They have to behave to be successful in life, you have to motivate them. This is why I wanted to start this project to become their friend. To be able to listen to their problems and to motivate them and advise them." (R63: 192).

There are important time points and events in the life of young people which should not be missed because otherwise remedial of their consequences seems to be difficult.

Key policies included in this book and dimensions for their assessment

In the research work that we participated in recent years, and on the base of a wide base of literature (e.g., Auer 2002, Walther and McNeish 2003, Walther 2006, European Commission 2007, Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung and van Oorschot 2011, Zimmermann et al. 2013) – we distinguished four policy fields. These policies, which are according to our view most relevant for shaping young people's chances on the labour market, are:

- Education and lifelong learning, and orientation and career counselling,
- Employment protection,
- Unemployment protection,
- Active labour market policy and
- Work-life balance policies

In the traditional social policy perspective, systems are constituted by specific measures realised in education, social protection, or active labour market policy. Sirovátka and Spies (2018) pointed out that the general level of effort towards young people is crucial for the chance to address problems in the whole scope. According to our view, this can have many dimensions.

First, the general effort in the quantitative perspective is shown as the number of measures, number of participants, or expenditure on activities. It may be low, selective, or fragmentary (coverage, spatial fragmentation). Second, it relates to the concrete types of activities, which are provided (light support/heavy support) – this is also connected to the intensity and expensiveness of activities in concrete cases (Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018a). Third, it is connected to the ability to reach people who are outside of contacts with established institutions (outreach activities). Many studies also argue that low targeting to the most disadvantaged young people and/or lack of comprehensive targeting is an important precondition to lacking the solution of the problem with transitions of young people. Fourth, the measures and offered options may change in time. The policy for young is often inconsistent in time, unsustainable, and with low relevance of content (see Behrens and Brown 1994a). The retrenchment process may reduce some options that have been previously available (change of effort in time) (e.g., Hussain et al. 2018).

In addition to these criteria, three other dimensions of the policy seem to be relevant.

- The first of them relates to the focus on long-term effects of the policies (Walther and McNeish 2003).
- The second is focused on the voice that young people have in the process of their transitions.
- The third is connected with the pooling of services and one-stop shops (Gehrke, Günther, and Seukwa 2018). The following aspects are important for these services: a) whether they provide more specialised services for particular groups, b) whether they

reduce time-demanding character of the approach to services and bureaucratic obstacles, and c) whether they are lowering or raising barriers to services, d) the quality of the services. Realisations of these ideas are not without problems (see, e.g., Gehrke, Günther, and Seukwa 2018, Tan and Spies 2018).

Some of these aspects are discussed below at the end section of this chapter.

Besides realising concrete measures, an important part of the policy is in the setting of rules, regulation conditions of labour market, education system, etc. Regulations can be set (negotiated) at five various levels: supranational, national, sectoral, enterprise, and individual (Anxo and O'Reilly 2002). According to Wilthagen and Rogowski (2002), there are three key aspects of legal systems.

- Detection threshold: what is regulated and what is not regulated.
- Discrimination threshold: justify qualitative differences in regulation on the base of explicit criteria.
- Evaluation threshold: what is legal and what is illegal.

We have found in our previous research two distinct approaches concerning young people. First approach is in situations when the rules are more relevant for young people, even in the absence of de jure distinction. The second situation is explicit risk categorization based on age or family status criteria, e.g., waiting periods, lower benefits, or requirements to live with parents (see Cinalli and Giugni 2013, Hora et al. 2019b). Du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco (2003) argued that states regulate access to support according to bureaucratic criteria such as age, duration of unemployment, nationality, or gender rather than regarding individual needs.

Consequently, there are two important aspects. First, it is the question how much regulation is respected and what disparities there are from the pre-set standard. Trifajová et al. (2015) described situations of low legal protection of people in three concrete situations: when the promised wage is not paid, when there is an illegal approach in the exacting of debts, and cases of discrimination. Second, it is the question how the regulations are congruent with linked social infrastructures. Snel and Starling (2001) argued that the fact whether the rules were broken does not depend only on the activity but also on the situation (specific position and legal status) of the person involved and the legal context that the activities are being conducted in. These aspects are highly relevant for all five main types of policies discussed in this book.

Initial education and lifelong learning

Initial education is one of the critical factors for labour market integration. Young people with low qualifications face particularly high risks of scar effects, exclusion, and lack of access to employment (Zimmermann et al. 2013). This is particularly evident in the case of the Czech Republic, where the unemployment rate of a young individual with low level of education, is about 6 times higher than the rate of individuals with medium and high level of education (Karamessini et al. 2019a) and young people aged 15-19 have the highest probability of unemployment (Karamessini et al. 2019b). We estimate that young people who prematurely end their education at a low level are the most vulnerable group in the Czech Republic. As a reaction to this, in many countries, one typical feature is the prolongation of the initial education process including compulsory education to avoid early finish of education and early drop out (Cachón Rodriguez 2003, Zimmermann et al. 2013, Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019b).

Structure of the education system and education attained by respondents

Zimmermann et al. (2013) distinguished the four following types of education:

- School based general education,
- School based vocational training,
- Mixture of school-based and vocational training (dual system),
- Pure learning on the job.

The Czech Republic is among the countries where the first three types exist (see Zimmermann et al. 2013: 24). Education systems are usually assessed due to the specific or general character of the provided knowledge (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a). There is usually a divide between academic and vocational track (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Vocational systems often not only provide vocational education, but the teaching process of occupation-specific skills also includes practical training at workplaces – dual apprenticeship system (Gallie 2007a, Buttler 2019). This may include the development of apprenticeship schemes and the dual character of the education system (including the firm based on job training). The relationship between the school component and job training component is important (see Behrens and Brown 1994a). Evidence shows that dual systems are successful in helping young people into the labour market. However, they may be also under pressure from changing labour market conditions (see Zimmermann et al. 2013: 25, 47).

From the individual perspective, “the transitions to skilled and professional segments involve longer participation in education and training and typically require more explicit choices between pathways and a process of socialisation in which occupational identities are developed” (Biggart et al. 2002: 59).

One important distinction is between systems that are highly standardised such as in Germany or more flexible such as in the United Kingdom (see Biggart et al. 2002). Structured system leads to highly distinctive structure of occupations. It is expected that structured system as in

Germany may lead to better recognition of qualifications and better job placement outcomes (see Biggart et al. 2002). Transitions within the education system and school mobility are also important aspects of the education system because students have to adapt to new conditions (social, academic, and organisational (see Dvořák et al. 2016). Unsuccessful transition may lead to another school transfer or to disaffection/ separation from school and early drop out (*ibid.*).

Highly structured character of the system may also lead to delays and impossible changes due to the changed situation – they are blocked paths from early age (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a). The competition effect may lead to refusal of students that would be otherwise eligible to higher education due to their results (Behrens and Brown 1994a, Zimmermann et al. 2013) or lead to low use of gained qualification (Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018). Kieselbach (2003) argued that cooperation between enterprises and counsellors is required to close the gap between demand and supply for job training places for young people. Relevant criterions are also which education institutions are permeable to allow for entry to schools at higher education level (Walther 2002, Biggart et al. 2002, Zimmermann et al. 2013, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018) and how many real further education options are available (Evans and Heinz 1994c).

The role of individuals (students) is also discussed in the aspect of self-determination during the study and its potential outcomes. Flexible systems that put students in the focus of his or her learning process were criticised for lowering the level of student qualification and for creating a hidden differential behind the back of individuals (Böhnisch et al. 2002, see also EGRIS 2002).

It is expected that the education system has to be flexible to the extent that allows for adjustment due to new labour market demands (Bynner and Evans 1994, Walther 2002, see Down, Smyth and Robinson 2018 for an opposing view). Bynner and Evans (1994) and Down, Smyth and Robinson (2018) showed how the outcomes of the education system can be heavily labour market dependent (on the economic cycle) with the key role of employers who provide opportunities for jobs and apprenticeships. Education (and its certification) also may have a strong signalling function for employers providing information about the quality and likely productivity of young workers (Denzin and Rubery 2002, Van Lieshout and Wilthagen 2003, Avdagic 2015). Employers demand formal education or higher level of education for the job when it is not necessary (Evans and Heinz 1994c, Engbersen et al. 2006, Hussain et al. 2016).

Access to the system for disadvantaged including minorities is a key characteristic of the system. Young people in Bulgaria spoke about segregation in education and low access to quality education (Hussain et al. 2016). For women and people from minorities, it can be difficult to survive on the scheme dominated by the other majority (see Wallace 1994). There are also financial reasons that may constitute a barrier to higher education for some potential students (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Students may finance higher education school attendance from grants, from loans, from parental support or from money earned working while studying (see Behrens and Brown 1994a). Direct public or private financial

support for students in the Czech Republic is very low. When such support is provided, it is in some indirect form such as payment of health insurance or cheaper housing and meals.

Situation in the Czech Republic can be characterised by the preference of general education over vocational training, relatively high stratification, and poor perception of the quality of vocational programmes due to low cooperation with employers and limited match between acquired skills and labour market needs (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a, 2019b).

My reflection on the structure of the education system and attained education

In this section, we discuss education from the perspective of our respondents. We will first reflect on the general character of attained education among our respondents. This includes the general type of post-elementary education as well as their ability to successfully compete their studies. The level of successfully attained education among the respondents was different:

- People with only elementally education or absolvents of special schools for children with specific needs (Karin, Vendelín, Otto, Peter, Derek, Janine, Simon, Herbert, Steve). This category mostly includes people who dropped out from vocational training and some people who did not enter secondary level of education.
- People with various kinds of vocational training for services, crafts, and technical professions: bricklayers, machinists, metallurgy, glass workers, shop assistants, cooks, bakers, confectioners, make-up artists, photographers etc. This type of education can be completed by two years of additional study to have an abitur, but many young people do not finish such studies (Betty, Ron, Lucy)
- Rare cases of abitur (Quido, Jake).
- There was no single person with university education.

Concerning structure of the education system, we can reconstruct from stories of the respondents that most of them had no problems concerning attendance in elementary education. When young people had some problems, they were mostly caused by their attitude or behavioural problems. Despite a few respondents who decided not to continue to second level education, most respondents were able to continue to some type of vocational training although their choice was in some cases clearly limited by their previous school marks or by the results of their entry exams. These aspects were discussed in the previous chapter about the strategies.

When we combined interviews from CITISPYCE and NEGOTIATE projects, we came to a striking conclusion that most of our respondents went to study vocational training, but they were not able to finish their second level education (see details below). Even among NEGOTIATE respondents there was a much higher share of people with unfinished secondary education than in other countries in this international research. While we note that it is not a representative sample, we believe that unfinished education is among the key factors causing young people's insecurity in the Czech Republic.

Respondents saw the subjective value of education in combination of attained level of education, field of education, and the utility of education on the labour market. Some of the respondents mentioned that the level of their education was not high enough for contemporary needs in the labour market (Jake, Derek, John, Sabina). For example, Jake noted that despite having an abitur, his education is not very good because he studied administration.

"Because today almost everyone has abitur, not everyone but a lot of people have it and it is no longer the preferred part 'you have abitur, great, you can be sure to get a job' (R11: 151)

Sabina argued that in the early 1990s when she studied, the abitur was not common for people with vocational training and this is limiting for her now.

"[My education] is no miracle. I do not have an abitur, in the past, there were not vocational trainings with abitur. It started after we finished education. I said to myself that I do not want but now regret it – not having an abitur. I think that I would be able to find employment better...nowadays. And because there was not English at school, only German and Russian, this is stupid." (R25: 15)

It is necessary to note how the various levels of education have developed in the last 40 years. During the communist period, primary education was quite prevalent (mainly for women), while a substantial change towards higher levels of education can be seen in each following cohort (CZSO 2014a). The education in the communist regime was also highly oriented towards heavy industry and specific types of light industry, and these branches of industry were highly reduced during the transformation after 1989. Respondents from the middle cohort had limited opportunities to learn languages at school, because before 1989 almost only Russian language was taught and other languages were often not taught in sufficient quality (Alice). Formáneková and Křížková (2010) described in a similar way, how the work careers of young people were affected by the change of political regime in (1989). This argument is mostly relevant for people from the middle cohort of NEGOTIATE research.

Quality of the education system

Respondents sometimes discussed the quality of education including pre-school education. There is a hidden assumption that education institutions with more quality are better able to prepare students for their work careers. Young people reflect the usability of education as one of the main factors in their decision to choose or maintain a concrete education path (see Hussain et al. 2016). Trhlíková (2017) found that young people assessed the quality of education including the level of provided general and vocational knowledge including specific courses (e.g., language courses) during their process of choice of school. Sometimes this quality is defined as the characteristics of process:

- Education opportunity for all students, it is often limited also indirectly by the real costs of studying (see Jubany and Güell 2018)

- Content of the study and standardisation of provisions: an extent to which there is nationwide uniformity in school quality standards with respect to curriculum and school leaving qualifications (Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a). Associated risks are that subject-specific specialisation occurs too early and the curriculum is too narrowly focused (Zimmermann et al. 2013: 84) and that study schedule is reduced (Jubany and Güell 2018).
- Quality of the lecturers
- Overcrowding of classes: high ratio of pupils to teachers and increased class sizes (Brown and Roberts 1994, Jubany and Güell 2018),
- Existence of absences, behavioural problems, and sufficient discipline at school (GAC 2009, Hajdinjak 2018b),
- Cooperation with employers and other relevant stakeholders (Zimmermann et al. 2013, Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019a) including quality of compulsory praxis (Trhlíková 2017). Some authors point out that apprenticeships, temporary contracts for young people are of substandard quality, and employers often do not prolong them with permanent contracts (see Plug et al. 2002, Barbieri 2009).

Sometimes this quality is defined also by outputs and outcomes:

- School results (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018) including ability to pass state-defined standards (Hajdinjak 2018b)
- Differentiation of school process and outcomes among children/ at various school levels (see Böhnisch et al. 2002, GAC 2009)
- Being prepared for the labour market, i.e., by the usefulness of qualifications, by the skills of workers who enter the labour market or who work only for a short time, and by the time young workers need to do their jobs well (see e.g. Gallie 2007a)³⁹. The aim is to avoid ‘educational mismatch’ when learned skills are less usable or when formal qualifications are not translated to matching jobs (Zimmermann et al. 2013). Education system should be able to predict future labour market needs.

My reflection on quality of education

Next, we reflect here on the quality of primary and secondary education. We want to know is how young people in our interviews assess the quality of their previous or current education and what attitudes towards school they declare and why. We concentrate on primary and secondary education. Kindergartens are reflected in the previous chapter, because although they are formally classified as schools, they are more important in this book from the perspective of enabling work for their parents. Universities are not much reflected here because respondents did not speak about attending them although some of them dreamed about going to the university in the future.

³⁹ However, this is also about the congruence between the education system and labour market structure and opportunities in a particular country (see Böhnisch et al. 2002, EGRIS 2002, Mørch and Stadler 2003).

Young people were naturally assessing the quality of education they passed or had passed. Many young people reflected that some schools were generally of good quality: 'good', 'suitable', 'they like it', 'are satisfied' etc. (Maria, Vanesa, Lampert, Lars). Vanessa, e.g., commented: "*It is a good school, I cannot complain.*" This also meant that even the same people sometimes compared quality of the schools and said this one was good but that one was not good. Peter, for example, switched from gymnasium to a technical school in electrotechnics. Peter reflected that in later school the quality of the school was inferior. According to Peter, several aspects contributed to this: too many pupils in the class (about 30), teachers did not have such authority, teachers were not able to teach well so many students, and bad quality of education in languages. Criteria of quality were not always clear. E.g., Lars assessed quality of the school by the amount of additional activities (hobbies, music, travelling) provided by the school to the pupils (besides teaching). For some young people, it was also important whether the study corresponded to their initial expectations. For example, Antonia mentioned that the content of the study was not corresponding to its name. (Maybe it was creating false expectations).

Young people themselves reflected that more work praxis would be needed. Randolph said:

"I am learning theoretic, learning constructions. However, this is only theoretically, because the practical part is only once in two weeks, sometimes weekly. It is not enough." (R45: 9)

Quido and Laura mentioned that the experience attained during school praxis was not sufficient for employers to get a job. Ron (also mentioned above) spoke about the need of more cooperation between schools and Employment offices and more help in looking for a job and transition to the labour market.

"They should cooperate, social institutions and schools. School could directly help students to find work and ease the transition from school to work. I think this is not functioning, but I do not know the latest development." (R33: 231).

Lars mentioned that he earned money during his work praxis as a bricklayer. This effectively replaced for him the need to look for occasional jobs to have some money. He also appreciated that his teacher was willing to use his personal contacts to arrange work for him. Derek found his first job during his school praxis. Derek spoke about the need of practical experience and about the possibility to prepare students for concrete employers:

"I liked that some schools had contracts, it is emerging back now, some schools had contracts, that vocational trainees were on praxis and when they proved to be good they were offered a work contract and after abitur they continued in the work environment in which there were already used to, I like it a lot. Praxis during school allows young people to get to know what they study, that is important...and know that is not going to do nonsense things. And when he does his work well, the employer is glad to offer him a job." (R14: 258).

Story of Ron

Ron is a young man who completed vocational training for photographer. Ron extensively reflected on the quality of his initial education.

"There was praxis in school, one week of theory for one week of praxis. And the praxis was about working in the black chamber, we worked with classical photography a lot. When I spoke with [concrete employer], he said: 'Now you can go to work in the museum', it is completely useless nowadays [everywhere is] digital photography. However, we had several very good teachers there, who were really good in this field and who achieved something, three or four teachers who really knew something and they were able to give a lot to me in this....And then there was a bunch of incapable teachers." (R33: 23)

Ron also reflected on his general school preparation for the labour market including job search and gaining employment.

"I did not have [school preparation] ... how to write the motivation letter. I create something or I think something out what I think is not such bad. However, I think that it is not done in a way to really appeal to them [employers]....education or something similar how to appeal to employers by motivation letter...would be fine to do this better at schools...now it is realised at school that I used to go that they directly cooperate with people who look for photographs or who train them and they offer or mediate them some work. If I had this, it would be much easier." (R33: 137).

Later (after obtaining the vocational certificate), Ron continued in his education by studying further in distance education in the field of entrepreneurship (with abitur). However, he did not finish it. He explained that he did not believe that it would help him to get a job because employers look at which concrete school you have, and that he did not learn much there. He realised that he still wanted to be a photographer entrepreneur and the school was not of much help in this.

"From the beginning I looked in the field of photography, because I knew from the start that in this field most people work as self-employed and that it will be difficult to find an employment when you are not well known and top. You try to work for magazines, most magazines do not have their own employees." (R33: 61)

After school, he worked in several more stable and many occasional jobs (some of them undeclared). Meanwhile, he was unemployed. He said that most of these jobs he has got due to the help of his friends or former schoolmates. Two of these jobs were in the field that he studied. Ron found that it is very difficult to find a job as a photographer. The typical 'other' job was work in the courier service (delivering things) or work in the factory. Some of these jobs were bogus work.

Ron renewed his self-employment status two years ago. He uses it for both photography and for hidden dependent employment. At the time of the interview, Ron was working in food

delivery. This provided him with money for living and for starting his self-employment as photographer. He wants to do it as his main job.

"Beginning of entrepreneurship is difficult, you do not have money, but you have to pay money [also for compulsory social security contributions] that you do not have. Thus, until it starts to earn, you have to have a second job or something and also my parents supported me." (R33: 149)

He admits that although he has occasionally some commissions, his photographer business is not yet very successful. He founded web pages for his business, and he wants to advertise his services more to get more attention from customers. Ron reflects that his photographer business and dependent employment are in a conflict that has to be balanced. He also notes that his position on the labour market is insecure and he points out to his long previous period without stable employment and lower security in doing bogus work.

Ron presented a specific version of 'anti-education discourse' which is more based on his specific situation than on the generally low utility of education. In his reasoning, it is combined with both 'need of education' and 'work experience'. In some respects, it is ambivalent. Ron, e. g., argued that work experience is much more important than school:

"Because I do not have work experience and I have only vocational training, it is hard to find work both in my field and generally. In the field of photography, it is rather difficult. However, there they [employers] do not look on education but rather on what you are able to do." (R33: 19)

Ron also explained:

"I definitely think that education is good, and a lot of jobs cannot be done without it, it is useful for a lot of entrepreneurship but I think that schools produce...that for employees it is important to have a diploma and they do not teach the useful education at the school. It widened my education by courses about photography, and I have certificates. When I apply for a job, abitur would be more important, but I learned much more from the courses." (R33: 167)

Another the discourse presented by Ron is discourse of 'creative work'. He reflected on previous 'boring' manual jobs that he did.

"I have never imagined to be an employee. I rather imagined to be a photographer and self-employed...I have always wanted to do something that I would enjoy and simultaneously that I earn money with. I do not want to do something that I will hate where I would not like to go, that would worsen the work for me a lot." (R33: 157)

...

"I would be angrier or on the nerves to have work where I work from Monday to Friday and which I hate than when I was unemployed." (R33: 189)

My reflection: I have chosen his story to illustrate the quality of education because it is a story where there is existential discussion about aspects of education which are relevant to constitute the quality of school: relevant and timely contents of the study, good teachers, practical utility of part of the knowledge and recognition of the school by the employers. Ron is contrasting going to school with later specific courses of photography which he thought that gave him more, but I think these two things are not fully comparable due to his changed life situation. Maybe he would not be able to use these courses so effectively if he had not mastered 'basics' of photography at school. Another notable aspect is that although schools prepare you well for the profession (doing work) which you want to do, it may not prepare you well for conditions of the labour market usual in the profession that you want to do. People need specific skills for both looking for work and starting entrepreneurship.

My reflection on the bad quality of some education

Bad quality of some schools is reflected in the tale of Alan, which constitutes an extreme example of the assessment of low quality of concrete school. Young Roma man Alan told us a tale about the situation when he visited his brother at a private high school because he needed to borrow the brother's keys to get home. He described that he found a school without character, without teachers or with bad teachers. The students were out of the classroom in the corridor during school class or they sat during class with their back to the teacher (the teacher did not react to this) and some students were even out of school sitting in the park. The teacher was not reacting to the students. The students were rude. Alan reflected that there is no discipline at school. According to Alan, the ability to teach and learn is limited in this school and there should be someone guarding the discipline, or the undisciplined students should be dropped out. Alan thinks that the problem is that only Roma students attend that school.

This tale is a small part of the problem of lower quality of a part of segregated education (although this is an extreme example). Rachel said that there are specific 'Roma schools' where most Roma go. Lars spoke about himself attending three schools during his elementary education. Of these three schools, one was a typical 'Roma school', where most pupils were Roma. There were only a few Roma studying in the other two schools. Similar experience is presented also by Maria, who attended the same school described by Alan above.

"This school was OK, but we did not learn much there, because almost all children were Roma, and no one listened to anyone. Everyone did what he wanted." (R52: 27)

Barbara mentioned that negative behaviour of children (including being nasty, smoking, and skipping school) is tolerated. According to Barbara, this leads parents to get their children off these schools to other schools because they want to improve their prospects. Some young people disputed the value of attaining such education:

"I would not go there, no. Because there are no goals. There it is only about teaching you something and giving you some paper. You are written there that you finished it, but it has no future. You can have a paper, but it is useless. You will do something different." (R47: 65)

Amanda argued that some of the local schools have special curricula and (slower) regimes and the children are delayed in their learning process compared to children in other schools. According to Amanda, it is because children attending there are unable to tackle normal education. Children are divided into groups even within the same school: children who are able to learn better go faster in one group and other children go slower in another group. This is mentioned also in other interviews. Steve attended school for children with specific needs where the pace of learning was slower. Lars and Bob mentioned that their vocational training was provided at the school for children with specific needs where the demands are lowered. Some young people (Amanda, Bob) noted that attending school with a special regime did not restrict their chances to continue in further education or to do a studied profession.

Ability to use attained education on the labour market

In this section, we discuss the outcomes of using attained education on the labour market. We reflect that the effect of education on the position on the labour market may be further mediated by transition policies (see Cachón Rodriguez 2003). We will open this section with two stories.

Story of Laura

Laura is a young Roma lady. After elementary education, she applied for a hairdresser and cosmetician, but she was accepted only to a hairdresser. Laura wanted to do the hairdresser profession since her childhood when she did haircuts with dolls and it was a 'clear profession choice' for her. She successfully completed vocational training for a hairdresser. However, she had problems and quarrels with teachers and schoolmates during her studies and she felt excluded from collective. She thinks that it was because she is Roma.

Laura reflected that when she studied vocational training for a hairdresser, she learned only basic things and not real good haircuts. She even said that she would be afraid to do this in the work, but she will be willing to try it. School praxis is according to her insufficient for employers. She thinks that the right way to learn it well is in work or in specific more advanced courses:

"May be there are some courses, but rather they learn it when they are in the hairdressing saloon and they see how it is done and then they learn it." (R35: 83)

Laura is unemployed for more than one year since her graduation and she looks for a job, but she is not successful. She can find only short occasional jobs (wash dishing, storage worker). She is not satisfied with her life because she would need work and money. However, work experience is always needed to be accepted for the job. Laura, e.g., noted that for one concrete job she wanted to apply for they required three years of previous work experience on the job. Although it is her dream and strong wish to be a hairdresser, she is now resigned to do the hairdresser profession. Laura noted that many of her schoolmates from vocational studies now do different professions than a hairdresser.

"I think I learned to hairdresser, but I will probably be not a hairdresser because I will never find such work, and so I will have normal work such in a shop, selling something or something like that." (R35: 605).

Laura also dreamed about having her own hairdressing saloon, but she reflects that she does not have money to start her own business.

Main discourse in Laura's story is 'lack of experience'. One particularly interesting aspect is that she herself reflects not being fully prepared for the labour market. In many aspects, she struggles between her dreams and a more realistic stance towards her future. When asked about possible help in her situation, she replied:

"I was not thinking about this. I look for the job myself, using the internet, etc. However, anytime I call to the hairdressing saloon, they want praxis, they do not accept anyone without work experience." (R35: 317)

My reflection: This story reflects on one basic dimension of education quality – how well and in what aspects are young people after school prepared to do their profession. Laura herself is not sure whether she is sufficiently ready. In such cases, the quality of education may relate to the lower willingness of employers to accept fresh graduates, because there is a perceived gap in their skills. However, this gap was never really tested in practice in Laura's case. In some cases, the requirements of the employers on work experience were very high. There is an ALMP program in the Czech Republic aimed at the provision of practical experience for young people, but it was not offered to Laura. There is an immediate outcome that when (as Laura) you are not able to get a job in the field for which you have the qualification, you often have to accept an unqualified job and this means that you are forced to work in jobs which are often temporary and with worse working conditions. This happens despite these young people did probably nothing fatally wrong in their career choices.

Story of Vanda

Vanda is a young lady who is married but childless. Vanda studied and successfully finished vocational training for makeup and hair artists for theatre and television. She had praxis in theatre during her studies. She was able to find a job in the same theatre and worked there for three years. After three years, she was released due to finance-motivated reorganisation (when more people were released). She also had problems and conflicts with her workmates. Although she was very active in looking for a job, she was unable to find another work in the field of her study. She was unemployed for a long time. She was not able to find a job in any other similar fields (e.g., perfumery). She was always rejected, and she had to accept 'unqualified work' in a food supermarket. Vanda reflected on her job search:

"I still ask in local theatres, I actively work on it.... However, there are only four theatres that can employ a makeup artist and there are no other possibilities. They currently cannot employ anyone. And in TV there is only studio...and it is under production...I found it all, what is there, but it is bad...it is difficult because it is a field [of study] that no one wants you. And I ended up working in the supermarket because they take

anyone. They do not look at education...they do not mind. I would like to do it [profession], to return to it, but it is not possible even if I strive for it." (R21: 39).

Vanda did the retraining course at Employment office for cosmetics, but the employer where she was supposed to work went bankrupt and retraining was not enough to get a job. Vanda described that she had psychical problems connected to unemployment, missing of the beloved profession, and her low ability to find work. She was dejected and depressed, had low self-esteem, and looked for fault in herself. She was exhausted and had health problems.

„Work has great importance in my life because I have a feeling that I can do something, or I do something that is useful." (R21: 127).

Unemployment was tiresome for her and she decided she had to get work, even if it were not in a similar profession. She worked in the shopping profession, but she had health problems from working conditions there.

"We had to work in 12 hours shifts and it was very demanding. We had to stay all the time, it was cold there and I was ill all the time. And the shift was long, it was 13 hours, because it was with two breaks. It was really long. And my tiredness was growing, and I was not able to handle it. I could not get rid of it by sleeping but it was growing. And the neck spine started to pain me and everything because I was overworked." (R21: 211).

Now she works in another shopping job that is not so demanding.

"I have a feeling that I do not do work for a qualified person. There is no need for specific education." (R21: 161).

Main discourse in Vanda's story is 'career identity'. It is one of the strongest cases of developed career identity among our respondents.

"It was very hard for me because I still like the work and I always will. It caught me since school, and I enjoyed it. The problem was that was unable to do it." (R21: 67)

Key criterion for her when speaking about jobs is whether the job is interesting and not monotone ('creative work'). Vanda strongly declares that she would like to return to work in the theatre. She described how her love for theatre emerged and influenced her life:

"[I did want to work] in the theatre, maybe. I did not know much about television, so I oriented towards the theatre. Because we went to the theatre since the first grade at school, we had a good master, and she showed us around. We went to Prague, we saw theatres all around, and it was strongly aimed towards the theatre environment, etc. However, when you start to work there you get to it and it catch you...I caught me and it is something I always will be living with, even if I will not do it for 10 years. I have it in me. And I like it, I like theatre." (R21: 119).

She mentioned she had to finally accept she cannot do her profession.

Another discourse in the story of Vanda is the discourse of ‘activity’. She explains that she was active in looking for jobs all the time, she actively asked for work. However, in contrast, workers in the Employment office were not active. They had no interest to help her (but it changed for the better, see below part about Employment office). Activity is her (in her perspective) main strategy.

“I would say that I tried hardly different ways. I have a feeling that I did the maximum for it.” (R21: 109)

“I take it as it is. However, I will have this effort always. I will try to get there over and over. However, I take it as it is...it is better to have some work than no work. (R21: 245).

Vanda also mentioned ‘education discourse’ (‘I know that education is important’).

My reflection: Vanda was among a few of our respondents who studied a profession where it is very difficult to get a job because there were only a few workplaces available. Again, conditions on the labour market are more important than her ability to do the job well. In her case we can see how her attained education is lost and she had to accept jobs which are unqualified or rather for which she is unqualified. Usually in such cases, the gap between a person and employer was not closed by matching and the help needed to attain a person on qualified track was not offered or it was insufficient to close the gap.

My reflection ability of respondents to get a job in the studied field

Many of our respondents with completed vocational training or high school have problems to get their jobs in the field. For some respondents (e.g., Jake, Sabina) having insufficient (although completed) education functioned similarly as for other respondents who had an unfinished qualification. The first issue is why employers were not willing to accept them. Employers often declare lack of work experience as a main reason for refusal (see also work experience discourse). Generally, the situation in this respect may have improved in the last years, due to the lack of workforce and young people getting more work experience during their studies, but this is not much reflected in our data. Natalie thought that employers consider attained marks during education to assess quality of the candidate. We would need to do specific research to see whether employers consider the quality of the school, as some young people assume.

Consequently, many of the respondents have never worked in the field of their study or they worked there for only a small part of their work careers. Sometimes they were unsatisfied with the choice of their profession (Magda). This was connected to the fact that the chances to find a job in the field of their study were clearly limited for some of the respondents (Vanda, Ron, Laura), the profession became obsolete, or they found that did not want to do it. Some people said that they may have not chosen the same profession again (Ron). Jake reflected that studying administrative work finished with an abitur was not good enough to get him a job. According to him, he would be better if he had chosen a different study.

While nowadays there is a renewed strong interest in vocational education, we can see that many young people with vocational education had problems in the labour market. Even when these people finished education, they had to accept unqualified jobs or a job with completely different qualifications (e.g., Vanda, Josephine, Sandra). This is a great waste of resources including acquired human capital. When you do something different from your study, suddenly you are not qualified. Some respondents mentioned qualification limits for jobs (Karin, Peter, Lucy) and for self-employment (Peter, Simon). This means that you are not allowed to do a certain profession even if they would be able to do it because you need formal education or certification. This is mainly a problem for people who switched to a different profession or who dropped out before getting the full required education.

Anti-education discourse

Anti-education discourse is widely shared among Roma (Rupert, Randolph, Lisa, Vendelín). It has two aspects. First, it is a statement that having a complete school education does not help you to get a job. People (respondents or others whom they personally know) have finished vocational school, but they do not work, or they do something completely different (Vendelín, Jake, Vanesa, Laura, Randolph). This is a more descriptive statement reflecting the perception of a commonly shared situation than refusal of education per se. However, it is also an assessment of value. Jake, for example, commented that would have rather studied vocational training because he has an abitur, but he is not able to find a work.

The second aspect is that young people are demotivated to the study because they know (assume) that it will not help them to get a job. Put simply, it is not worth to study or return to school because even when you have school you get no work (Lisa). This is nicely presented by several statements of Randolph.

"...and people do not know what to do with their free time, because they have nothing they could go for, because they see what is going around them, and almost no one has some vision to trust that it is useful. I know a lot of people who have vocational training, or they finished some school, but the majority of them gave it up because they said to themselves: 'What is it useful for?'. However, some of them finished it, but they have nothing. They finished school...only to say that they have school, but they do not know what to do. They just.. [go out to do leisure activities]." (R45: 45).

...

"...they are lazy, 100 percent. However, if someone would guarantee them that after finishing school, they would get work, I think that they would finish it. However, as I say, because they do not have faith and they say: 'Why I should go there when I can already start doing what I will do. What is the school good for?'. They do not see any added value." (R45: 63)

Other versions of anti-education discourse are that in some concrete professions you do not need as much school education to work as concrete skills, work experience, and specific training (Ellyn, Betty, Ron) and that elementary education is enough for work in the field that young people want to do (usually waste collection or unqualified work in construction).

Drop out from education to low qualified job/unemployment

Besides the studied level of education, field of education, and quality of education, several other factors were found potentially important for future work prospects (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, GAC 2009, Zimmermann et al. 2013, Trhlíková 2017, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Tan and Spies 2018):

- *a) early finish of education,*
- *b) fail leading to repeat of class, education transfer to another type of education, and drop-out,*
- *c) interruption of education career due to competition effect,*
- *e) ability of young people to re-enter the education system,*
- *f) personal relation to school and social relations at school.*

While elementary education is compulsory in the Czech Republic and most people are able to complete it (at least in some form), their chances for secondary education are lower and many young Roma have problems to complete secondary school (see GAC 2009, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b). While attained education level may serve as an education insurance, trajectories leading directly to unskilled labour market segments carry higher levels of structural risk (Biggart et al. 2002). Some young people are unable to get a contract, or they are not able to stay until the end of the program (Zimmermann et al. 2013). The lack of skills acquired during primary education, lack of family resources, unwillingness to attend school, low family support, early pregnancy, and health problems are mentioned as reasons for leaving school early and they may also contribute to the impossibility for continuation or return to education (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Sirovátka, Válková, and Hora 2018b, Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2019b). We should be looking for reasons that young people state for their early drop from the education system and whether these reasons are driven by pull factors or push factors.

Drop out from education is reflected in the following stories.

Story of Roman

Roman is a young man who has a girlfriend and a small child. He works for the firm that maintains public places, where he walks all day, and he collects rubbish (paper). He has got this job due to his father's influence. This is his first regular job, but he had several short occasional jobs before this one and meanwhile he was unemployed for a long time. He refers to his previous unstable housing situation.

Roman dropped out from his vocational training for a bricklayer shortly before he would finish it. He said that he did not finish it because he had 'problems' there and he had to end it. Later to a direct question for the reason of his drop out, he explained:

"Concrete reason [for leaving] was that I was the only Roma in the whole school. There were various other children, including drug addicts and similar people and there were a lot of thefts and I was only Roma there, and everything went after me [I was accused

of everything], and I did not want any more problems. I went to the school director and explained him the situation and I told him that I want to end the school and he told me that it is a pity, and he is going to give me two years deferment." (R9: 175).

Roman said that there is still a possibility to return to this school and finish it. It would be sufficient to pass the final exams. However, Roman reflects that he has to earn money and it would be demanding for him to bring money home and tackle going to school simultaneously. Another important issue is that he does not seem to be sufficiently motivated to do the profession of bricklayer. In his arguments, two reasons are apparent. The first reason is that although he likes the profession of bricklayer, he wants 'calmer and less demanding work'. (It is also notable that no one of his latest jobs was in the field that he has studied, although he has experience from the former period when he was much younger). The other reason is that he wants to do another profession. He has wanted to work as a driver since his teenage years (even when he studied a bricklayer).

"I had a vision that I will be a driver, I will do the driving licence, I will be a driver delivering furniture within Czech Republic or even abroad. However, this did not fulfil." (R9: 170)

Roman tried to find a driving job, but he was not successful. He has a driving licence only for group B (personal cars) and not for trucks or buses (group C and D). Getting these other grades of driving licence would be costly and Employment office is unwilling to pay it.

Discourse most prevalent in the story of Roman is the discourse of 'hard work'. He mentions it several times in various occasions including judgements of the bricklayer profession, doing overtime (beside his regular job, he works in moonlighting to tackle this situation), and the need to work hard to feed the family. Roman founded his own family and started to live with his girlfriend. He, e.g. claimed:

"When I lived with my parents, it was OK. I can say there were no worries, everything without worries, it was fine. However, as I tried to care about myself, it started to be harder and harder, I found a girlfriend, we have a six-months-old son together, and I have a high effort to tackle everything, rent, food for the child, everything he needs, it is just demanding" (R9: 039).

The situation is difficult because caring for a child requires a lot of money.

"My situation changed a lot, I did not expect it to be so rough...I expected it to be easy, and it is very hard, I did not expect to be so demanding, I did not expect it so difficult, it is really hard work." (R9: 169)

Another discourse in his story is the discourse of 'welfare dependency'. Living on social benefits is for Roman something very negative. He declares that he does not want to live without work. He does not want to live as his mates. E.g., he said:

"...they [my mates] are used to claiming social benefits, they do not want to work, and so they are in a worse financial situation. I tried hard to do something different, to find work and have a regular income and not to be dependent on social benefits." (R9: 91).

....

"I told to myself that I do not want to live without work. I did not want to be dependent on social benefits. I told to myself that I want to live a better life, as a normal person, I will go and look for work." (R9: 184).

....

"I hope I will never end up with social benefits, I try to maintain my work, to be working all the time to earn money and that is all." (R9: 248)

Other discourses included in this interview were 'need of education' (I wish my son to have education and vocational training, so he can live without misery), 'stealing Roma', 'claiming Roma' and 'discrimination' (when I entered and they saw Roma they automatically answered that they are full, Roma would like to work but they are not allowed to work), and 'career identity' ('I would like to be a driver. I love driving, I immediately did the drive licence when I was 18. I dream about working as a driver').

My reflection: Roman is somehow a typical case of school drop-out. There are three other notable aspects in his story. First, he is among a group of Roma young people who declared that their problems at school and their drop out were caused by problems with schoolmates which are according to young Roma originated in their Roma origin. Several young people mentioned this (Rachel, Lars, Josephine), but not in all cases it led to drop out. Second, notable is that Roman studied something which he does not want to do. He is much more oriented toward a completely different profession. He currently does a completely unqualified job as a dustman. However, for him (according to his statements) it is as having such work is like hitting the jackpot. He is not persuaded about returning to school for both economic and other 'practical' reasons (current stable work, need to feed the family, low interest in the profession of his studies). For Roman there is a discrepancy between his dreams and 'low path' that he accepted (to have at least something).

Story of Derek

Derek is a young man who has a girlfriend, but he still lives with his parents. Derek studied several high schools, but he was unable to finish any of them. First, he studied three years for an electro technician, but he realised he does not want to do this profession. He said that he was very young when he decided about his profession.

"...I decided what I will do for the rest of my life when I was twelve...in the third year of my study when I was seventeen, I realised that I do not want anything like that and that I lost three years of my life. I went to study a different field." (R14: 27).

Generally, he does not want to work in manual professions. He switched to economic school, but he had problems to manage his studies, he had conflicts with the teachers and had stress invoked health problems. Because there was refusing approach from school personnel, he had to drop out. He has been registered at Employment office. He worked together for two years

(the longest job for one year) in the last five years, including the time during his previous studies. Once he was released from the job, and twice he left himself. He thinks that his work opportunities are low due to having only elementary education.

Now Derek studies another high school (in distant studies for the profession of librarian) to get an abitur. He has chosen it although he might prefer another field of study. The advantage of his current study is that he could start in the third school class (not all from the beginning) and that the lectures are only on Saturdays. Although he thinks that abitur is important, education is for him more like an instrument for a better life. He believes that school (a formal qualification) will help him to get more stable administrative work.

“It influenced me a lot [not having school], because I cannot have a stable job while I am still studying.” (R14: 131).

The difficult moment for Derek is that he works (or looks for work, eventually he can anytime go to ALMP program) and studies simultaneously. He thinks that generally he is able to manage it well. However, he argued that he is not able to hold a stable work when he studies. One difficult aspect is that his attention is distracted towards more things and there is also a time aspect included (he, e.g., had to take unpaid leave from job) and he cannot earn as much money. Last time he even had to leave his job due to education:

„I ended in the last job myself in May because I needed time to prepare myself for the final exams.” (R14: 117).

Derek admits that sometimes he has financial problems. He believes that finishing school will open new options for him.

“Sure, because I would concentrate more on work and future and family, the important life chapter will be closed, I would have more stable work and to end due to school.” (R14: 175)

He thinks that he cannot advance in his personal life until he has more security.

One discourse presented in the story of Derek in ‘need of education’. He declares that having education and especially abitur is important to him.

“...studying for a librarian is for me a mean to have an abitur, there is a state exam, and the level of abiturs is equal [this means that abiturs from all schools have the same value].” (R14: 43)

“I believe that it [my situation] is caused by education. I do not think that otherwise I would have different, worse opportunities than any other people in this society.” (R14: 242)

However, for Derek, having education is merely instrumental as a mean for a better life.

"If I have an opportunity of stable income or stable high income, that would cover my living expenses, if I would be able to entrepreneurship, if I had some know how, some idea, I would stop the study and become self-dependent." (R14: 131).

Another minor discourse presented by Derek is 'creative work' ('I would like to do something that would intellectually develop me, not stereotypical, with communication with people, working more with humans than with machines').

My reflection: We can see that for respondents like Derek, there is a perceived great difference of having an abitur or having only elementary education. Elementary education is a crucial disadvantage because years of unfinished studies do not count anywhere. Derek argued that even having ALMP policy course is much better than to have only elementary education.

We can see how young people who are unable to finish their education and return to it later have often been struggling to combine work with their studies. We can note in the story of Derek the moments when school blocked his work opportunities as well as the moments when work blocked him in school. The first aspect is that you need specific time for both work and study. This means that in some situations you have to reduce one type of activity to be able to do the other. The second aspect is scheduling when sometimes the timeframes of both activities are in direct conflict. Third aspect is attention because you are not fully concentrated on both.

My reflection on low level of education and school drop out

One small group of respondents did not enter secondary level education/ended their education after primary school. Most of these were Roma (Karin, Vendelín, Steve, Lisa). The main reason was that they did not want to, or sometimes they were not accepted. Lisa said that she was demotivated by her teacher. We can classify these people as early school leavers. Another, much bigger group of respondents changed and/or did not finish for various reasons their school at secondary level. Typical was also a pattern when young people changed school and then dropped out again (e.g., Simon, Derek). Another interesting aspect is that a lot of respondents dropped from school after more than one year of study (some even briefly before final exams). We can argue that they invested much time and effort which was lost. There is not one clear reason for leaving school. Instead, various dropouts corresponded to different life situations of respondents. Sometimes respondents marked one crucial reason, sometimes they spoke about more reasons. There were even cases when respondents left more schools, but for each they marked completely different reasons to drop out (like Derek in the story above). Reasons for drop out included:

- *problems at school including nasty behaviour (Ken, William) and conflicts with schoolmates (Roman) and conflicts with teachers (Derek)*
- *bad school marks, not being able to tackle the study (Ken, Ellyn, Rachel)*
- *low quality of education (Peter, Nancy), low satisfaction with the studied field or contents of the study (Quido, Derek, Simon)*

- *low interest in education, not learning at home, and/or not attending school (Janine, Bonny, Ben, Herbert, Nancy, William)*
- *preferring working to studying (Derek, Felix, Alan, Peter)*
- *conflict between studying and other activities (Quido, Lucy, Herbert)*
- *low ability to pay schooling fees, financial reasons (Quido)*
- *pregnancy (Sophie, Melinda, Gwen)*
- *family problems (Tobias, Rupert)*
- *health problems (Ellyn)*

Please see also reasons to drop out in individual stories. Maybe the most interesting argumentation was provided by Alan who said that he left school to make money. He added:

"I immediately knew that I wanted to do tiler, but it did not because my mother found that there [at school] pupils smoke cannabis and similar things and she took me away to avoid my partake in this. I told her that I would not do it when I do not want to....My mother wanted me to go to another school, but I said that if I had to leave school I want to go to earn money but I do not want to change to a different field, I want [to study] only this one [original school]." (R72: 29)

We hypothesise that school dropout further contributes to the insecure situation for the following reasons: unfinished education, changed family situation, need to combine school and work. For example, Karin noted that unfinished education is the decisive factor.

"I looked for the job via the internet or sometimes through looking at jobs at Employment office. However, considering jobs via internet, the requirements there, I was without chance with elementary education, I was able to find only with the help of acquaintances." (R2: 89)

Another reason is that the attained but unfinished qualification was not so much used for the work (with some exceptions). For people with only elementary education, it was clearly a limiting factor in getting some jobs despite their real skills (e. g., Peter, Derek). In such contexts, having skills necessary for doing a job was not without formal education (school certificate) sufficient to get a job. In addition, education is sometimes necessary to get a formal certification legally needed for doing a job or for entrepreneurship (Peter, Simon).

One clear strategy was to try to return to education by attending school or other long-time education (courses). Only a few respondents (like Melinda) were able to return to education later and complete it before the time of the interview. Some respondents thought about return to education (Bonny, Karin, Quido, Barbara). Respondents said returning to school was difficult, but they still considered it (Bonny, Bruno, Roman). Bonny felt ashamed:

"I am ashamed to return to high school due to my age...I do not know whether this is proudness or what it is." (R1: 76)

Several young people had and considered possibilities to return to the same school as they had studied before (e.g. Roman), but mostly they wanted to study distant studies (doing

school beside work) – Bonny, Karin. Work was clearly the preferred option because respondents had financial needs and responsibilities (Quido, Barbara).

"I would like to do high school but probably only after I save money for my own rent and I will live alone somewhere in a calm place because now I would not be able to prepare myself for school." (R2: 62)

Many respondents said that despite having a low level of education or not a usable field of education, they would not return to school or that they simply cannot because:

- *they felt too old for school (Ben), it is many years since their last education (Jake)*
- *they have no strength/power to do it (Violet)*
- *the no longer believe in their learning competences (Jake)*
- *they were discouraged by their general situation (Herbert)*
- *this was incompatible with their personal attitude: they are not studying types, they would feel bad in school (Fred, Simon, Otto)*
- *assessment of work and housing situation – they had currently work, they would not be able to feed themselves and keep housing (Ken, Tobias)*
- *financial situation (did not have money), the role of tuition fees was surprisingly strong (Sabina, Otto).*
- *family situation – have to care for the family (Vendelin)*
- *low health (Vendelin).*

We note that some people were not willing to return to school, but they were willing to undertake a less demanding education. For example, Otto was not willing to return to school, but he wanted to attend a specific course for three months.

Prevention and second chance measures

Critical attention aims to measures that prevent drops from the education system and that work with people who have already dropped with insufficient qualifications. Prevention of early leaving from the education system, unsustainable choice of profession and drop out is realised through various counselling and career guidance positions and centres. In some systems, return to education is an established route for young people who left the school system early or who did not finish their education (Davelaar and Spies 2018). Career guidance was reflected in the part about the orientation of young people in the chapter about the strategies. We have seen that in many cases young people dropped out. In this part, we will reflect other measures which try to keep people in education, or which are offered to people who previously dropped out.

Second chance measures (Brown and Roberts 1994, Behrens and Brown 1994a, Walther 2006) are measures, which are aimed at people who failed in first chance measures (e.g., standard education) or who have substantial problems with labour market inclusion. They may serve as alternative routes to employment or as preparing for further education (Brown and Roberts 1994). Kieselbach (2003) argued that for people in a critical social and financial situation,

psychological stabilisation and personal development are often necessary before integration into training and education.

Recognized problem of these measures (but also in some apprenticeship programs) is that they are:

- *unable to overcome multiple problems of the participants,*
- *after completing them, the employability and chances of young people are still very low (Cachón Rodriguez 2003),*
- *they are used as parking schemes (Brown and Roberts 1994, Behrens and Brown 1994a, Gazier 2002)⁴⁰,*
- *young people are cooled out to limited ranges of training opportunities and occupations thought to be appropriate for to their abilities (Bynner and Evans 1994, Burgess 2003) and this may have influence on their motivation (Bendit and Stokes 2003)*
- *are often of inferior quality,*
- *do not keep promises or the results are clearly not as good as expected (Plug et al. 2002, Gehrke and Güntner 2018),*
- *people in these schemes have special contractual status (Cachón Rodriguez 2003),*
- *Institutional discrimination may be included in the education system when some classes and programs have so bad quality and reputation that attending them may be stigmatising (Burgess 2003, Bendit and Stokes 2003, Gehrke and Güntner 2018) or participating in them is perceived as a strong signal of individual deficiency (Behrens and Brown 1994a).*

My reflection on prevention and second chance measures

When considering all data from our research, we can conclude that these measures are limited in both scope and available types. Partial explanation is that the Czech system is less developed and organised differently than those systems in western countries. The most important tool helping young people was after school learning. Some of young people we spoke (e.g. Rudy, Rosalie, Rebeca, Randolph, Josephine, Greta, Laura, Rachel, Bob, Vanesa, Sandra, Josephine, Gwen, Doris, Natalie) used afternoon afterschool individual learning organized by local NGO. Lars and Leo mentioned the same type of help organised by his school. The widespread use of such activities is influenced by the high activity of several NGOs in the locality where CITISPYCE interviews were realised. This support was aimed at improvement in school performance in concrete school subjects and to prepare for final exams. It was used during both elementary education and at high school. It included e.g., contents explanation,

⁴⁰ While parking schemes are mostly perceived negatively, Behrens and Brown (1994a) identified that they can have a sheltering effect, providing place and time to solve urgent personal matters. They can serve also as waiting places (for education, for the economy to take off) as well as places for personal development, which nevertheless was limited (Behrens and Brown 1994a).

advising, testing and repeating, and motivation and psychical support. Some young people (Bob, Randolph) reflected that it helped them to understand what they learned.

"They [NGO workers] helped me a lot because I was afraid. I knew how I should learn and what I should learn, I even knew the contents, but I was afraid of testing. She helped me by testing me and she ensured me that I would tackle it. She became my friend. It was very fine." (R41: 155)

According to their assessment (e.g., Gwen, Doris, Rebeca), this was really very helpful, and it brought concrete results (such as better understanding of the subject, improvement in school marks or an option to stay in the school). Sandra was much grateful because such tutoring helped her to pass the abitur:

"I went there [to NGO] because they [the school] did not want to allow me to undertake the abitur because I had had some fails in subjects. And due to this, I enlisted to NGO for tutoring, and I went there for two months. I had one teacher for English and another one for Maths. And then I passed. I rewarded them because for me it was an unbelievable help." (R42: 162)

We should note that in many cases dropping out from school is for other reasons than problems to tackle studying demands and in such cases, it is unlikely that this type of prevention will help. Another helping tool was the financial provision for paying private English courses (Josephine) provided by NGO. Nancy mentioned that there are funds available for children who need financial support including paying tuition fees.

Another type of second chance measure is attending evening or weekend classes at normal public or private schools. Some of the respondents were considering returning to school or trying to complete education by attending another school – usually by distance study (Bonny, Roman, Peter, Derek, Sophie, Janine, Ellyn). Some respondents like Bonny, Derek, or Peter noted that it was not so important what field they study but that they will complete an appropriate level of education. For the respondents, it was crucial to combine work and studying (time and money dimensions). E.g Sophie reflected that she had to wait until she got some money to be able to pay for a private school and that her mother contributed her financially to tuition fees. Her parent also helped her to study by caring for her son during weekends. Janine was not able to combine the time needed for studying and for working. One important dimension is how difficult the school is (Janine). When schools were too difficult, young people were often not able to withhold. We did not note any systematic effort to return young people to education. Young people usually said that they were themselves interested and active in the effort to find a school. However, active labour market policy programs work in a similar way, with aim to strengthen or replace the previous qualification (see below).

Further education and informal learning

We should not neglect further education and informal learning in our work. Many authors believe that the development of competences and informal learning is a key activity needed for successful transitions (see, e.g. Pais and Pohl 2003). Such activities can be recognised at

both the individual and meso levels – in specific contexts of informal learning such as voluntary organisations and groups (Pais and Pohl 2003). There is a question how informal learning is relevant for young people.

My reflection on further education and self-learning

Some respondents did activities of further education. First type of further education was attendance of specific courses (Bonny, Karin, John, Helen, Melinda, Violet, Ron, Josephine). These courses usually develop specific skills needed for the job. When people did it, they were usually very motivated (the courses are paid).

- Bonny and Karin attended courses necessary for their profession of social worker (they were probably paid by their employer).
- Helen attended a three-month course necessary for the profession of a medical orderly, which further allowed her to work in the field where she worked in the past without appropriate education. Melinda attended a course for an orderly paid by employer.
- Ron attended a course of photography.
- Josephine attended English courses after work. Violet attended Italian courses.
- John noted that in his case certificates from the courses that he attended were not accepted by employers as sufficient proof of qualification.

There were also some self-learners (we mean learning at home using the internet or books) who were sometimes able to learn rather difficult skills: language (Clara), programming (Fred), and specific work procedures in joiner work (Tony). From my reflection, attending courses and self-learning were helpful because young people used it effectively and it in some cases helped them in their work careers. However, most of these activities were privately arranged and paid by the respondents and employers, and there is no single quote about some public support for these activities.

There may be a discrepancy between competency and competence. We noted several cases when young people gained skill for something by doing it, but they lacked a formal qualification for it (Peter, Simon). It may be hard or even impossible to obtain such a qualification easily because it requires the equivalent of vocational training or several years of work practice. However, some employers allowed employees to get training on the job.

"When I looked at the notice boards, all they need vocational training or engineering high school....including where I work now...but luckily the firm takes people for these positions also from internal employees [working on a lesser position in the firm]. They hesitate to take external employees because they [work candidates] do not know it."
(R12: 234)

My final reflection on education

Young people did not complain much about the education system although there are some visible problems with quality in some parts of the system. The problems which we describe in this book are more related to the ability and availability of young people to finish their

education and to use it on the labour market. First, some young people are not willing to use attained education. Second, employers sometimes did not want to accept young people although they had completed vocational training. Third, some young people studied fields with low prospects to get a job. When we try to assess the general education rooted problems of more than 70 young people whose lives are described in this book, we see that in this specific sample the most prominent reason of their insecure position in the labour market is unfinished education and school drop-out. We suppose that this imbalance is caused by both research selection criteria and by the growing severance of this problem, especially among Roma. In addition, with some exceptions the system was not able in case of our respondents to offer any systematic help to young dropouts (NEETS) which would be visible from the interviews. Most of this help was provided by one or two local NGOs and we could not say whether similar help was offered also by other providers in any systematic matter.

Employment protection

Employment protection legislation (EPL) is usually defined as a set of legally obligatory norms for the behaviour of actors in the labour market. Employment protection is by many researchers connected with actual firms' hiring and firing practices, affecting firms' productivity, workers' commitment, turnover, and firm specific/general employment level (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Harcourt et al. 2009, Barbieri and Cutuli 2015, Noelke 2016). On the individual/meso level, it is expected that EPL is advantageous for employees because:

"Legislated employment protection obviously helps provide workers with some assurance that their jobs are reasonably secure and will not be taken away from them in the absence of due process, compensation, and some advance warning." (Harcourt et al. 2009: 968).

On the other side, there are potential risks of strict EPL for employers including prolonged employment of nonproductive or misbehaving employees – so called 'lethargy effect' (Harcourt et al. 2009). The changes of EPL can be attributed to changes in power structure towards employers in society in the last quarter of the 20th century (Harcourt et al. 2009).

Institutions do not necessarily protect all workers equally (Chung 2016). Some authors highlight the relative perspective, i.e., the disadvantaged position of some people when comparing to other groups or to standards in the country (Edwards 1995 in De Witte and Näswall 2003) or when compared to previous periods (Dingeldey et al. 2015). These disadvantaged groups may include young people, labour market entrants, women, immigrants, and low skilled workers (Barbieri 2009). This creates labour market segmentation (dualisation) and may raise new forms of economic and social inequalities (see Barbieri 2009, Barbieri and Cutuli 2015, Chung 2016, Noelke 2016, Gebel and Giesecke 2016). There is a theoretically based expectation and also evidence that in some countries changes in EPL led to the substitution of permanent jobs by temporary employment and reduced mobility from temporal to permanent employment (see Barbieri and Cutuli 2015, Chung 2016, Noelke 2016, Gebel and Giesecke 2016).

The central question for many researchers (Green 2006, Paugam and Zhou 2007, Eichhorst et al. 2011, Scarpetta and Sonnet 2012, Barbieri and Cutili 2015) seem to be whether less protected jobs in the secondary labour market are steppingstones to employment and more stable and secure jobs, or whether they lead to repeated spells of employment and prolonged scarring effects – e. g. in comparison to longer job search. Barbieri and Cutili (2015) in their analysis found both the scarring effect of unemployment and the (lower) scarring effect of temporary employment on future chances of permanent employment, but these effects are of different magnitude in different clusters of the countries. People living in countries in Southern Europe have much lower labour market chances than people in Central and North Europe (see *ibid.*).

Some authors discuss the relation of EPL to employment security of workers (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung and van Oorschot 2011, Chung 2016). Gallie (2017) argued that there is disagreement on the topic whether and how EPL connects with insecurity (see *ibid.*). This relationship is country dependent and is in interaction with other policies such as unemployment protection generosity, and ALMP (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009, Chung 2016). In addition, in different countries, there is a different relationship between job security in the position of insiders with permanent contracts and people having temporary jobs (Chung 2016).

While in the Czech Republic the share of temporary contracts is still low but growing, we also believe that the relationship between EPL and work in the grey economy should be investigated. Scarpetta (2014), e.g., concludes that in many developing countries stringent employment protection is weakly enforced, and many workers in the informal sector are unprotected. Several studies showed that work in the grey economy is common for some groups of young people (e.g., Plug et al. 2002). We have also strong evidence from the Czech Republic that people ‘must’ work without a work contract and with very bad pay and work conditions (see Trlifajová et al. 2015). Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov (2018) have shown how young people in Bulgaria accept such a strategy on their own will. In other words, we believe that for a part of young people the official level of EPL is not relevant and that they do not show up in official statistics (see also the chapter about the strategies).

My reflection on employment protection

First, I will briefly reflect on any employment protection measures which were mentioned by respondents. We note that respondents spoke about specific work regimes rather than about concrete conditions as defined by legislation. Permanent contract, which for decades constituted the golden standard of employment, was not available for most of the respondents in most of their jobs (exceptions are Fred and John). Rather, various other work regimes constituted the reality for young people.

Trial period and fixed term contract

There were several cases when young people were released in the trial period. The trial period was functioning well. For both sides, it is a measure allowing to end the contract in its initial phase. Young people may complain that they do not know concrete reasons for premature

release, but both sides can terminate the contract ‘without saying a reason’. However, the two situations are remarkable. When some employers use the trial period intentionally for short-term employment without the intention of prolongation (for example, Ben spoke about this) and when employers use the trial period to employ a lot of candidates and then choose the right one and then they release most of the other candidates. While formally this is all fully legal, we can understand that young people are disappointed by such behaviour because employers hide their real intentions (see also the previous chapter). In some contexts, employers used an informal ‘trial period’ without providing any form of work contract and sometimes even without the intention to employ a concrete person (this is not legal). On the other side, young people also used the trial period to quickly leave jobs which they were not satisfied with. It was relatively common to leave a job after a week when they found that the working conditions are unsatisfactory or that they are different than their initial expectations.

The most common form of lowered employment protection is fixed term contract. Fixed term contract is combined with the trial period, but usually it is longer. Simon argued that the times changed and ‘nowadays no one will offer you a contract of indefinite duration from the start’. For the first group of respondents, their previous fixed term contract had a screening function and the employers offered them later a permanent contract (Fred, John, Simon). These people, like, e.g., Fred, understood this ‘screening function’ of a fixed term contract.

“When someone said: ‘We have to try you to see whether you are the right person for the job and lately when it functions well, we will surely employ you for indefinite contract’. I had an understanding for this.” (R26: 133)

Specific aspect connected for some young people with fixed term contracts is that these contracts are almost never prolonged although it was initially promised or there is no information about it (Ben, Ken). Ben explains:

“Insecurity...it happened to me last time three quarters a year ago I had a work where I was three months before Christmas. They released us after Christmas due to lack of work. They wanted to do some business contract before Christmas. The lady first promised us to employ us normally in the firm. Then when we came to sign the contract, she told us that we do not have to worry and gave us the contract for some agency work, that it is only for a trial and that they are going to transfer us to the staff, but it was not so. However, how then you can trust them.” (R3: 408).

Sometimes young people left the job themselves because the conditions were not improved as promised (Jake, Fred). Jake explained how he was working on fixed-term contracts and work contracts for specific tasks:

“I was working in the call centre where I step up from operator to administrative position. I would like to stay there if they offered me a full time job. When I asked them, they replied: ‘Yes, yes, that is not a problem’ but it was postponed and postponed until I did not withhold and I left and in other jobs they did not prolong my contract or they cancelled it in the trial period.” (R11: 207)

Jake reflected that some employers use the full options given to them by the law, thus employing a concrete person on a fixed term contract for a long time. Later, Jake commented on the possibility of social policy to help him:

"If they [politicians/employers?] do not have security 'Look here you start a job and if you will work well, everything will be right, it will go on, you will have work, you will have money'... If it is not so, even if you provide training or intensive support...if the employer is not oriented to employ person until he does some mistake or that he cannot fire him...I think that it will probably not help. I meet with this concerning many people that they start a job for one-year contract...and after one year they have a contract for another one year, and yet another one and then eventually a permanent contract or goodbye." (R11: 241)

It is notable that conditions for fixed-term contracts are very relaxed in the Czech Republic, allowing such employment for quite a long time. It is sometimes discussed whether such contracts reduce or increase the security of workers. We should also note that such contracts were common among young people (considering their work paths presented in the second chapter), however they were not much going into detail in the interviews. Actually, among our respondents we noted that people with fixed term contracts may be among the better off in the whole group of our respondents compared to people who were never offered any contracts or they were offered only work contracts for the short duration.

Paying of social contributions and severance payments

Protection of workers is assured in the Czech system by mandatory payment of health and social security contributions during employment. This constitutes a form of protection because contributions are required for entitlement to unemployment insurance. This is valid also for work contracts which are with income above a certain threshold. There were several cases when employers did not pay these contributions and employees were surprised to find out. For example, Clara described how the employer did not pay social security contributions for her and she found it only after some time (she believed that everything is OK). Clara mentioned that the officials found that her employer was guilty and not her, so she did not have to pay it herself, but she left the job. Helen told us a similar tale (see her story for details). Severance payment was almost not mentioned. Only Vanda said that she got three months of severance payments. For her it was a greater help than unemployment insurance.

Bogus work

Next, I will reflect on the bogus work. The logic of bogus work is that people work as self-employed even when they work for only one subject (employer) and they should be formally employed. Employers try to save administration and money for social contributions by this. Usually this is illegal, but the consideration depends on the conditions of concrete cases. Derek explicitly mentioned the denial of bogus work. Usually there is not a free choice between self-employment and employment (Ron, Quido, Lucy). Employers offer the concrete job only in the form of a bogus work contract. Lucy described such situation:

"I worked in a cake shop. However, they told me after one year that they do not have enough money to employ me. I should make a self-employment certificate. And so, I did this self-employment certificate. However, I found that after paying taxes, social and health insurance, there were only 3000 CZK left. And I told myself that I will not accept this." (R29: 5).

In the case of Lucy, the aim of the employer was to save labour costs and Lucy found that either she would have unacceptably low income, or she would have to lose social protection. However, paying contributions is partially mandatory even when you are without work.

Ron worked in two bogus work jobs, which were both delivery jobs for the concrete firm. He ended the first job due to low income, but he was satisfied with the second job. He explained that despite the character of the job, he accepted it due other its features:

"It is financially advantageous for me. They would not employ me and the money they pay are good for a food delivery job. It is well paid in this firm and I would not be able to find a better job now, If I can say that it is a job, because it is entrepreneurship, self-employment..." (R33: 77).

Ron reflects that it is not a secure job:

"I still do not have work security...I am self-employed, so they can fire me anytime. It depends on their firm policy, because it often changes a bit, and so I will see." (R33: 165).

Bogus work was not as often mentioned. However, we know that there is evidence of its wider use in the Czech Republic (Hora et al. 2022, forthcoming). When it was, it led to the reduction of income or security. It was also not clear whether the respondents reflected conditions in which it was legal and in which it was not. We can doubt about its legality especially when they are realised as a normal job and the time investment practically avoids the possibility to work with other 'commissions'.

Agency work

Another way of specific work arrangement is using agency work. Agency work is a job in which a young person is an employee of an agency who hires him/her to concrete firms. According to some respondents (Ben, Ken, John), agency work was widespread in manual professions. John described his experience:

"When I was asking for work last time, it was some firm in manufacturing, and he told me directly that they want people from personal agencies to avoid having to care for personal policy, etc. They do not have their own employees...he immediately gave me the phone number to the agency [name]." (R16: 273).

John tried one agency offer but the job offer was after subtracting provision for the agency under minimum wage. Some respondents described that they used agency work (Clara, Ron, Ben, Ken, Ellyn), while others explicitly mentioned not using it (Sophie) or refusing to do it (Quido, Derek). Ellyn started to use a personal agency because employer, where she wanted

to work, employed people only this way. Ron described that he used two personal agencies for getting occasional work in manufacturing. He criticised one of the agencies for 'chaos'. Ron argued that it is easier for them when they release employees and that they also take provisions for this. Ellyn was using the agency regularly to get an occasional job and she was satisfied. For Clara, agency character of the job was among the reasons why she left the job. She explained:

"... how they behave to the employees arranged through agencies. They wanted these people to leave on their own and then one of my colleagues was released, taken back again, and again released when she was ill. Therefore, it was a good reason to leave." (R17: 82)

Similarly, Ben and Ken had experience with agency work. They reflected the following problems connected with agency work: work on a specific task instead of an employment contract, temporal character of the contract (not prolonging the work contract), work on call, worse conditions than core employees. Quido commented that he was afraid to work through work agencies:

"...I found some work offers from the agencies...there was something, but I am afraid to arrange something through the agencies because my friends had very bad experience with them...due to low wages because they were never paid what they had in the employment contract and what had been promised to them. I do not say that all employment agencies are like that, but unfortunately I know about two with which my friends had bad experiences." (R13: 61).

The main advantage of working through working agencies was that such work was better accessible. Most young people said that working conditions seemed to be worse. We also noted that rarely it led to accepting a concrete person to the staff later.

Minimum wage

Minimum wage was not much mentioned in the interviews. Betty said that the minimum wage is not high enough and that it is not sufficient to cover living expenses. Simon complained that the minimum wage is not much raised compared to how expensive most goods are. Other respondents mentioned the importance of wages in a more general context (Peter, Bonny, Ellyn). They reflected that the wages are low and noncomparable to western countries.

"If the wages were higher in many fields, because a lot of fields are financially underpaid or generally, I think that all wages should be raised, but especially in some fields like nurses of secretaries who work for a little money..." (R12: 188)

"I think that the problem is that a lot of people are skilled craftsmen with vocational training, but they do not want to work for such money, which I understand because if I were a carpenter and someone told me that this guy from Ukraine will do it for half or money. Why should I want it? Why should I accept everything when I know that I should earn twice as much?" (R1: 153).

Low wages were among the factors which many young people assessed as a reason for refusal of jobs. In some cases, the presented wages around CZK 50 per hour was at the level of hourly minimum wage in 2013 and this level of wage was unacceptable for young people.

Specific work contract

Young people often worked on specific work contracts which are not employment contracts. These contracts are for short-term or low scope work and are limited by some restrictions (working hours, etc.). Social security contributions are paid only after going beyond some threshold. Fred, Sabina, Melinda, and Derek worked on such contracts. Mostly it was 'work for doing a specific task' [dohoda o provedení práce] which is limited by 300 hours a year. Melinda noted that she worked mostly on such contracts. For Derek, these contracts were important because it was for him the best or sometimes only possibility to get money (he did not have the opportunity to get an undeclared job and he still studied).

Working on a specific work contract is common for young people to earn money during their studies. We are more interested in cases when young people work on these contracts instead of an employment contract and there are no specific reasons for doing so (they could be normally employed). Jake, for example, reflected that he was not able to make his ends meet and he had to be supported by his parents. For example, Sabina refused working on a work contract because she perceived the concrete offer as short-term (lasting for two months) and irregular (one month of work, two months without work activity, and another month of work). She perceived the disadvantage that social insurance is not paid from such contracts leading to reduced pension benefits. On another occasion, she worked on such a contract because 'at least health and social insurance was paid' for her. She said that for some unemployed these are the last chance to get legal work. We noted that some young people worked only on such contracts or illegally. Working on these contracts brings problems when you are unemployed. Karin described how she had to stop her occasional work in supermarket.

"I ended after 4 months because they needed me, e.g., one day a month and I had problems with evidencing it at the Employment office that I had earned money...M" (R2: 46)... My money raised for one month and then next month they subtracted it from my benefit." (R2: 83)

Reasons to accept low employment protection

In the context of Eastern European countries, Employment protection is in many cases not sufficiently protecting against various forms of precarious employment. This precarity is well described in the second chapter. Here we concentrate on the specific question why young people accept working in insecure working conditions. There are specific reasons why people accept lowered employment protection. For example, Fred describes three concrete reasons (personal situation, family situation, and concrete context of the situation):

"If I were a person with existential problems and looking for security and had a family etc., it would annoy me not to have security and have to pray for my employment contract to be prolonged. However, because I am a person without obligations and

lucky enough not to have existential problems, I could have an understanding for this.” (R26: 136).

There were several people like Lucy and Clara who accepted undeclared jobs because there were without money (desperate) at that time and were not able to find another legal job. Clara explained it in the following way:

“It was set so if you know the laws on Employment office. Here it is set that you are registered at Employment office without financial support. I was without entitlement because I did not have one year of previous working, which you need to get unemployment insurance, and which I did not have. I was without support and I naturally needed to make ends meet and supplement family income. And so, I had some occasional jobs. When you are registered, you are paid health and social insurance, you can earn up to 4000 CZK a month. I have to work on the side without evidencing income or legally to notice Employment office by bringing a certificate that I learned only 4000 CZK.” (R17: 52)

Ellyn described another stance – accepting a work contract instead of an employment contract:

“I was able to defend it [to myself]. I accepted it. I said to myself that occasional work and employment is almost..., no it is not the same, but it earns me money. Occasional work as well as employment. In employment it is good that you have benefits, food coupons, etc. However, for your survival, occasional work suffice.” (R20: 115).

In the cases of Peter and Ron, we saw that they accepted an undeclared/illegal job because they were otherwise of good quality. This dilemma between good undeclared jobs and bad legal jobs was mentioned also by other respondents. People avoid employment protection when their formal employment would mean that they would have to have a deduction from their salary due to debts (this is mentioned by Helen, Simon, etc.).

On the other hand, there were reasons why people preferred legal work. Lucy and Simon, e.g., said that they were afraid that they will lose benefits. Lucy accepted illegal work only because she was in despair and in crisis after divorce with partner. She commented on the other reason why she preferred legal work.

“For me, the feeling that I have an employment contract was more important than physically earning money. I wanted to be employed, to have a paper in my hand that I am employed, and not have to go to Employment office. It was really deterrent for me to go there and see those people who went there. It was for me like no, no, I do not want to be there.” (R29: 45).

My reflection on Employment protection legislation

We would like to discuss how some EPL is related to insecurity. First type of insecurity connected to EPL is in avoiding employment/work contracts by employers (Betty, Helen). Second type of insecurity is connected to not fulfilling other employment conditions like

paying wages on time and at the level given by the contract, not paying or avoiding mandatory security contributions, and lowering the protection of health. Betty also criticised the minimum/guaranteed wage because she thought it was very low (let them try to live with that wage themselves). This type of insecurity has several identifiable consequences.

- Young people are in a disadvantaged position when negotiating with employers because they are not sufficiently protected by existing legislation (see Betty, Vendelin),
- They have no proof about their work and easily they are left without a wage or with only partial payment (Doris, Betty, Bruno),
- Other conditions of the jobs (security, time schedule, etc.) are not fulfilled,
- Young people are not officially employed which leaves a scar in their CV and it worsens their position when negotiating loans (Betty),
- Psychical consequences (Betty).

Some other insecurity relates to contract or work where the amount of work directly influences wages and simultaneously the productivity is at least partially influenced by unpredictable factors. These forms of work are less secure because people need stability of employment and income as it was reflected, e.g., by Quido (who worked as self-employed financial advisor). Similarly, insecurity was reflected also by self-employed carpenter Tony.

Third type of insecurity relates to the temporal character of the job. We have seen four types of such temporal jobs: regular employment (Ben), bogus work (Ron), work on a specific task, and undeclared work (Betty). There are of course contexts when such contracts are advantageous for both sides. However, more often this is another type of disadvantage based on the marginalised position of young people on the labour market.

Systems clearly restrict some types of work behaviour with the intention to reduce misuse of employment systems (see, e.g., discussion by Derek). However, part of the labour market constitutes a grey zone, where employers and sometimes unemployed avoid conditions of employment protection. John nicely characterised it as 'hold it here and I will bring the money'. There are also specific reasons why some people do not care about employment protection or avoid employment protection themselves. On the other hand, there were people like John unwilling to compromise in the aspect of avoiding formal contracts set by law (e.g., work in the grey economy, bogus work, etc.). Informal employment and Employment office registration is sometimes in necessary conflict (Peter). This conflict may help to legalise employment.

Unemployment protection and social assistance

The main role of unemployment protection is generally seen in the income protection of unemployed people – to protect people against poverty and material deprivation during transitional states between various economic statuses (education, employment, maternity leave, etc.) and in the periods of economic downturn. They are one of the main sources of economic security both during transitions and when employed. Sufficient (i.e., generous and reasonably long) unemployment protection allows people who lost their jobs to stay in

unemployment for a longer time without a fatal reduction of their income. This on one side can help them to find a better job, but on the other time, it may potentially prolong their unemployment spell. Protection is often conditional on previous employment history of the unemployed because unemployment benefits are based on unemployment and contribution records (Chung 2016). This may lead to a dualization of protection, where the core of workers (insiders) is protected with social insurance benefits, while others have to rely on social assistance, or they are left without support (see Davidsson and Naczyk 2009).

Social security in the Czech Republic is based on 'composite principle'. In the situation of unemployment, unemployment insurance, and social assistance benefits should be typical benefits, but they are sometimes topped by other benefits. This means that the concrete benefits (you get) depend on your current situation and you can combine some benefits while the combination of other benefits is restricted. For example, among our respondents:

- Betty claimed support for housing, social assistance benefits, and support for children,
- Amanda claimed support for children, parental benefits, and social assistance.
- However, Ellyn could not have an entitlement for social assistance benefits because she already had an invalidity benefit.

Most topping benefits are benefits of Czech system of social support [státní sociální podpora], second tier of social security system. Claiming of parental benefit ('rodičovský příspěvek') was often mentioned by women (and some men – Roman). This benefit is rather generous and easy to get because it is not means tested (Sophie, Karin, Amanda). Some of the respondents (e.g., Sabina, Betty, Sophie, Fred, Tony) reflected that they got a housing benefit ('příspěvek na bydlení'). Housing benefit is typically (except parental benefit) the only benefit that is available to people who are better off among people in need. Although there is also a means test, it is not so strict as in other means-tested benefits and it depends on where you live (big city or small town, village). There are other conditions related to type of housing that you live in. Ellyn, for example, was not entitled to a housing benefit because she was formally still living with her parents although her father expelled her from the flat. Tony and Sabina also got 'child supplement' for their children when children were young. Sabina mentioned that after reform, the benefit entitlement criteria for child supplement were made much stricter and that they are no longer eligible. Other benefits (outside of the social support system) rarely claimed by our respondents were benefit for children's foster care (Magda) or disability insurance benefit (Ellyn), and disability care benefit for the child (Simon). Other types of help are provided by NGOs in the form of services, including, e.g., legal counselling, etc. This is discussed in detail below.

Eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance, and social assistance

People are often not social benefit claimants because they are unable to fulfil eligibility criteria. Usually there is some line or barrier strictly distinguishing the claiming and nonclaiming unemployed, while the difference in the situation of people close to the line may be negligible (Hora 2008b). For unemployment insurance, the eligibility criteria are based on a rather strict test of previous work records. For social assistance, people are often unable to

fulfil eligibility criteria due to cohabitation with a working person or people – this is most often the case of working partner of working parents (Hora 2008b).

Eligibility criteria are in interaction with the strategies of the unemployed, as we defined them in the previous chapter. People, e.g., non-take-up social benefits because they expect they are not eligible, because of a feeling of honour and need to avoid potential feelings of embarrassment and because they do not have internalized gloomy images of the functioning of social assistance (Hora 2008b). Unemployment benefits may (or may not) also serve as a motivation factor for young people to register at Employment office (Dingeldey et al. 2015, 2019). There are various other motivation factors including better chance to get social benefits, payment of health insurance, and free health care for social assistance claimants (Hora 2008b, Trifajová et al. 2015).

Eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance

Only respondents who had longer jobs have been usually eligible for Unemployed insurance (see below). For many of our respondents, unemployment insurance was not easily available. Some people never get it despite occasional work experience (Simon, Ron, Peter, Quido, Jake, Ron) or they got in only once during their whole working lives (Fred, Ben, Clara, Vanda, Betty). The usual reason for nonclaiming was that young people did not fulfil entitlement requirements. When asked whether he claimed social insurance, Fred applied:

„Rather not. It was because there are conditions, you have to work one year in the last three years or something similar... I did not look intentionally at these criteria during my work career... only when I wanted to enlist at Employment office or I enlisted I found out whether I am eligible or not, but I was not eligible in most occasions because either my work contracts were not long enough, or there were not long enough pauses between them [claims?] or something else. And so, I did not fulfil these conditions... and I got it, I think twice in ten years or even more of unemployment.” (R26: 95)

Fred also reflected that he would not get social assistance benefits due to his family situation (living in the house of his parents). Jake said that he was not well oriented, and he just accepted when he was told that he was without entitlement. This shows that some young people are not well oriented in the system of benefits and they are rather passive during the process of benefit claiming. Peter said that he was not able to get all employment evidence in the given time limit and the entitlement was lost. This has shown that claiming requires effort which was not always invested by the unemployed.

Clara and Peter described how social insurance benefit is reduced for people who leave their previous work ‘voluntarily’ or ‘after agreement’ (this means that both sides agree on termination of the contract).

“I went for medical treatment, and I was a few months at home... and when a person leaves work on his/her own will, he/she has entitlement only 45% percent of his former salary, but if they expel me it is 65 percent. I had 45 percent of my former average salary for one and a half years.” (R17: 93).

This is about the relationship between entitlement and level of benefit when behavioural criteria are considered. While the entitlement criteria for unemployment insurance seem to be strict, there are some additional conditions that lessen their strictness for some groups. Karin mentioned that she got unemployment insurance due to the entitlement created by her parenting period. Ben pointed out on another aspect of Czech unemployment insurance that raises the level of protection. When the whole benefit is not claimed during the unemployment spell, the rest of the benefit can be claimed in the next unemployment spell. This is particularly relevant for people like Ben who worked in many short-term jobs.

Besides unemployment insurance, there is a benefit 'Financial support in training' provided in the Czech Republic for people who partake training within the labour market policy. Among our respondents, Vanda explicitly mentioned this. This benefit is much more easily accessible because it is not mean tested, nor the previous work tested. It can be counted as 'unemployment scheme benefit' – these are specific measures which connect benefit provision for young people with their participation in orientation, training or internship or other labour market integration activities.

Eligibility criteria for social assistance

We reflect here the entitlement for the main social assistance benefit 'Support for living'. The respondents sometimes lived on social assistance (Vendelín, Otto, Magda, Bruno, Roman, Simon, Betty, Helen, Eugenie) at least for some period of their life. Knowledge of the entitlement conditions of these benefits by respondents was influenced by who cared about the benefit claiming in the family. Respondents were less informed when their partner cared for benefit administration.

There was also a relatively numerous group of respondents who never claimed social assistance (Ron, Derek, Janine, Jake) or it was only once and for a short duration. Social assistance benefit was not available for respondents who lived with other family members, who worked, or who had at least some savings or property (Ben, Derek, Betty, Jake, Fred). Derek explained:

"I tried to get it [social assistance] several times. It was not possible. The clerk every time looked at me and said that when I live with the other family member who is working, I have no entitlement and that she will not talk about it with me any longer." (R14: 193).

Living with parents of other relatives like, e.g., with siblings is the most typical disqualifying condition of social assistance in the Czech Republic. It is related to the common household income test. The access to social assistance is somehow limited for previously employed, previously married, and lone parents – despite the fact that they do not have this money counted towards the means/income test – because that situation is assessed including this 'fictional income' (Sabina, Bruno, Melinda). Melinda and Bruno had the problem that they were formally counted with former partners (husband, wife) who left them (and with whom they were in the process of divorce) and they lived separately. Bruno's income was counted together with his girlfriend who left him. He was denied benefits for three years. Melinda said:

"I did not go demean myself [to the social assistance office]. I already knew that they are not going to give me anything until I divorce. And the divorce lasts long." (R30: 15)

Another important aspect, which the respondents (Ben, Magda, Betty, and Melinda) mentioned, is the common assessment of social assistance claimants and this is the interaction with reduced or delayed benefits. Ben commented on this situation.

"There happened a situation when the mother got ill, he [brother] lost work and the mother stopped to get sickness benefits and my fixed-term contract ended and we had no benefit entitlement for three months. We were counted together, and it happened that we did not get any money." (R3: 206).

Similarly, Betty argued that the benefits were considered including money for alimony from her former boyfriend, but she does not really have them. She got only part of the money back because the income for the former months was not counted.

Having own money was another barrier for entitlement for some of the respondents. Ellyn reflected that she did not have an entitlement for social assistance because she had an invalidity benefit and also she had 'saving for housing'. Saving for housing is a special program of saving for housing needs supported by state. However, when you have this program, it is counted as a property and it disqualifies you from claiming social assistance. This is so even though the abolishment of the program relates to severe financial sanctions from the side of the bank that you have your money deposited within. Betty described the process of rationalisation (discouragement) of social assistance clients.

"What I can get I found due to a friend of mine, not due to Employment office. I think that these workers make a clear effort to discourage people from claiming social benefits. How many papers they want....and their insolence. They want to seek your things to ensure that you have nothing. I had some saves...They told me: 'You have saves so what you want from us?' I told them that this money is for my future. However, 'no, you have money, you have a car and so you need nothing'. Therefore, they draw you to the bottom until you have nothing and afterwards they give you some money that does not even cover your housing. This is more destruction than a support." (R22: 260).

When your incomes (e.g., from a temporary contract) are stopped, claiming social assistance is possible only after three months (Magda).

„It is strange that when you lose work you have no entitlement. You have an employment contract for limited duration and then for unlimited duration, but when you have a contract for limited duration and they release you, you have no entitlement for three months, and three months you are without money because you are unable to save from your salary and you have to live for something, you have to pay, and this is what social assistance offices do not understand. They tell you that you should save, but from what?" (R7: 349)

It is because of the entitlements your incomes in the previous three months are assessed. This was also the reason for the emerging of some above-mentioned situations. However, Magda was unable to save money during her work. Eugenie mentioned that child support benefits are counted on the base of her previous good situation and that it is not corresponding to her current bad situation.

There was also a group of respondents (Janine, Ron, Herbert) who did not ask for social assistance or other benefits sometimes despite that they might be eligible for it. They stated the following reasons:

- They were not oriented in the system and familiar with the procedures. Quido said: "I got no financial support. I have to admit that I am completely nonproficient in this. I do not even know whom I should contact." (R13: 97)
- After their own assessment of their financial situation, they thought they would not be eligible (Fred)
- They refused to ask for social assistance benefits because it would be embarrassing for them (John)

Young people also often reflect other harsh criteria for claiming social assistance or for help in crises (e.g., Magda, Sabina, Melinda, Eugenie). Some respondents believed that they are intentionally denied help. Magda argued that within social assistance some people are helped more than others. Social assistance workers according to her opinion 'make the same options secret' 'telling clients that there is nothing available for them'. On the other hand, others got help and there is an unequal approach. Besides the main two social assistance benefits, there are two other facultative lump sum benefits provided in case of emergency or other specific situations (release from prison, etc.). Non-providing this money was sometimes essential and a source of complaining. For example, Helen described that she was refused when asking for lump sum benefits in for vacuum cleaner and washing machine (these benefits are at the discretion of the street level worker). However, she was given 1500 CZK for the baby stroller. Bruno was given money for the medicine of the handicapped child, but he must repay them with future benefits (it was a loan). Eugenie was not given support after her house burned down. Ellyn and Bruno mentioned that she got 1000 CZK benefit.

My reflection on eligibility criteria

The system of social protection of the unemployed in the Czech Republic is very modest, clearly putting Czech Republic to 'transitional' (Eastern European) model of social protection. Eligibility conditions for unemployment insurance were made more strict and young people are usually not among its claimants. Eligibility conditions in some cases also clearly disadvantage for people in need – this is well identifiable, e. g., in the case of lower unemployment insurance benefits for Clara. Respondents including Clara also reflected that claiming benefits mean restrictions on their work activities. Derek decided not to take up the unemployment benefit because he could not work when claiming. In the past, working with 'working disregard' during claiming unemployment benefit was allowed, but this was cancelled due to frequent misusing.

Social assistance is (intentionally or unintentionally) set in a way which is very ‘rule dependent’ and inflexible. The system seems to be dividing people into those ‘who have’ and those ‘who have not’, strengthening the impression about work disqualification (that only people in households where no one works can claim). Material situation of people is in many cases different from the situation which we would expect considering only the rules given by law. Unemployed are in most cases completely unable to influence their claims within the system and they are left without support.

Benefit generosity/level of protection

Second relevant dimension for the assessment of the social system is about the level of income protection during unemployment. We expect that the level of income protection is going to be low. Hora and Žižlavský (2009) have found that people claiming social assistance benefits mostly declare low ability to live with their current income. People often claim that social benefits are high enough to survive and making ends meet is very difficult (Hora 2008b). Still, some people are grateful that at least something is provided to them (Hora 2008b). They saw these benefits as crucial for their ability to keep housing (Hora 2008b).

The more generous unemployment protection is linked to a higher level of job security (Anderson and Pontusson 2007, Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009). This relationship is stronger for temporary workers (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009). We can understand this as spill-over effect. It can be also argued that workers who feel to be in insecure employment support more unemployment benefits than workers who feel more secure (Paskov and Koster 2014). There is a paradox that putting benefit level and duration aside, also social benefits are not as secure as expected. The following main factors contribute to this: threat of sanction, unregular payment of benefits, and loss of income as a consequence of temporary work (see Trifajová et al. 2015).

My reflection on the level of income protection

We first reflect here on the assessment of unemployment insurance benefits. People like Ben, Betty, Helen, Tony, Derek, Sabina, Vanda, Eugenie, or Fred got unemployment insurance benefit at level of 2500-5000 CZK. Betty declared the lowest benefit of around 2500 CZK (paid after a period of parental leave). Tony (his story is in the second chapter) reflects that his unemployment insurance benefit was horribly low (around 4000 CKZ) due to his low flat rate contributions during self-employment. On the other side, paying social security contributions for him by Employment office was (as he says) a great help. Derek, Tony, John, and Fred commented that the level of insurance benefit depends on your previous income. Derek compared two situations – one was after one of his previous jobs and the second was after the last job.

“The benefit was counted...the wage that the benefit was counted from was around 17 000 CZK, so it was 65% from 17 000, or 55%, even this are nice money. In that period [after a previous job], it helped me a lot due to this level [of benefit]. Comparing to 3000 or 4000 now.” (R14: 195)

Eugenie commented that the drop of income from sudden unemployment of about fifty percent is substantial. We can identify that an inherent problem in the system for most young people is that previous incomes from employment or self-employment were low (or that they paid only at the minimum level in their self-employment). On the one hand, unemployed people reflect that the amount provided is low to cover basic needs like housing. Ben reflected on the level of benefit.

"When you are used to the income of about 13 000 CZK [wage] and you get 5000 CZK, this is a great problem. Because I have to pay some things regularly. Where are money for alimony or for food? It [benefit] is nothing nowadays. And because you are without work, no one will help you. I say there is really little left." (R3: 214)

On the other hand, some of them like Fred are glad to have it (he commented 'it is generous', and 'great help'). John means that unemployment insurance is sufficient if you are willing to be humble. Vanda commented:

"It was at least something. It was not 'nothing'. It was not plenty, but it is better than to have nothing." (R21: 171).

We can generalise that although unemployment insurance is modest, it is still helpful, and that people usually take it as it is. Another important issue is that the benefit is provided for a very short time compared to some other EU countries (usually for five months). Although young people reflected this, they were not addressing the issue of possible benefit prolongation.

When considering social assistance, the level of benefit depends on the composition of the concrete household and whether these benefits are topped by other benefits from other parts of social security systems (e.g., in the case of Simon, Betty). People in material need often reflected that social assistance benefits are not high enough to feed the family, they are only sufficient to survive, they are not enough for the whole month, etc. (Vendelín, Bruno, Roman, Betty, Magda). Betty commented on her situation:

"Benefits are sufficient when you work. However, imagine that I have to pay for a flat. I get 9000 CZK together and they [social security clerks] write me letters that I am over some amount. However, I have to pay for a flat which is 6000 CZK a month, kindergarten...I do not understand how they can count [benefit calculation] that I should be able to feed the child from this...[the problem is] also with alimony. Father did not pay it for half a year, but until it is half a year, no one is interested, interested what I will live from, they do not care...I do not understand whether someone lives like that, is able to manage it, because I think that is not possible to live only from benefits, have housing and care for the child. It is not possible to tackle it without the help of others." (R22: 100).

Bruno and Antonia noted that they have to use part of social assistance for personal needs to pay part of their housing. Rents are too high to be covered by housing benefits. Roman explained that he gets money once a month, he pays for housing costs and other related expenses, and he is without income for the rest of the month. He took occasional work and

from this they (family) survived. Young people often ‘solved’ this situation by borrowing money (Karin, Magda, Bruno, Roman, Betty), help from relatives (see below), and informal work (Betty). It seems that borrowing money for draconic interest rates was not an exception. In this case, social assistance benefits are not working as intended.

Now we will discuss how this is related to the relevance of benefits for potential work motivation and we will discuss how some young people reflect their ability to leave the benefit system for work.

Unemployment trap and poverty trap discourse

In society, there is a widespread view that many people are better at social benefits than working and that they are unmotivated to leave for work. Unemployment generosity is in an international comparison leading to a more prolonged unemployment spell (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009), but the authors point out that it does not have to be valid on the individual level (see *ibid.*). The first supposed type of effect is that prolonged unemployment benefit duration discourages looking for a job and thus leads to prolonged unemployment (Lalive 2007). Many studies conclude that unemployment benefit has only a minor role in long-term unemployment and that the length of unemployment benefit is more important than replacement rates (Schmid 2002c). Literature usually empirically supports this argument, but the prolongation of unemployment benefits has to be great to have a substantial impact (Lalive 2007). The second related question is whether prolonged benefit duration leads to more quality and more durable employment.

My reflection on unemployment trap and poverty trap

Unemployment trap and poverty trap discourses are presented in the reasoning of some young Roma. The ‘calculating discourse’ (comparing various options on financial grounds) is implicitly present in this kind of reasoning. Peter (R12: 189) argues with the kind of reasoning typical for the discourse of ‘trap of unemployment’. Because wages are low and the available kind of work is not very attractive, it is more suitable for the unemployed to get social insurance or social assistance support (because they will get the same money as when they work). We can see similar reasoning in the story of Simon who argued that offered wages would not cover their basic expenses.

“We solve our situation with Employment office, that we claim social assistance. Moreover, I look for work, where I will earn at least 12-13 thousand CZK, because this is the amount that we would lose if I went to work...I know it does not sound good, but a person has to protect his family first.” (R15: 83)

Randolph explained why according to him, many Roma depend on social benefits.

“They work on occasional work. Because no one wants to work permanently, because when they live somewhere....they are dependent on benefits...the state gives them...about 12 000 CZK all together and they would earn 13 000, 14 000, and that 12 000 would be withdrawn from them. And he would be worn out...and he would have almost nothing from it practically because he would be only 2000 in addition. Or in

many cases it is the opposite that he works hard and earns less than 12 000, and it is withdrawn, and he is the same as before. Therefore, people work on occasional jobs to earn some money for a short time." (R45: 53).

Some of our respondents admitted that they did not declare their low or occasional incomes because they knew that the earned amount would be deducted from their benefits. There is a paradox that these people earn more money this way than by accepting formal employment.

In addition, the common assessment of the family in the social assistance test works as an effective barrier to work for some young people. This was explained by Bob:

"I have completed vocational training as a car mechanic. I do not have work because everywhere they want a permanent income and that means they would withdraw money from my mother. It is not possible to work on the side or have an occasional job...I go to do only occasional jobs (R46: 3).

Derek argued in the completely opposite direction. He preferred the possibility of occasional income to claiming unemployment insurance.

"I have an entitlement for unemployment insurance, but I said to myself that I will rather do something for short-term contract, anywhere, anything, and not to sit at home. Because the unemployment insurance, if I got it, it would be even lower than 4 500 CZK which I can earn when unemployed. And so, for me it is advantageous to do something." (R14: 183)

This argumentation is based on a rule that forbids claiming unemployment insurance and working on working disregard. In addition, when you live with someone who has an income, you are out of social assistance benefits (see above).

Although the level of social benefits is low, some respondents reflect on various unemployment trap situations reflecting both unemployment insurance and social assistance. This is the reason minimum wage was substantially raised in the last years. Situation of unemployment trap happens due to low wages and because it is much easier to get an occasional job than to get something stable with a proper employment contract. In such contexts, some strict rules work to further direct legal behaviour. The unemployment trap is real in cases when there is only irregular additional income, and it is subtracted from the latter benefits (this was the case of Karin). The role of working disregard is often discussed. On the one hand, it may be seen as a way to increase the income of the unemployed, to motivate them to take an irregular or occasional job and preserve their work habits (Derek). On the other hand, it is considered a measure that is misused to cover undeclared work (Betty) and that demotivates people to look for an independent job on the labour market. In other words, when you try to work on occasional works legally, it brings you a lot of trouble. We must wonder why these people do not accept something more paid and more stable. Sometimes they do not want, but sometimes nothing like that is available.

Specific aspect of this situation sometimes is that when a child earns money, his/her parents lose it. And some parents are against the employment of their children. While the common

assessment of the income situation of the household is realised with an aim to save public money, in such cases, it blocks the change of the situation because people think that social benefits are more secure than employment. Furthermore, in other contexts we noted that common assessment is blocking some individual chances (see above).

Discourse of claiming Roma

This is another specific discourse relatively widely shared among both Roma and non-Roma people (it is often mentioned in the stories). Key parts of this discourse are the following characteristics: 'Roma are not interested in work and they do not look for it', 'bit families have privileges and claim a lot of money', 'Roma are masters of claiming', 'Roma people claim benefits and work on the side', 'Roma have property not corresponding to their proposed poor material situation', 'Roma get everything, white get nothing'. Some respondents (e.g. John) also argued that the provision of social benefits should be more conditional on giving something back or that those benefits should be abolished.

The most radical version of this discourse was presented by Bob. Bob who is Roma himself is deeply unsatisfied with the situation in Roma community and he is very critical to his peers proposedly causing it. We present here a lengthy excerpt from his opinion.

"First of all, to be honest with you, I do not feel good here. I am Roma myself, but I do not understand these people, what they are doing here, this is a total mess. They do not value [these Roma] what they have got...I would put them somewhere...where they would start to regret not valuing this...I know a lot of normal Roma people who work and they are good people....If I were like these people [first group] living on social benefits, not going to work, I would appreciate this. However, they steal in the streets instead." (R46: 27)

To sum up, the discourse is about the widely shared view that some Roma are masters of claiming social benefits and that the state tolerates their claiming while it does not tolerate the claiming of other social groups (e.g. lone mothers, young people with functioning families). It is important to know about this discourse because it shapes the reasoning of many people including some young people in need.

My reflection on income insecurity

We should note that when social benefits or free social insurance payments (during unemployment) are provided, they are functioning in the way to provide income security. The system may be modest, but some people accept it as they are glad to get at least something. For example, Ellyn reflected that without social benefits their situation would be very bad.

"I have 1st grade of disability [pension] and I have 4800 CZK and I think that it is great. It covers my rent and telephone bill. I am very glad for it... I would be no miracle for other people, but for me these are great money...If I had not this money, I would end up somewhere, I do not know, somewhere on the street. I would never return home. Never, no chance. I would end up in some squat somewhere. I rather would not think about it, because maybe I would not handle it." (R20: 135)

This is how many people like Ellyn were protected against even more detrimental consequences of insecurity. We noted that many young people were left without support. System expects that the family will care for them, but it is not always the case. Lower income security is apparent also in cases when the social benefits are low (even in the Czech context) even when you have an entitlement for unemployment insurance. This means that this system seems to protect more people who are better among the unemployed.

In this context, we understand that the only way to solve the unemployment trap vs. income security dilemma is:

- To raise wages to the level where they are not at the same level as social benefits (this is happening in the last years),
- To maintain social benefits are the level which is acceptable from the perspective of poverty protection (because we want to avoid detrimental consequences),
- Provide specific ‘in activity benefits’, and abolish the common assessment of people in the same household in cases when it blocks the employment of one of its members,
- And provide real education and employment opportunities which have legal status and offer a real escape route from above-mentioned dilemma.

We will discuss such options in the next part of this chapter.

Active labour market policies

Active labour market policy is in the Czech Republic the main skill development tool past initial formal education. In this part, we discuss programs which provide classroom training or training on the job and subsidised workplaces with the supposed existence of a training element. Policy aimed at job search assistance and matching is discussed below in the section about the interactions. We focus here on the experience of young people with the measures, while the interaction leading to a general stance towards these measures is discussed also below in part about the interactions.

The policies can be proactive in the sense that they work as prevention of long-term unemployment or reactive which try to solve existing unemployment (De Koning and Mosley 2002). For young people, ALMP policies often serve as compensatory measures aimed to tackle previous deficits in quality of the education system or various unemployment/inactivity pathways of young people (Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018). Active labour market programs are in the Czech Republic principally open to all unemployed. However, in practice, for obvious reasons (money, scope, and effectiveness), the ALMP policy is limited to a relatively small and selected category of unemployed. ALMP in the Czech Republic is not so much targeted to young people (Bussi et al. 2019a), mainly because their problem is perceived as less pressing than the problems of other groups and because the solution is assessed to be sufficient (see Bussi et al. 2019a).

A vast number of studies have shown that the effectiveness of ALMP policy depends on appropriate targeting to people who are ‘ready enough’ to participate and able to benefit

from the measure and who would not be able to get a job without it. According to Burgess (2003), the associated risk is that the criteria for eligibility for participation may have been too narrow or too wide. This is relevant also for young people who are often seen as more prosperous unemployed (compared to other groups) and thus they may be omitted from the measures. However, the key problem that is revealed within some studies is that there may exist the most disadvantaged ‘the remainder group’ of people, who are not involved in the measures or for whom the measures are not very effective (see McNeish and Lacle 2003). The other aspect is that the most disadvantaged are least expected to find the services. In other words, within one target group, there are subgroups with different work prospects.

Training courses

Training courses are the traditional cornerstone of active labour market policy. In the Czech Republic, the offered courses are short and more theoretically oriented or aimed to some specific skills (e.g., driving licence, electrotechnics, welding) – see Hora et al. (2020). Some authors (Behrens and Brown 1994a) argue that the effects of training programs are highly dependent on general situation on the labour market. Gained skills and work experience tend to perish quickly when not used in consequent employment (Behrens and Brown 1994a).

When considering the training courses, we reflect here mainly on the respondents who really attended the training course – Otto, Vendelín, Bruno, Clara, Peter, Vanda, Karin, Simon, Magda, Sabina, Melinda, and Steve. All respondents attended standard courses organised by Employment office except for Steve who attended a retraining course during his sentence in prison. Clara generally appreciated idea of training courses.

“...that is fine at the Employment office that they pay for the training course, which helps you to have more chances to find work. I consider this positive for people who are without work that they have training paid for, they have something to do, they can learn new things, I think this is very productive and fine from the side of Employment office.” (R17: 136)

On a positive note, Vanda mentioned that her retraining was supposed to continue her previous education and work experience. She was glad that she was also offered another course to widen her skills, that she learned new things and it was interesting. On the other hand, some other respondents referred to some courses being not relevant for job search. Karin was sent to a course of ‘financial grammar’ (how to manage money in her life) which she could not use to get a job. Magda attained courses of ‘financial grammar’, psychology, and basics of computer which according to her were not helpful in finding work. Magda reflected on contents of the courses:

“Completely useless. Some financial grammar [sic]. It is completely useless to me because I do not do this. Then some psychology, no I have seminars that give me more than some psychology. Or computers, well, computers, but only basics and this is all. It will not employ you.” (R7: 157)

Vendelín mentioned that he was sent to the course of economy, which he could not use anyway, and which did not correspond to the manual character of his previous jobs. Otto mentioned training courses for the development of general skills (basics of computers) which are necessary but not enough to get jobs. However, Otto reflected that after the course of basic computer skills he was able to look for a job himself.

Young people characterised the attained courses in the following way. Some of the respondents mentioned that the training was not long and good enough (Peter, Clara, Vanda). Clara completed one-week training for a bar woman which was according to her not sufficient. Peter said that training courses are of low extent and quality: you learn little, it is not enough for practical use, it is too theoretical. Peter put great importance on the practical element of training during retraining. He connects insufficient quality also with Employment office paying only the lowest extend of the course. He paid himself the difference to have a full extend of the course.

Unemployed also have to finish the course successfully. This was reflected by Bruno, who did a training course for an industrial firm making plastic parts. He complained that at the end of the course there was a test which he did not pass (because he was slower than the allowed limit of two minutes). Melinda also did not finish training for cosmetics, but she did not mention why.

Another critical aspect of the training course is to be able to get a job in the field that the unemployed are trained in. Bruno attended five courses, but he was never employed afterwards. Vanda mentioned that there is a formal problem because the course is not assessed to be equal to having education in the same field (it is not recognised by employers).

"It is a good thing [training]. However, it depends on whether it helps person at the labour market. I have a feeling that these courses are not sufficiently appreciated. That it is assessed that you have nothing. And when you realise that you put your money into it, time, and you want to learn it, you can be disappointed that it is useless." (R21: 195)

Some employers state that retraining without work experience is not enough (Clara, Lucy). Lucy said:

"I started to do retraining for accountant. [I wanted] to do something different than before where I had not been able to get a job. Thus, I tried this. However, unfortunately, without work experience, no one is willing to accept anyone. You have a course and a certificate which you can only stick at home on the wall and that is all." (R29: 5).

...

"When I finished the accounting course, I wanted to do at least occasional work...or even to do it for free to get work experience. They all thought that I am crazy. I told to them, I only need work experience, I am on maternal leave, I do not need money, I only need work practice. 'Could I work for you to see how it is functioning?' ...They gave me the training course, but no one told you: 'Go over there, they will give you work experience'. That training course would be useless without work experience...They

fulfilled what they were to do. I did retrain, I paid for it and that was all for them. And for me it was an end as well.” (R29: 27)

Lucy further commented that retraining should be accompanied/continues with work praxis. Training is incomparable with vocational education, but these two aspects together should ensure that you are able to do a job (to know everything needed and be able to prove that you can do it). Therefore, people would have more security that their training is not going to end in vain.

Even in the situation when people are retrained for concrete employers, there is no warrant of acceptance. Vanda and Sabina were trained for a concrete employer who guaranteed their training and who meanwhile bankrupted. Otto described that he successfully finished two training courses for two different professions (plastic making industry and social services), but in both cases, he was not among the chosen candidates for the job. We may note that these retraining were both for concrete employers. He was deeply disappointed and refused to have any other future training. Other respondents (e.g., Ben, Helen, Sabina) described similar experiences (not getting a job after training) but is not always possible to clearly say why they did not aspire for these jobs. Sabina mentioned that you have to apply the attained knowledge soon, otherwise it is lost. For Ben other work opportunity emerged. However, he thinks that he would not be able to find work in the field. In some cases, respondents only during their training have found that they do not want to do this work (Helen).

Another aspect connected with training is the possibility to do what people are trained for as self-employed. Simon talked about this aspect in the following way:

“It was good until I have found that the training is completely useless for me. Because I needed to have a trade licence for the making of plasterboards. However, the paper get from this retraining is useless. I cannot start self-employment on the base of this paper. I would have to have someone else who would be willing to cover me. This was the reason that I did these plasterboards on the side or bigger firms covered me. Otherwise, I would have to be dependent on their willingness to pay me and I would have to obey their orders to get money.” (R15: 223).

It seems that Simon was not well informed in advance that training is usable only in dependent employment and not for self-employment. He would need to work there for three years to be able to certificate as self-employed. He was very disappointed.

People who completed the training, but it did not help them may be discouraged from further retraining or education (this was explicitly mentioned by Vanda and Otto).

Subsidised jobs and apprenticeships

‘Subsidised workplaces’ is a program of temporary placement of a concrete unemployed person realised in the private sector. These measures combine on-job-training (work preparation, gaining work experience), reduce the uncertainty of employers (before or within personal contact, screening), and allow for the reduction of salary costs to a level when the productivity of workers is higher than wages. Subsidies provide employers with financial

incentives to hire unemployed with perceived lower productivity. In theory, such are perceived as opportunities to get a permanent job (transition effect) or we expect them to have an enhancing effect (gaining experience, increasing skills of young people) and providing ‘springboards’ to other workplaces (Burgess 2003, Brown and Koettl 2012). They may serve also as signalling devices for employers (Denzin and Rubery 2002). There are several discussion themes connected with the targeting and quality of subsidised programs.

- *Subsidised workplaces may lead to deadweight and substitution effects (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998).*
- *Employers are mostly interested in workers with better prospects while the worst of them (people with problematic attributes) are left behind (see Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). General argument is that the ‘most disadvantaged’ are not for various reasons (including, e.g., disability, low work morale) able to sustain subsidised jobs.*
- *Subsidised workplaces do not lead to stable positions in the labour market – ‘revolving door effect’ or ‘merry-go-round effect’ (Clasen, Gould and Vincent 1998, Stauber, Kovacheva, and van Lieshout 2003, Trlifajová et al. 2015). This is explained by the low financial sustainability of these workplaces without public financial support (Trlifajová et al. 2015). On the other hand, some researchers pointed out on the transition and enhancing effects of these jobs (see Hora et al. 2018).*
- *They may also stigmatise unsuccessful participants (Denzin and Rubery 2002).*
- *Negative side of job subsidies is the potential of the creation of a subsidised secondary labour market for temporary and low-paid jobs ('second labour market') – this may be even reinforced by the sorting approach leading to the placement of less prosperous candidates (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Gazier 2002).*

Some of the respondents participated in a supported workplace which was by design for fixed duration (Peter, Clara, Alice). Clara was included in the subsidised workplace program, but she did not finish it (see her story). Clara reflected on subsidised training:

"I enlisted at Employment office to project for young people without work experience...they have a program where they help young people without work experience to get a job according to their previous education, the most suitable work for them. However, because I have only a vocational school, they told me they had few offers for me at the moment, but they offered me that room maid. In this project, it is so that when they find a work for someone... he/she has security of work for a year and the employer gets X thousands financial contributions for the employee, and so he has the employee almost for free." (R17: 60)

Clara left the subsidised workplace because she was dissatisfied with the employer and lacking organisation of work. The disadvantage of subsidised workplaces is when the workplace is not prolonged after the subsidised period (Peter) and it is not sufficient to get another job. Peter said that his former employer was not able to pay him after the subsidy ended. Alice commented that she was released immediately after end of work subsidy and she was offered an undeclared job by the same employer. We noted that subsidised workplaces were not much mentioned in the interviews.

Measures of temporary work placement in the public sector

These programs [veřejně prospěšné práce] (not to be confused with other type of ‘public works’ which are not a job) are often realised as workplaces organised by municipalities or non-governmental organisations in the Czech Republic. Such programs are realised with the aim to keep long-term unemployed in touch with the labour market and to prevent further marginalisation, loss of motivation, and deterioration of their skills (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998). For some unemployed, such measures mean welcome improvement of their financial income when compared to claiming of social insurance benefits (Trilfajová et al. 2015). The following traits of these programs are often discussed:

- *Jobs in the public sector are mostly temporary and relate to a greater share of returns to Employment office registers than other programs (Hora et al. 2018).*
- *There is a concern that these jobs may constitute a closed system with minimum transition to an open or unsubsidised labour market.*
- *There is a concern that workplaces in the public sector are provided to people who would otherwise find a job in the private sector (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998).*
- *There is a concern whether workplaces are of sufficient quality (Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998).*

We had four cases of young people explicitly mentioning attaining a public works program. Nancy found a public works job place for nine months sorting clothes in a local NGO, but she was released again after the program ended and she was not able to find work thereafter. Peter worked at the municipality for twice half a year, but then he was released. For Karin, her publicly subsidised workplace as a social assistant in social services was her first real job on an employment contract. She did partial work of a pedagogical assistant and half the job of cleaning lady. Very similar case was Bonny who got a publicly subsidised workplace in NGO for one year and later this time-limited position was transferred to a permanent contract because he has proven himself capable for the job.

“I started from the scratch...this is the only type of project I met. These publicly subsidised workplaces, it was the moment really suited for my needs and it was a solution for me, it was ingenious. If there were more of such workplaces and if there were not so great obstacles, I think that it would be a very good solution. Because even people in whatever situation can get one year of work experience. It may be motivating and beneficial for the person...to get one year of work experience and get work habits...in this it is excellent...” (R1: 145).

According to Bonny, the development aspect of such jobs is important. It is not only good for work experience and stable income, but there is a possibility to (self) learn/educate and get new social contacts. We noted that some NGOs started to use these workplaces to support young people without education and work experience with the provision of their first starting job.

It seems that for subsidised workplaces the most important aspect is whether young people can use attained qualifications in later jobs.

Characterisation (picture) of the system and the relationship among the four types of measures

We have defined four policy types that are most relevant for the assessment of support or barriers for young people towards building a secure position on the labour market. We have also found that the effort as well as the quality of implementation and the specific position that young people may have within the system are relevant criteria for assessment. For the assessment of a country, it seems to be important that the policy fields are within the country functioning together in the specific set. We will briefly reflect on the overall picture provided in the interviews. Education system was working fine but the level of drop out among our respondents shows that it creates a very disadvantageous position for people who for various reasons are not able to finish it. In addition, attained education does not provide a strong signal to the employers about quality of the candidate. While in theory the education system and active labour market policy should be coordinated, this is much less apparent in the interviews. We noted more cases of trying for a new start than of gradual development of a previously attained qualification. Active labour market policy is not used so often to have potential for greater impact. Active labour market policy was able to help young people when there was an interest of the employer about trained candidates. One key example of good practice was the cooperation between Roma NGO which provided subsidised jobs to young people and Employment office which paid these subsidised workplaces. From the interviews we can conclude that this was a helpful approach.

Unemployment protection and active labour market policy are in the Czech Republic cleverly linked by the provision of training subsidies and by subsidising programs in the private and public sector. ALMP participants are almost always protected from the perspective of income security without decreasing their future social security, and this may mean additional motivation to participate. Some authors believe that the Active labour market policies can offset the negative impact of unemployment protection by training programs and job search assistance (see Chung 2016, Gebel and Giesecke 2016). We see that in the Czech Republic there may be more problems concerning the low level of effort in both systems than problems emerging from low cooperation between the two systems.

Countries in central and eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic provide low protection on both EPL and unemployment protection (see, e.g., Boeri, Conde-Ruiz, and Galasso 2003, Cinalli and Giugni 2013). The low protection on both dimensions is also more typical for young people because their conditions are different from older cohorts (see Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka 2016a, 2016b, Hora, Horáková, and Sirovátka, 2019b). The relation between employment protection and unemployment protection is highlighted also in the case, when working conditions defined by ELP influence the entitlements of young people, e.g., because they are based on pro-rata principle (Barbieri 2009, Hora et al. 2019a, 2019b). Both employment and unemployment protection jointly create a labour market setting, which is very flexible, with minimum security and where some tools which are otherwise fine are not used as intended. In this setting of general insecurity, young people have to accept what less

is offered. Often, they struggle juggling between disabling rather than enabling rules and hostile interests.

3.4 Interaction between young people and policies addressing their problems

All policies are not dependent only on policy design but also on their successful implementation. This is crucially dependent on the ability of street level workers to interact with young people in a way which helps them in their tackling of insecurity. In the Czech context, interactions with Employment office are crucial. It is important to help with job search activity, counselling, and matching of unemployed to employers. Interactions with social workers in NGO may be also highly relevant.

We did literature review to define concrete dimensions and their aspects (Behrens and Brown 1994a, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Stauber and Walther 2002, Miles 2003, Walther 2006, Hora 2008b, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Gehrke, Günther and Seukwa 2018, Gehrke et al. 2018, Lewis and Tolgensbakk 2019). The following dimensions and aspects of the situation were found.

- Ability and/or willingness of street level workers to help.
- Quality of work offers.
- Quality of active labour market policy offers.
- Restrictive or enabling behaviour of street level workers.

We especially build on the work of Patton (1997: 210) who distinguished the dimensions of participative/authoritarian and supportive/non-supportive. Walther (2002: 39) distinguished between forced and chosen transitions and between supported and neglected transitions. Concrete aspects are reflected in the tables below. These tables are based on above-mentioned literature.

Ability and willingness of street level workers to help

This dimension is about the concrete help (effort) provided to young people. Measures have to be somehow attainable to all members of the society (Stauber and Walther 2002). The other linked question is whether and how it is possible to target any policy only on an individual basis. Bussi et al. (2019b) have shown how the policy was successful in the concrete case because it was able to react to specific conditions of the case. Behrens and Brown (1994a) pointed to an important dimension of support for young people. Although young people were able to progress in work integration schemes (gain job), integration to continuous employment without any form of continuing support proved difficult. In other cases, young people are left because they are not considered as being scheme ready (see Ayllón et al. 2019). On some occasions, young people feel they are neglected/left to help themselves and that the situation in their neighbourhoods has worsened (Hussain et al. 2016).

Dingeldey et al. (2019) points to three aspects relevant for efficient implementation of policies: the administrative capacity of PES (e.g. workers' capacity and overload, financial

problems, administrative barriers, implementation deficits), incentives provided for young people to register and the governance structure of PES (unification or fragmentation within the system). Interaction between young people and policies addressing their problems is influenced by several above-mentioned trends, namely, by measures of retrenchment and stricter character of services.

Ability and/or willingness of street level workers to help	
Positively assessed	Negatively assessed
(+) individual approach, (+) personal approach (feel like humans, not units or numbers) (+) nice behaviour, (+) keep their promise,	(-) formalised behaviour
(+) really helped in concrete cases, (+) be willing to help, be forthcoming, (+) trying to solve concrete problems,	(-) neglect, (-) low willingness to help due to the perception of the concrete person as unemployable
(+) transparent information, (+) providing all information, pro-active stance,	(-) bad advice, (-) providing outdated and inaccurate information, (-) providing minimum or only requested information, rationalisation,
(+) able to find and develop concrete competences (see Miles 2003, Mørch and Stadler 2003)	
	(-) low capacity, infrequent contact, (-) limited time of meeting, must wait for the meeting, (-) too bureaucratic, consequent delays to help,
Enabling / restrictive behaviour	
(+) treat young people like adults, (+) asked questions to really get to know me, (+) be tolerant, (+) be listening,	(-) insensitive approach, (-) perceived arbitrariness of decisions, unequal approach, (-) superior behaviour, high-handled behaviour
(+) giving authorship, autonomy, and freedom,	(-) restrictive behaviour, (-) blocking some opportunities, (-) discouragement, (-) brainwashing and manipulation,
(+) giving time to think or to action,	(-) focused only on control, (-) disturbance of personal space, (-) threat of sanction for noncompliance (-) daunting, ready to sanction early,

Restrictive of enabling behaviour

Many researchers focus on the individualization of the approach towards young people (Miles 2003, Walther 2003). The result of individualization is that people should deal with the problems of transition on the individual basis (Miles 2003). However, the interpretation of it should be a subject for further thorough discussion. On one side, some people see

individualization as a way to respect individual traits and features of life of young people. Mørch and Stadler (2003), e.g., argue that individuals are seen as actors in modern society, and as such, they are taken as individuals before they engage in education and social life. On the other side, some reflect the risks connected with using individualization for identifying deficiencies and consequent blaming of young people (Miles 2003) and for unintended or purposeful omitting of structural deficits.

Important dimension is whether young people perceive the offered help as an opportunity and whether they are enthusiastic or sceptical/critical about it (see Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998)⁴¹. Policies may be based on the idea of allocation – i.e., a strong effort of pressure on the wanted outcome. The conflict may be between young people who are under pressure to take responsibility for protecting themselves against the risk and older workers expecting to be protected by solidarity standards (Schmid 2002a).

Important dimension of policies is whether the assumptions and symbolic images included in the measures used towards young people correspond to the assumptions and images that young people have about themselves (Spies 2018). Stauber and Walther (2002) wrote that policies often fail in respecting youth subjective perspectives – their specific needs and cultural orientations, or the responsibility of their families. There may be gaps between actual living conditions and institutionalised standards of normality (Spies 2018). This argument is in accordance with the relativity of rationality as provided by Thompson et al. (1990).

From this perspective, there may be questionable barriers to access measures, targeting and mismatch between actual needs and measures (Sirovátka and Spies 2018: 13). It seems to be sensible to distinguish here between non-existent (poor, fragmented) and comprehensive but selective policies⁴². Some research (Hussain et al. 2016, Gehrke and Güntner 2018) showed that young people have feelings that no one listens to them, that social workers did not consider their wishes, or that young people had a poor image about the offered activities and that the promises by authorities are not kept. ‘Cooling out’ is understood as a process during which gatekeepers (in the situation of scarce pathways) force young people to accept unwanted pathways and to low their (supposedly unrealistic) aspirations without much choice for change (Walther 2003, 2006). Bonoli (2010) writes about the process when people ‘are occupied’ until something better is going to come along. Denial of choice can be interpreted as denial of citizenship (Walther 2006).

⁴¹ There is a substantial methodological problem because most of the qualitative research about subjective assessment of ALMP programs by unemployed or participants is based on nonrepresentative groups. It is probably biased towards people who were not helped by the programs.

⁴² Sirovátka et al. (2018) defined misfitting (to the needs of young people), deficient (failing), discriminatory, and fragmented (poorly coordinated and unstandardized) policies. Authors see possible innovations in closing these gaps (see *ibid.*).

Perceptions of available offers

When considering the general quality of job offers, young people referred to criteria which were introduced in the chapters about the strategies and factors influencing the insecurity of young people. We argue that young people use similar criteria when reflecting offers provided by Employment office.

Work offers	
Positively assessed	Negatively assessed
	(-) very few job offers
	(-) low quality job offers, (-) only temporary jobs, (-) only low-wage jobs,
	(-) unsuitable job offers (e.g., due to health problems or family obligations, with higher or different demands of qualification and skills, too far, not matching with interests of young people and their perceptions about work careers...)
	(-) old, occupied or non-existent jobs,
(+) enjoying work in the public workplace, (+) remuneration is high enough despite inclusion in a public program	(-) only work in a public workplace, with low remuneration.
Active labour market policy offers	
	(-) limited access, unfair or nontransparent targeting of ALMP programs (-) required training is not available or the unemployed is not eligible, (-) have to wait too long for the program
(+) gained experience, welcomed support in transition,	(-) not 'real work' position, not integrated into the firm (-) not tailored to the needs of participants, (-) the work position is not designed to correspond to the skills, knowledge, and experience of young people, (-) not improving job chances, (-) not providing long-term prospects to work,
(+) useful information in training programs, (+) were more motivated to learn, (+) meet new people, (+) good quality of lecturers,	(-) absence of relevant training (useless information), not sufficient level of training (-) too short programs, (-) low quality of lecturers.

Hora (2008b) have found that people were quite motivated to train because they perceived it as an opportunity or because they could choose the field of training and because they hoped it would help them to find a job. There are also other instrumental motives for training including need to be occupied, the belief that it is better to be in training than to be unemployed, the need to be in vacancy regime and money that are provided during training (Hora 2008b). Some unemployed are also 'motivated' by threat of sanction (Hora 2008b). On

the other side, the main reservations to training were due to the want to stay in the previous field of occupation, the money required to pay for the course, and low belief in the usefulness of the course (Hora 2008b). Perception of subsidised workplaces and internships is dependent upon concrete conditions and perceptions of other better options (Hora 2008b). Young people may be afraid that they have to stay in the internship despite other work offers (Hora 2008b). Substantial side effect of Unemployment protection and active labour market programs may be the stigma of participants (Biggart et al. 2002).

Young people may have quite high and concrete expectations concerning concrete outputs and outcomes of the project as soon as possible (see Hussain et al. 2016, Hajdinjak 2018a). EGRIS (2002: 123) argued that: "Young people today experience their lives as their own construction and they feel the need to decide upon their own transitions – often in opposition to existing societal trajectories." On the other hand, people with low expectations tended to be satisfied (Hora 2008b). For acceptance of measures, young people have to see that the offered options are sensible (Gehrke and Güntner 2018). Some initiatives were successful in building trust – not only to the offered measures and in building relationships with people who managed the activity (social workers) but also with the wider society (Alwall and Hellberg-Lannerheim 2018, Sirovátka et al. 2018). Otherwise, the issue is that young people can lose trust in the system, do not register at Employment office, can be demotivated and frustrated, behave ritualistically, fulfil their own goals and eventually dropout, find their own solution or leave the labour market altogether (Clark and Kupka 1994b, Stauber and Walther 2002, Walther 2006, Hora 2008b, Trlifajová et al. 2015, Krasteva, Jeliazkova, and Draganov 2018, Tan and Spies 2018, Hajdinjak 2018b).

Stauber and Walther (2002) argued that policies were unable "as a result of institutional ignorance" to catch the changing character of transitions. They may neglect the diversity of individual transitions and specific transition problems due to their normalizing perspective (Stauber and Walther 2002).

Ability and willingness of street level workers at Employment office to help

First, we will reflect on the general ability of people at Employment office to help. When we consider what help is expected, it is, for example, 'to help me to find good work' (Jake). Only a minority of respondents thought that support from Employment office was good, Employment office workers tried to help the unemployed, were engaged, and had effort to help (Ben, Roman, Clara, Ellyn, Simon, Helen, Eugenie, Tony).

"To tell the truth, the only place I was is Employment office. I cannot say... the lady I went to for most of the time tried to find me something. She looked for something I looked for something." (R3: 188)

"It was fine, I was there once in two months, six or seven visits all together. We always somehow negotiated it, she gave me some offers and there was no problem." (R27: 103)

Some respondents mentioned finding concrete jobs with the help of Employment office (Janine). Other respondents mentioned that Employment office workers helped them in the concrete situation (Derek) or that they organise meetings with employers (Simon). Sabina mentioned that job search portal and notice boards are functioning well.

For some unemployed (e.g., for Derek, Janine, Ellyn, Vanda, Bruno) the experience was mixed, with both good and bad experiences. In many cases, the unemployed linked this directly to experiences with different street level workers, where some street level workers were helpful but the others were completely unhelpful (Janine). Bruno, e.g., said that there was generally no help from Employment office, although some concrete workers tried to help him. Ellyn commented on her relationship with street-level workers:

"I went to one lady and she was very fine. And then when I got an invalidity pension, I went to another lady who was very strict. The first lady was willing to forgive me something and she was helping me. And the second lady...she did her work, but we did not understand each other." (R20: 85)

Most of the respondents (e.g., Jake, Betty, Ron, Fred, Otto, Lucy, Herbert, Laura) assessed Employment office help as non-existent, unsatisfactory or useless because of a formal approach based mainly on administration, little information, no or very rare work offers, and low effort to help in job search (for ALMP offers see below). Street level workers only asked the unemployed whether they found work himself/herself and about his past effort to find it (Laura, Ron, Fred, Magda, Lucy, Otto, Herbert). Magda, for example, replied:

"Employment office? [laughing] Do you know? I will tell you. This Employment office is completely useless...useless clerks...you come there, sign, she writes you when your next appointment is...she asks you whether you have work and when you tell no: 'then come the next month'...when you do not ask, they do not tell you: 'I will look at the jobs with you'. They send you to courses which are good for nothing." (R7: 149)

Lucy presented a similar opinion:

"When I was at Employment office, I could not say that they helped me, that they recommended me some work. Nothing despite that retraining course which was useless for me...and even the second time I was registered, they did not help me." (R29: 33)

Quido said that there was a low effort of Employment office workers to cover his needs (see below).

Unemployed also reflected on the schedule of meetings at Employment office. Meeting at the Employment office was infrequent – (John, Lucy, Ron, Simon, Herbert), some people were only invited once in three months or even less often (Herbert once in five months, John once in a half a year). Fred, Vendelín, Ben, and Ken mentioned monthly or even more often the frequency of contacts. Frequency of the contacts is more connected to control than to help to find work (Vendelín). Inadequately long waiting for a meeting was also perceived as a problem (Eugenie). Herbert said that the meeting lasted only for five minutes. Vanda mentioned that

there are a lot of unemployed for one street level worker and their time to work with them is limited. John argued that the women in Employment office are fully occupied by the administration agenda and the number of clients, and he doubts that they have time to actively look for work for concrete people.

"You have an appointment set at eight a clock and you go in at half past nine...and the poor women working there. Doors were revolving. They have a bingo system, there numbers [signs] flashing, and during half an hour, eight people were in. [They have to] to speak with them about everything, have papers signed, explain all things to them. I would not like to work there, and I admire them." (R16: 107)

Meetings at Employment office were only about providing information about the past efforts of the unemployed and arranging future contacts. Jake said that only once he was given a printed list of job offers and he said that support was low. Betty has never got any such list, she had to rely on notice boards. Unemployed often reflect that there is no help or even interest to help from Employment office (Magda, Fred).

"From my point of view, it was not about help with looking for jobs from the side of Employment office. I did not even expect it and it was not so, so I was looking for the job myself...I was in the register, I went to the Employment office and I declared that I actively looked for the job... I always found the job myself...otherwise it [registration] was for me a bureaucratic formality. From my perspective, it was only about having health insurance paid, but otherwise from my point of view there was no coincidence of Employment office registration and some procedure of looking for job." (R26: 87)

Some young people reflected the switch of responsibility for job search from Employment office to jobseekers. This is reflected in the following statements:

"They do not care about it [job search], because there is no longer that obligation as it used to be to send you somewhere. Nowadays you have to seek alone and prove it by the paper where you called, went, or send something." (R25: 171).

"You have to look yourself. I will not look for it for you." (R6: 364)

"I looked myself, Employment office did not much. Because at that time when I was not employed, they were not active, it was much more on me. Therefore, I engaged and looked myself." (R21: 51)

Some people mentioned the control function:

"We have to prove [contact with employers] at Employment office. We get A4 paper to write where we called, where we wrote or where we were, who we met, and what was the result...they gave it to me every four months." (R25: 71)

Vendelín mentioned that it was difficult for him to get proofs of the work search activity, because employers were not much cooperating in this. Some respondents (Sabina) mentioned

that they are not sure whether this list of activities is verified somehow or whether it is only a formal activity.

Respondents also sometimes complained about not being properly informed. No one will tell you what your entitlements are and what your entitlements are not (Karin, Sabina).

[At Employment office] No one will tell you what entitlements you have, and what entitlements you have not, considering social benefits." (R25: 45)

"I never knew that when I am registered at Employment office, I can ask myself for training or for the course, which I want to suit me. I have never known that. No one told me, or they do not tell us such things, what we can or what we can try. They do not give us advice, these offices and such institutions." (R2: 97)

The widely shared view is that the main and (often only) benefit of being registered at Employment office is in the payment of health insurance during registration (Jake, Peter, Derek, Betty, Fred, Tony, Ron)⁴³. This was mostly highly appreciated. This also means that their security is threatened when health insurance is not paid as in the specific case of Betty who had to pay back health insurance for the period when she was not registered. Some of the respondents also reflected that unemployment insurance benefit is paid by Employment offices and they understood it as help (see unemployed benefits section above).

We can also see how some unemployed use calculating discourse and perceived low help including no additional income gained from Employment office registration as a factor in their decision making towards nonregistering. Lucy who has a very negative general perception of Employment office argued:

"I was influenced by Employment office a lot. It taught me count. You have to calculate if you have enough to meet ends or not. If I go to Employment office, I will be without income. Because my husband works, and I would not work. You get almost nothing [from Employment office] and so If I do not must, no one will force me to go there. I would rather do cleaning in the evening, but I will not go to Employment office." (R29: 65).

We can see that the concrete experience of the unemployed depends on both period when the unemployed was registered and on the concrete person that the unemployed met with. This was reflected by several respondents (Ron, Violet, Vanda). Interesting is that some young people referred to the improvement of the services while others spoke about worsening of these services. Violet commented:

⁴³ This aspect was generally essential for respondents. This can be illustrated by a description of the situation of Sabina: "I started to work in the [name of the store]. First, it was 'work on a specific task', and so I cancelled the registration at Employment office and I was there [at work] for 80 hours a month, what can you do, but they pay health and social insurance which is substantial...".

"Once I was there for ten months, which was my longest period...during my first registration I remember that street level workers offered, really offered, you had got a list of workplaces with places, positions, even money, contacts to a concrete person. And when I became unemployed five, six years ago, nothing...‘you have to look for yourself’, nothing. No offers. ‘We have Employment office webpages. You can look there’. In the former period, you had a service and you only went there. However, at that time there were not servers and computers." (R32: 33)

Vanda commented how the willingness of street level workers changed since her previous registration.

"The lady that I was dedicated to was completely awful. Her behaviour. It was clear that she was completely uninterested, and she goes there only because she needs to work somewhere. She was completely without any concern. Contrary, her approach was awful...it looks like that when you come that you bother them. That you bother them by coming and wanting something, what is your right, but it is disturbing for them. It is beyond their contents of the work or something similar. Even when it is not out of their work frame and it is not something crucial." (R21: 189)

Vanda also said that the approach of Employment office changed because now they provide more job offers and send them by e-mail.

"When I was registered before, they were not active at all. I only came there once a time, they wrote me somewhere, but there was no help from them at all. It was all inactive. When I was registered recently for a while, I saw it really changed. There was now interest, they offer you something actively. In addition, there are various meetings and talking about things, where are you and what you can expect, etc. Therefore, it is somehow better now. Still there is a problem, it is for me somehow unpleasant and silly to go there." (R21: 59)

We offer the following hypotheses concerning the changing character of the services. It is possible that the character of help was U shaped. It is also possible that the level of help was fluctuating with the changes in the general level of unemployment. Changes in the level of help could be individual: e.g., there were workers who provided more help despite difficult conditions. However, the final explanation is beyond the scope of this research.

Ability and willingness of street level workers at Social Assistance to help

Although social assistance is formally part of Employment office, it is not provided by the same workers as job search activities. People generally perceive that it is very difficult to get social assistance. When you ask for social benefits, the procedure is complicated and difficult, but no one will help you with it (Otto). Magda (already mentioned in previous chapters) argued that workers at social assistance help people differently ('more to someone and less to someone else'). Magda defined it as having a different approach according to the number of children and skin colour ('when you are white, they would even not talk to you about this'). As a result, some people claim more benefits than other people do. They [street level workers]

'hide information about your entitlements' and 'tell you that you have no entitlements'. They are more interested in assessing entitlement than in helping you with real problems. They are completely unwilling to help you in crisis – they say that 'you have to help yourself'. Magda also complained that in crisis help is delayed by bureaucratic procedures.

"Nothing, they look at you and say: 'you have no right to this' and that is end. They do nothing with you..." (R7: 347)

"These are things when you get into difficult situations, which you have to solve and it is about a little money, but no one cares, because you caused it yourself...and you get not one crown [koruna] more...this is my experience. Because you have some net income, but what you have to send to someone, somewhere part of it, no one cares." (R25: 149)

Melinda had the oppressing experience in the question of helping Roma:

"The women at social assistance told me what we Roma want all the time and that it is not possible. She wondered why we Roma did not ask and were not so insolent during communist times." (R30: 15).

Melinda argued that people at employment offices are unable or unwilling to distinguish people who really try to improve their situation. They all think that Roma do not want to work, and their help is very unengaged all the time. Melinda also said that asking for social assistance was humiliating. Otto and Vendelín said that these workers are moody.

"The women from the social assistance office helped me, they talked to me normally, they helped me psychically to get somewhere else, some of these ladies are...you can sit with them and talk with them, all nice...but different place, different day, you hit a bad woman or man, and it is all gone, they heal their nerves on you." (R5: 135)

In contrast, Barbara referred to this situation positively:

"[They are useful] because they want to help these people. They have willingness. Everyone goes there, it does not matter who and how he/she looks like. If he stinks. They just want to help them." (R58: 445)

When we consider general ability and willingness to help, Ben argued that it is low.

"I think that offices should care more about people, generally. Because 'good day and goodbye' is not enough. They do not care about the person, when something happens to him, where will he go, and what is going to be with him. People should have more support from the state...because there are a lot of such people who just survive...They do not offer any options, retraining, nothing." (R3: 509)

Concrete interactions with social assistance workers are visible in the story of Eugenie.

Story of Eugenie

Eugenie studied vocational training for a photographer during communist times. She worked in that field in two jobs, but afterwards she could not find any other work as photographer. She reflects that she studied a profession which partially became obsolete due to changes in technology and widespread use of computers and digital photography. Later she found two more stable jobs (for several years), one in administrative work and one in local management of advertisements and newspaper distribution. She had also other jobs, but they were shorter.

Eugenie lived at the time of the interview with her mother and children in an old house. Her work situation was influenced by her family situation because in the period between the two stable jobs (mentioned above) she was living as was a single mother on parental leave (she did occasional jobs, because she needed to have money for the child). Later she had a second child. Once she had to leave a job in a shop (where she was for a year) because her child was ill and caring for it was incompatible with working in that job.

The main topic in the story of Eugenie was the claiming of social assistance benefits. She claimed social benefits as a single mother even in times when she was employed. She was very nervous and stressed by the need to claim it and that she must wait for a long time at the social assistance office. Later she decided rather not take them up [benefits]. Eugenie had problems with a social assistance worker due to his rude behaviour when one street level worker told her that 'she should not have children when she is not able to care for them'.

Her situation became most difficult for her at another moment when their house burned down, and they did not have money for repairs. She asked social assistance for lump sum help (to repair burned electricity) but she was refused (she said that a street level worker did not care). The street level worker at social assistance had 'horrible approach' to her. She appealed to the street level workers decision, but it took two months before the final decision at the higher level and it only returned the case for another first level decision. She collapsed, had psychical problems (ended up in psychiatric care) and was released from work because she had those psychical problems.

On the other hand, she had good experience from Employment office where the street level worker had understanding for her low ability to look for work due to the illness (borreliosis).

Discourse of Eugenie is 'claiming Roma'. She believes that street level workers should have an individual approach and distinguish between people in need and permanent claimants. According to her view, Roma people with big families and foreigners have better chances to get social benefits than 'normal' Czech people. It is very difficult to have time for social assistance administration when you work. In addition, Eugenie was most upset when she found that refusal of help in a crisis was reasoned in a written letter 'by her (having) work'. Eugenie thought that the street level workers did not have the required competences for their jobs.

Another discourse in her story was 'need for security' (comparing opportunities with security in the labour market). She said that with age she became afraid of radical change. There are a

lot of job offers, but they are insecure. Eugenie spoke about her last job in this situation when she noticed emerging problems there.

"...I had an offer for better work but I was afraid to leave [my current job], because I told to myself, here I have a contract of indefinite duration, unlimited contract, and what if it would not be so in this other firm, what if they fire me in the trial period and I will be where I was...and so it influenced me a lot, because I said that how I would be to have to go to social assistance again and the result will be as it will be." (R24: 83).

"...older I am, the more, I am afraid of radical changes...there is plenty of work, thousands of offers...but there is no longer that the security, the security of holding that job for longer time, whether the job will be of indefinite duration, will the firm pay social and health insurance for me [gives lengthy example how she was cheated]. This is what you have to think about...yes that work looks promising, they pay a good salary, but beware, check your social insurance...I try to be cautious. When I had a good job offer, I thought a long time about it, but I said no because I was for a long time in that firm. If I made that change...but there are many if in human life" (R24: 135)

My reflection: The position of Eugenie on the labour market was heavily influenced by her lone motherhood. She tried to combine working with social assistance claiming, but it proved to be increasingly psychically demanding to the extent that she decided to non-take up. Her complicated situation with the burned house showed that the real help in social assistance is in concrete cases non-existent and we do not know what criteria are used in the decision who is helped and who not. The fact that Eugenie was a breadwinner of the family was influencing her decisions because she reflected her responsibility. In other words, Eugenie was not sure that after a change of job it would be better (it is too risky for her).

My reflection on ability and willingness to help

Help from the side of Employment office was generally (with some exceptions) assessed as low or non-existent. Despite the publicly common image of benefits for everyone, I noted in the interviews that social benefits were rather hard to get. In reflection of Magda, we can see typical aspects of deserving/undeserving, individualisation and rationalisation (effort to discourage people from claiming). Magda also noted that the approach of street level workers is more driven by discourse on 'assessing entitlement' than by real interest in the specific situation of the client and finding ways to help.

Job offers provided by Employment Office

Second dimension of the relationship between unemployed and street level workers at Employment office was about providing job offers as a key expected activity of job search assistance. We have found several criteria which the unemployed used to assess job offers provided by Employment office. These included the general number of job offers, adequacy of job offers to the skills and situation of the unemployed, general quality of offered jobs,

strange work offers, and virtual job offers. We will follow their argumentation in the following paragraphs.

Number of jobs offers

One dimension is whether the unemployed even get some job offers as it was reflected in the previous part of this chapter. Some unemployed declared that they were given (enough) job offers (Tony, Melinda). On the other hand, people such as Herbert, Betty, John, Lucy, Otto, Fred, Ron, Sabina, and Simon got (almost) no concrete job offers or they said they would welcome more job offers (Sophie). This is accompanied by statements of street level workers 'I have nothing for you' (Herbert) or 'I have nowhere to send you' (Sabina). Ben reflected that the number of suitable job offers was fluctuating and there were periods when nothing was available. Individual respondents assessed the different number of jobs offers as low.

"...I go there [Employment office] asking for work. I tell them myself to give me job offers. She [PES worker] looks at the computer and tells me: 'For you I have nothing'. She arranges me another appointment in five months. I am here [at an appointment] for less than five minutes and I go out. What they are for? I could do it, doing click, click 'I have nothing for you, sign it here and goodbye'...I ask them for sweeping streets or something similar. That I do not care. Even for the work at heights that I am afraid of...but nothing is for me." (R31: 131)

„[it would help me] If I got some list of works. It is nice to enlist and sign papers and know nothing and go there. However, I thought that I will come here and they will print me some papers, with job offers in my field with phone number, where I can call, what is the salary, work time etc.... There are some boards, but I think it is out of necessity rather than the willingness of Employment Office to help people to find work. Only [it is good] for social and health insurance to be calm." (R22: 88)

Sometimes even when there is a suitable work offer, Employment office workers do not inform you about it (Eugenie).

Skill/health/situation mismatch in provided job offers:

Some unemployed were satisfied with job offers (John) or they said there were some interesting job offers (Peter). Clara argued that she got appropriate job offers. The criteria she used were that Employment office workers reflected the field she studied (waiter) and that she was without work experience and they did not recommend her to any job that would be inferior or which she could not do. This was also positively reflected by Janine, who was sent to jobs corresponding to her previous work experience. Nancy commended that she was given job offers in preferred professions.

Some other unemployed reflected that they got no job offers in the preferred fields (often the field they studied) and they get job offers in 'unknown fields' – where they have never worked and they knew nothing about the job (Quido, Ron, Sophie). This argument is not about getting no job offers but getting wrong job offers.

- Employment Office workers send them job offers which they clearly do not fulfil basic qualification conditions or required experience (Quido, Ken, Vanda, John).
- Vendelín reflected that job offers are not corresponding to his health condition.
- John and Janine said there are job offers for jobs that they are not suitable candidates for, or they are not willing to do them. This is typical for the profession of agent on the telephone and some other goods selling professions but also for some cleaning jobs.
- Ron and Quido argued that they [street level workers] did not use their skills and preferences to provide them with corresponding job offers.
- Janine stated that she had to accept a job which collided with her possibility to attend school.
- Long distance and other conditions, which are not compatible with family responsibilities (Alice)

Quido and Vanda reflected that this mismatch may happen because the list of job offers is universal and not suited to their needs.

"I, e.g., get an offer for an electrician which is completely out of my field [trade and entrepreneurship]. No one would be talking to me [about a job], naturally they [employers] invite you for an appointment, but at the end they tell you that they are not interested because you do not meet the criterium." (R13: 59)

Vanda said:

"They [Employment office workers] do not look who they send those emails. It happened to me many times that they sent me some work offer of some firm, e.g., working with iron where there was a demand for men. And you can see that they send it to all people on some list and they will respond or not. It is good for nothing...three quarters of work offers were useless and only a few were suitable" (R21: 181).

There was a similar argument raised also by John.

"Job offers provided at the private portal are better. You can set the filters there. They directly ask you about your preferred wage, conditions, mileage that you are willing to commute. Employment office does not ask you. They could make a questionnaire for the unemployed asking: Thirty kilometres is OK. Fifty kilometres is OK. Do you have your own car? This is a mistake that Employment office does not do this." (R16: 261)

Formal criteria should not be, according to some young people, the only decisive factor. Peter argued that he does not want to be sent to jobs for which he meets the basic formal criteria but which he does not want to do, because he thinks that they are not perspective. Janine said that people themselves should have the opportunity to influence what they want to do.

Job quality – bad working conditions and strange work offers:

Some respondents generally mentioned that jobs offered at Employment office are of worse quality than jobs from other sources (John, Lucy). Lucy commented 'they have never offered me anything that I could do'. Other respondents said that jobs offered by Employment office

were in preferred professions and suitable but working conditions were unacceptable. Ellyn, Ken, Betty, and Lucy got job offers that were very low paid (around CZK 50-70 per hour) and they were themselves able to find better (better paid) offers. Ron argued that Employment office offered him only one manual job which he had previous experience with and which he did not want to do due to long shifts, monotonous (extremely boring) character of the job and low wage for the work done.

Another category is strange job offers. Simon commented that jobs provided by Employment office are 'strange'. For Simon, this relates to offering occasional work on trial first (sometimes without a work contract) and promising job later, which is never realised. Ben and Ken describe a similar experience. From previous research, we know that strange job offers are offers which often later prove to be fraudulent or they are different from their original presentation in the advertisement (Hora 2008a, Hora 2008b).

Low interest of employers to employ young people and the real ability of street level workers to influence the chances of unemployed

Another dimension is linked to the low ability of the unemployed to get the job proposed by Employment office workers. Vendelín, Ken, Simon, Antonia, Roman, Magda, and John reflected that they were sent to workplaces where no one was willing to talk to them, where employers refused them or where they got no response and that Employment office sent many people to the same workplace.

"Employment office sends you with a recommendation and they [employers] ask you: 'Do you want to work or not?' Someone may say no but when I want to work, I beg them 'please call me' but they do not call you or they say we are already full." (R7: 409)

Vendelín perceived that sending many unemployed to the same workplace decreases his individual chances of a job. Alice said that good workplaces were often already occupied when she went there, and she proposed that these job offers are 'fictive'.

"You find a job via Employment office and they [employers] say that it is already occupied. And I ask: 'Why do you have this workplace enlisted, to have at least something enlisted there?' I do not know. I see a link to the bad image of people who are registered at Employment office, they are perceived horribly." (R28: 161).

Janine argued:

"..if there were something that would [she did not finish the sentence]...because when they send someone somewhere from the Employment office, he/she is often not accepted. When I came to [concrete workplace], they looked strangely funny to me. When there were ten people asking for the same workplace the same day, it is clear that they will accept no one of them....[Continues the first sentence] To do something for people who want to work, to find them a job, where they would accept them...They will not accept you if you are from Employment office...because there are many candidates or because they are from Employment office". (R19: 282)

This aspect was also reflected in the interview with Melinda. She commented:

"[after describing frequent job refusal] I left the employers crying...and I told them at Employment office: 'Why do you give me such work offers, why do not call there, why do you not arrange work for me'. However, they told me that they cannot. They only give me recommendations, but the rest is to employers." (R30: 39)

Roman described his meeting with a street level worker and from his description it is apparent that provision of work tips is present, but it is rather formal without any additional support. Alice argued that Employment office workers should motivate employers to take people who are registered at Employment office and they should try to improve the image of these unemployed in the eyes of employers to assure that these unemployed are not seen as inferior.

Job enforcement and work recommendations

Employment office sometimes provides the unemployed with the paper of 'work recommendation'. Unemployed must attend in this case the concrete employers and to accept the job or have a stamp from the employer that they were not accepted. When they do not attend these employers, they risk expulsion from Employment office. Not all unemployed are given recommendations. Some unemployed saw these recommendations as good because they perceive them as help in job search and they would like to get them (Vendelín, Simon, Roman, Fred). This means that these recommendations are perceived as a helping tool. Other respondents want to avoid them (Peter).

"I looked for work, but I did not want them to give me some work chosen by someone who does not know me because I know how this is functioning and a friend of mine was several times sent somewhere.... He [street-level worker] to find you work says: 'they want employees, elementary education is sufficient, age is fine, I will send him there'. However, I do not want to do this. Why should I do guardsman or some other work without perspective, operator this is without perspective for me and doing it all day, I am going to be 25...." (R12: 232)

Peter reflected that some unemployed got a lot of recommendations, but some were not given any. He thinks that the reason is that the number of recommendations depends on the own activity of the unemployed (if you are active and you are able to prove it, you are left with your own job search).

Others perceive recommendations or some of their aspects negatively. We can summarise some main problems connected with work recommendations mentioned by unemployed in the following way:

- Discussion whether these places are suitable for concrete person. When they are not, young people perceive them as work enforcement.
- Fact that despite recommendations they are never chosen (Ken, Antonia, Roman)
- Refusal on sight from the employers and only providing a stamp (John, Roman)

- Going to already occupied workplaces (John, Antonia)
- Sending the unemployed to workplaces which are far away from their homes (Otto, Bruno)

In cases like Roman, the work recommendations were clearly ineffective because despite several attempts (Roman estimated about six) they never led to jobs. Roman reflected that he always found a job himself. Bruno commented on having to accept job:

"I was after the car accident, but they did not care that I am after leg surgery and I hardly walk. They just send you [name of a distant town], anywhere. They do not care how you are going to get there. They just expel you of Employment office." (R8: 189)

Expelling out of Employment office has consequences because your social assistance is limited to specific, even more meagre support (Bruno).

Story of Alice

Alice is a woman in her middle age. She studied and finished high school for engineering. She was not offered any engineering job due to low certainty at the time of the Velvet Revolution. She also believes that she was discriminated because she was a girl. When she was not able to find work, she did not know what to do:

"I did not know what I wanted. I wanted to study for vet, but I did not pass the entry exams and so I went to study agriculture university with the vision that I will see. I really did not know what I wanted, but I did not want to work in an engineering factory, despite studying for it." (R28: 23)

She did not stay at the university because the university was temporarily closed during revolution time. Alice said that her situation at that time was insecure and she wanted to get any work, even abroad. During her studies at high school, she worked as a hostess and she learned several languages. After school, shortly after Velvet Revolution, she had got a good job offer and she went abroad where she worked in administration and where she met her later husband. She married a foreigner and they together moved to the Czech Republic. They wanted to give children to the Czech schools. They founded together a firm, which operated for several years. Her former husband suddenly disappeared (he moved back to his country of origin) and she lived as a single mother with three children which were very small. It was a horrible period of her life. Later she divorced.

She worked in several jobs, including one longer in the travelling service, which ended at the peak of Economic crisis. Later she was unemployed, and it was very difficult for her to get a job. She spoke about specific disqualifying conditions (see the previous chapter).

Alice has presented a specific discourse concerning job offers in which she prefers 'creative work' to 'legal work'. On one side, she does not want to work in the factory because she thinks that she has developed substantial work competencies (speaks three languages, has a driving licence, accounting skills, has work experience in administration etc.). Employment office

workers forced her to work in the factory. She is willing to accept any ‘good job’ but nothing like that is offered to her legally (nor any from the Employment office).

“For me it is discrimination. They [Employment office] should offer me adequate work. I would go anywhere, and I responsively went to any workplace I perceived to be good. However, there are firms which offer me illegal work, but there is an offer. However, what [is offered] from Employment office?” (R28: 157).

On the other hand, she thinks that some jobs are degrading (especially routine manual work) and she refuse to do them. ALMP polices are according to her misused. She worked in a subsidised workplace but was released immediately after the end of the subsidy. The same employer offered her undeclared work shortly after that.

She has work offers for interesting works but all of them are undeclared work. She said that she was financially well due to undeclared work and that employers will not give her an employment contract upon any circumstances.

“It is not true that you should take any degrading work or sweeping streets. They [unemployed] go rather ill etc...I do not want to be unemployed in any case. However, I understand people who are at Employment office and they have a lot of undeclared work. And they have no chance for legal contact. That were my experiences and these jobs were not any degrading work, but they were not giving me work contracts.” (R28: 157)

...

“I have three children and what will I tell them? ‘Children, you are not going to go to a school trip because I want a work contract or employment contact and he [the employer] tells me: No, take it or leave it’. (R28: 159).

She knows about a lot of offers for undeclared work. She worked in many undeclared jobs.

“Everyone...will rather go to do undeclared work to make files in the advocacy office than to go legally and compulsory from Employment office to pack [in concrete unqualified manual work in the factory]. What will become of a university graduate who will go to do packing [in concrete unqualified manual work in the factory]?” (R28: 157).

My reflection: Alice noticed an interlink between her disqualification from the labour market, negative stances of other people, and the psychical consequences of unemployment. She resigned to have a legal job, because such a job is not suitable. Still, it is very surprising how many nonlegal job offers she is able to get while not being able to get a decent legal job. Her tale is one of the clear cases when undeclared work is a viable option while offers of Employment office are not.

My reflection on offered jobs

When we reflect on the job offers provided by Employment office to our respondents, we with some exceptions noted only manual work in the factories (very demanding and unstable), a

category of job which is described as 'so low paid than no one wants to get them'. This does not mean that there are not better jobs in the database, but they are not reachable for our respondents. Paradoxically, it seems that this is the lowest legal (and illegal) segment of the labour market. Some young people take undeclared jobs because they are more accessible and with better conditions. The other aspect is whether these job offers are real and why people are sent to occupied workplaces. It is possible that the concurrence for good jobs is so great that these are quickly occupied. Or it is possible that job offers at Employment office are not actual and the unemployed know about them late. Another explanation is that the occupied character of the job is a decoy used by employers to discourage unsuitable candidates.

Active labour market policy offers

In this section, we reflect on two main aspects of active labour market policy. The first aspect is the availability of active labour market programmes to unemployed people including specific eligibility criteria. The second aspect is the subjective assessment of programmes and the general stance that young people have towards program offers (potentially influencing their further motivation to participate). We discuss these aspects here because they can be most influenced by interactions between young people and street-level workers. This seems essential because in some cases the training was very intensive, and respondents attended several courses.

Access to ALMP programmes and eligibility criteria

The first and most important aspect constituting an opportunity is the mere presence or absence of active labour market policy offers. Derek mentioned that he attended an information meeting about the possibilities of ALMP programs. Some young people got ALMP offer with the help of some NGO which mediated the process (Gwen, Bonny, Karin). Some of the other respondents reflected that active labour market policies were not offered to them, they were not sufficiently informed about existing ALMP offers, or that they were not among the chosen ALMP candidates (Ken, Roman, Jake, Quido, Derek, Karin, Tony, Laura, Ron, Nancy). John argued that people from Roma minority are preferred to long-term unemployed white people with ALMP offers. However, we have not found any such evidence in our data.

During the interviews, we noted several times that respondents were rather passive in looking for active labour market policy offers. Derek mentioned that participation in ALMP program was in collision with his studies and that he preferred the job he found. Jake thought that his nonparticipation was because ALMP was not actively offered to him.

"[Retraining programs] are offered, but [I cannot say] that I would find the offer somewhere...but I cannot say that I would look for it actively. However, I did not see retraining courses among the listed job offers which were hanged at Employment Office." (R11: 95)

Nancy commented on the unavailability of the offers:

“I were registered at Employment office for five months but in the meanwhile, there was not any program starting and so she [a street level worker] offered me nothing. I am invited again only in the next month.” (R72: 29)

Karin missed more active participation in the choice:

“You know what? I have never known when I was at the Employment office that I could myself ask about training or some course, which I would want, to suit me. I have never known it, no one told me, or they do not tell us these things, what we can or what we could try, they do not like to tell us.” (R2: 97).

Basic criterion for participation here is logically the need for retraining, which is difficult to access from the interviews, as many young people have unfinished or unusable initial education. Only a few people (e.g. Tony) could argue that retraining or further training is contra-productive in their case.

Another key aspect of interest in training is the perception whether the program leads to a preferred job. Gwen, e.g., believed that completing ALMP training would help her to be able to do the hairdresser profession (she previously dropped from hairdresser vocational training). Others said that ALMP was offered but in the field that was not interesting for them because they did not want to do it (John, Peter). In Peters' case, the training of a specific type was not available at the moment because the training offer is fluctuating.

“..and you find that training is not available since the last month and it is going to be realised again after the next half year.” (R12: 116)

Peter said that you have to accept what is available or wait. He also interpreted this in the way that they [PES workers] were not willing to allow him to train for what he would like to do.

In another case, Roman was denied training for a concrete profession (and generally any training) because he was not in evidence for long enough time – one and a half year (also Bonny had to be registered for three months to get access to publicly subsidised workplace). Sensible participation depends on the feeling of the unemployed that the offered course is useful and that they can actively partake in its selection. There are some remarks in the tale of Karin.

„Once I came to the Employment office and the lady told me that it was a long time [I was registered] and that I have to attend some course or something. She sent me for training for four days here [name of the town] about ‘financial literacy’ may be to have it fulfilled.” (R2: 101).

This is a typical example of ALMP course which has probably no direct impact on the labour market chances of participants.

Payment for retraining is another topic in the interviews. Some of the respondents were glad that there was financial support for the training, and they felt no corresponding restrictions (Clara, Vanda). However, other unemployed had quite different experiences. Unemployed were asked to ensure their future jobs (to have job promises from employers), otherwise PES

was not willing to pay for their training (this was mentioned by Ellyn, Sabina, Magda, Ron and Otto). Ron e.g. said:

"They did not offer me any training. I asked for training. I wanted to do training for IT, but they strictly discouraged me from it. They said it is difficult to get there and if I do not have ensured employment in this field, they do not [provide/recommend?] it to me." (R33: 115)

Some unemployed (Quido, Ellyn) were discouraged from training because the training courses they wanted were paid and the value of the course was too high for them to pay. It may also limit future self-employed because in this case they must pay training themselves (Sabina).

Some people created a negative stance towards some ALPM programs. Peter argued that training programs should be longer and of better quality. Herbert reflected on his experience with active labour market offers. Employment office workers offered him retraining many times. Herbert said that no one ever asked him what he would like to retrain for. At first attained retraining, he was enthusiastic, but when it did not go to get work, he lost the belief that it would help him. He refused another retraining offer:

"They offered me training but I did not go there, I was already disgusted. She [street-level worker] asked me, If I want to go there: 'If you want to go there, go there, but I do not know.' Would you have a taste to go there? If she tells it to you like that? I said: 'I do not go there, it is useless, is not it?' Why should I go there? It does not make sense. When she tells it to you like that." (R31: 147)

Similar experience was described also by Otto. Not only personal but also shared experience and reputation may be relevant in decision making. When we asked John why he would not be interested in working in a subsidised workplace, he said:

"I have heard about this, but what I have heard from people, it is that the firm will take you, it gets money for you, and so you work for them for free and then they fire you. ...People talk about this in the following way: Some employer creates three workplaces, pulls people there, and he does not have to pay social and health insurance. He does not even pay the wage, which is paid by state. Thus, employers save money." (R16: 447).

John was because of his perception of the measure not interested in it. Alice discussed that public workplaces are not provided for long enough time to help people to set firm footholds in the hosting organisation. Participants often end with the end of the subsidised contract. She also criticised that such contracts are accompanied with high administrative burdens.

My reflection on labour market policy programs.

It seems that Employment office should inform more actively young people about ALMP offers and that some people have to be positively motivated for training or subsidised workplace. We noted young people who complained but they were themselves rather passive in looking for these options. To be attractive, these options should be in preferred professions, they

should be of sufficient quality and enhance usefulness after program participation. Targeting of these measures should be further discussed.

Enabling and restrictive behaviour of street level workers

In this section, we discuss whether interactions with street level workers are enabling or restricting or even enforcing concrete options. Still, we note that both willingness and ability to help and concrete type of behaviour are also based on a more general relationship between concrete unemployed and concrete street level worker. Ellyn, e.g., described a concrete relationship with a street level worker: ‘She did her work, but otherwise we did not understand each other’. As in other parts of the assessment, this is related to the behaviour of concrete street workers, resulting in the assessment of both positive and negative aspects of behaviour by the same unemployed (e.g., when comparing the behaviour of concrete workers). Respondents appreciated the following traits of street level workers, which they assessed as positive aspects of behaviour. These are taken from the assessment of both workers at Employment office who are concerned with job search and workers who are concerned with the payment of social assistance benefits.

- Appropriate frequency of contacts with street level workers (Tony, Sabina, Eugenie).
- To be able to negotiate conditions (Tony)
- Have a nice, decent, polite and human approach (Sabina, Ellyn, Eugenie, Helen), talk with me normally (Vendelín, Helen)
- Asking about job preferences of young people, young people were themselves engaging in the choice of the job (Janine)
- Being able to understand their specific situation and willing to take it into account (Helen, Sabina, Rachel, Helen, Vendelín, Eugenie), be empathetic (Rachel).
- You can speak with them about your problems (Maria, Otto)
- Avoiding problems and conflicting situations (Tony, Sabina)
- That the street level worker was able to forgive her something (Ellyn).

Respondents criticised the following traits of street level workers, which they assessed as negative aspects of behaviour:

- Being moody (Otto)
- Unwilling to accept views of the unemployed and enforcing their own views (Peter, Janine, Ron, Vendelín). This include enforcing applying for jobs that young people do not want or are unable to do.
- Having no voice – low engagement and interest in the needs of the unemployed (Ben, Ron, Rachel, Karin, Quido, Vendelín, Janine) and in their personal situation (Bruno)
- Not informing the unemployed about the nature and relevance of activities (Betty)
- Disagreeable behaviour (Ron), arrogant and nasty behaviour (Eugenie), they should behave better (Ken).

- Neglect, not interested, they do not care (Eugenie, Jake, Bruno, Vendelín, Herbert, Melinda). This includes refusing and playing down problematic aspects of the life situation of the unemployed, saying the unemployed, that it is their own fault etc.

We understand that the first basic criterion here is interest in the case of unemployed and the second one is how young people are treated from the perspective of their personal goals and needs. Melinda commented that street level workers should be more concerned about the unemployed. Commonly shared view was that street level workers 'go to work only to drink coffee'.

There was a group of young people who wanted more freedom and personal space to look for the job themselves (Janine, Peter). Janine reflected:

"...they should provide space for normal people to look for a job themselves and not to offer them something like a cleaning lady or similar all the time....I told them that I study but they do not care at all. They could give me a chance when I try to finish school and not tell me that this is not a reason [not to accept the concrete job]" (R19: 114).

In the case of Janine, we saw that she was more forced to accept jobs because she was unemployed for a very long time while she wanted 'to be left alone'. Such respondents are often more individualistic, and they have their both positive and negative reasons why they do not want to be helped. On the other hand, others expect a personal approach. When we, e.g., consider the reflection of Jake, he was not enforced to anything, but on the other side he did not think that his needs would be considered. Peter described his feelings in the following statement.

"They listened to me, but there was not even minimal interest to oblige, absolutely no one... they went according to some given plan of them or some schedule...I was not willing to do training for something that I do not need, or I do not have a plan to work or entrepreneurship in. It would be a loss of money and time." (R12: 120)

Fred described that when he was active himself, the Employment office workers were passive, and they let him to go his own way, but he was not satisfied with it because he wanted more help. Derek argued that Employment office workers leave the unemployed their freedom to look for work themselves for some time and then give them work recommendations.

There were some examples of situations where the behaviour of street level workers was clearly restrictive. Ken was offered a job in the building industry, which he could not refuse, despite very bad working conditions (see tale of Ben and Ken). Ken said that he was forced to accept a job with (for him) an unacceptably low wage. There is threat of sanction in the form of expulsion from the unemployment register for half a year. This had harsh practical consequences because during this period the unemployed cannot claim any social benefits and many of them are left without any income.

Employment office workers frequently used strategies leading to sanctioning people by expelling them from the Employment office register (Ken, Vendelín, Otto, Bruno, Betty, Derek, Janine). The reasons for expulsion were various and included missing of appointment (Derek,

Betty), refusal of ‘suitable job’ (Ken, Janine, Bruno), and noncompliance during ALMP programs (Clara). Some unemployed mentioned expulsion for refusing jobs far away (Otto, Bruno). Vendelín spoke about the disagreement concerning a concrete job and that a street level worker mistook him for someone else.

In some cases, expulsion seems to be ‘righteous’, e.g., when young people were expelled from Employment office for missing and appointment due to illegal work or due to not declaring the relevant reason of missing and appointment. Sometimes more mutual cooperation could help. Derek described how he was expelled from Employment office due to missing an appointment:

“My bad experience is when I was expelled from register. I did not go to a prearranged meeting because I was in the hospital, I had to go to emergency. I called the clerk, but no one answered the call, it was just ringing and they did not tell me anything even when I called the information service...and finally I found the clerk was on holiday and so no one could answer my call. Later I sent an appeal with enclosed paper from the emergency, but they did not care and they denied it. It was a really bad experience for me, the right was on my side, but the decision was, I cannot do anything with it.” (R14: 220).

A very interesting example of expulsion is the tale of Janine. She was expelled from Employment office because she attended school one workday a week, and she refused to do work which required working every day. The argument of Employment office was that attending school is not an excuse for not accepting work. Clara described expulsion due to prematurely ending ALMP program:

“...sanction for breaking the contract with Employment office and I was not allowed to register again for half a year because I refused the work offer within the project, which I did by leaving the [subsidised] workplace.” (R17: 70)

Otto described his current situation. Recently, he was sent with ‘recommendation’ from Employment office to the concrete workplace. He attended the factory where the recruitment lady asked him what she should write on the recommendation. He replied that she should write that there was no workplace open. However, she refused to do that because they had vacant workplaces. Finally, she wrote to the recommendation that he looks for another workplace closer to his home.

“I brought this recommendation to the Employment office and the lady whose client I am and who tells me whether work was found or not or she invites me to another term told me that she is going to expel me from the register, because they found me work and I refused that work (due to my stupidity)” (R6: 79).

The main reason why Otto did not want to work in this workplace was that it was distant from his home. Later he added that when he is expelled, he has to find work because otherwise he would not be able to pay for the rooming house. He called to the factory again and they said they would accept him. Otto said:

"Human is not without a mistake. Every human does mistakes and says unintentionally what he should not say." (R6: 121)

Vendelín presented a similar story of being sent to an employer who was not willing to meet with him and worked far away. Street level worker wanted to expel him from Employment office, but they found out that she mistook him for someone else. However, she said she saw him working on the construction site. Employment office workers ensure the compliance of concrete unemployed by requesting proofs of job search activities.

Interpretation of such tales is always difficult. It might have been some misunderstanding or Otto just did not want to work because the current situation suits him. However, one aspect is particularly interesting for me. One moment of noncompliance leads to expulsion. This means that you have to behave always right. One mistake leads directly to a fall (similarly as when walking the rope).

Some unemployed reflected on the consequences of expulsion. When you are expelled from Employment office, you are not allowed to register for some period (usually half a year) again. Respondents mentioned that you lose entitlements (e.g., unemployment insurance, free payment of health insurance, basic social assistance benefits). Bruno was expelled from social assistance and he was given only 1000-2000 CZK special benefit for homeless people. Bruno connected this with deep psychical consequences ('I could not bear it'). This has also other consequences. E.g. Ken decided not to try to register with the Employment office again after he voluntarily left the recommended job. He explained:

"When you register, you sign a paper. The lady tells you that when you are accepted for a job and you have a recommendation, you cannot leave. And I stayed at home." (R4: 333)

Another respondent mentioned that he/she accepted an undeclared job to survive. We also note that the perceived disagreeable behaviour of street level workers contributes to the unpleasant feeling of the unemployed and to their low willingness to attend Employment office (Ron). This is more reflected in the part about the psychical consequences of unemployment.

Respondents also spoke about social assistance workers. One group of respondents has never had any problems with social assistance workers – they described their positive attitude (Simon). Other respondents even said that social assistance workers helped them in a concrete situation (Vendelín). Other respondents described that social assistance workers tend to use a rationalization strategy, are without interest about the situation of people, are rude to clients, they are trying to conceal information or discourage some people from claiming and refusing to help in a crisis (Otto, Magda, Bruno, Helen, Eugenie, Sabina, Melinda). Several respondents (Magda) mentioned that the approach of street level workers of social assistance is different to different people and they provide different level of help. Otto said that social assistance workers strictly obey to their administrative routines, but they are not willing to help potential benefit claimants (by explaining them meaning of the forms, by

helping them to fill the forms) in their administrative task of assessment of benefit entitlement. Betty said:

"I would more tell how [street-level] workers see it, because in the current situation I never know. They give me some papers to sign it, but they do not tell me what it means, etc." (R22: 266)

One clear way of restrictive behaviour is refused help that blocks other possible options and solutions (Sabina). Sabina reflects that people in crisis may not be helped even a bit and even if it would be relatively easy to help them. She said that she perceived the stance that 'it is her own fault', and she is not eligible. Strict refusal of help in the critical situation was perceived especially negatively (see the story of Eugenie, who asked for help when she became a lone mother and later after the fire in her house).

Unemployed were in some periods in the past motivated or enforced to participate in 'public service works'. This was about working some hours a week for a small increase in social benefits or for the possibility to get social benefits (without any increase). Otto mentioned that he participated in 'public services works' for 20 hours a week and that his income was raised by 500 CZK. On the opposite, when you refused to do public service, your benefit was reduced.

"You have some hours that you have to work to get a social benefit. When you do not fulfil this quota, you do not go to work in the morning with the broom and the shovel, you will loaf around, the social assistance office reduces half, it is their right to reduce your money." (R6: 109)

My reflection on restricting and enabling behaviour

Enabling behaviour can be characterised as a behaviour which enables, by providing appropriate information, allowing discussion between the street level worker and a young person, the opinions of young people are considered and the offered options are worthy and corresponding to the needs of young people. Enabling behaviour is based on a relationship which is as balanced as possible, avoiding enforcement of prescribed paths. While there may be formal decision power of street level workers over clients, it should not lead to unequal and embarrassing conditions, embarrassment of clients, limited possibility to use some options, and a feeling of fatality (as described by Engbersen et al. 2006).

Reflecting the work of NGOs

Young people noted help which was provided by NGOs. We reflect that some young people perceived help from NGO as helpful (they are able to advise, they provide concrete helping activities). Non-governmental organisations played a substantial role in Roma community, but other respondents mentioned it occasionally. There were specific NGO working with children, NGO working with Roma, office for the social-law protection of children. One of the

respondents lived in an asylum house with her two children. Young people described using the following activities:

- Some NGO were providing housing for children (Magda),
- They provided clothes for reduced symbolic prices or for free (Otto),
- Legal and administrative advising and couching⁴⁴ (Ken, Gwen, Maria, Barbara, Greta),
- Debt's counselling (Bonny, Amanda),
- Advocacy (Laura),
- Help to choose of school and linked administration (Gwen, Natalie, Rachel), help to find housing (Maria, Magda, Rachel),
- Help in the job search or arrangement of ALMP policy program (Gwen, Bonny, Harrold).
- Some respondents (Lisa, Ken, Gwen, Antonia, Barbara) mentioned that NGO workers taught them how to look for work or helped them to write CV, etc.
- NGOs also work with children in the field of recreational activities (hobbies, music, sports) and in school support (these are very widespread, see above).
- NGO also actively cooperated with Employment office to get subsidised workplaces for their clients.
- They share or lend facilities and equipment which is otherwise unachievable for young people (football pitch, sport equipment, equipment for dancing).
- They also provide equipment for job search like access to the internet and phone for job search calls (Amanda, Barbara, Greta).

Bonny described how intensively NGO helped him to solve his debts and helped him to get work. Rachel argued that it is about finding an appropriate balance between not helping at all and helping too much. Usefulness was widely quoted for after-school tutoring (see above).

“They [NGO] helped me a lot to prepare for written tests. They helped me and I did not have to pay for it...and they had such good approach, good people, you can talk to them and so on.” (R37: 224)

When asked about the usefulness of NGO activities, Vanessa replied:

“I think that they [activities] are all useful. After school learning is most important, that the children can learn themselves, that it is not paid and anyone can join, and there are various games, boys can play football rather than doing silly things.” (R34: 222)

Robin said that attending a concrete NGO when he was a child helped him to prevent the negative behaviour common among his mates.

“Only them helped me. I came there for a small talk. They listened to me. Sometimes they helped me with school when I was smaller. Really, only them helped me.... due to them I am not a thug doing silly things like some other [people] in these streets. Drugs

⁴⁴ We noted that this included finding appropriate information, giving interpretation, giving advice, guiding, and/or motivation support.

etc. This helped me most. That I realised that I will not do this. This helped me most.”
(R49: 149)

Robin also said that people in NGO taught him to behave more politely. Most visible activities of NGO are in recreational activities. However, some young people (e.g. Rachel) reflect that such activities are used mainly by smaller children, while teenagers usually lose interest in them. This is the period which is crucial for going or not going the wrong way.

Young people also sometimes discuss the principles of work and approach of NGO workers. Leo liked that he ‘could speak with NGO workers normally’, they ‘cared about his problems’, and helped him to settle the conflict with his friends. Laura said that ‘young people can go there and say what they would like to’. Rachel presented a similar idea:

“When a young person comes [to NGO], [they] do not behave with him in a way that he is only work. Try to understand him, be empathetic when he/she has problems or troubles. This is what makes it better.” (R70: 271)

Some young people noted that NGO is open to almost anyone. Rebeca spoke about ‘open doors’ and ‘providing young people some place to go’. Bob liked that NGO were open and people of all origins can come there. Barbara spoke about the openness of help:

“They [NGO workers] want to help people. They are engaged. Everyone can come there. It does not matter how he/she looks like. Whether he stinks or not, but they want to help them. However, a lot of people misuse this, and they do not even want to be helped. However, it depends on individual people.” (R58: 223)

Robin appreciated that NGO workers listened to him. Antonia said:

“When you visit these organisations, they ask you first, what you would like to do. And this young person says it. For example, I would like to...he/she thinks out some activity and they try to organise a group for it.” (R63: 168)

Young people prefer options that are not too restrictive.

“...approach of NGO to me during the solution was so nice and empathetically led that I did not have a feeling that suddenly someone enforces me to do something.... Quite the opposite, someone started to appraise me for silly things [small tasks]. I remember that I brought a paper from the office and they said: ‘Oh, thanks, you are good’. Why have they said it? Most people took these things as natural, but then someone says: ‘That is good, that is the first step’ even when it is natural as a minor thing, but suddenly there was someone who did not take it like that and I think that it was super motivation at that time.” (R1: 142)

Leo explained why he prefers to go to one NGO providing recreational activities for children and adolescents and not to the other. According to him, although in both NGO they could do preferred activities, they preferred NGO where were not rules limiting their use.

"They [first NGO] had differentiated days when you can do it and days when we can play ping-pong. And there [in the other NGO] we can do it every day including music room. There are no such rules." (R56: 593).

Similar experience was also presented by Lisa. On the other hand, Rachel thought that preferring certain activities and teaching some discipline is beneficial for young people. Robin said that he was allowed to say his opinion, but he had to commit to certain rules.

"You can say your opinion, but there are always some rules, which you have to respect and when you do not respect them, then you cannot be there...or you get a sanction" (R49: 185)

My reflection of the work of NGO

Work of NGO was generally appraised. There were almost not almost any negative comments. It seems that young people generally used very similar criteria for assessment of service as in the case of Employment office workers. The position of NGO is different in the aspect that participation in their activities is usually much more voluntary and young people can leave when they are not satisfied with their services. Nevertheless, we also witnessed that NGOs struggled to set a proper balance between providing freedom and setting rules which guaranteed avoidance of anarchy in their facilities.

Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, we reflect on the interaction between young people and institutions shaping their lives and future chances. We noted that these interactions led to specific outcomes. In other words – yes, institutions matter. Besides the basic structure and quality of these institutions, which constitute the basic frame for these interactions, we witnessed that there are concrete opportunity structures provided by these institutions. When the opportunity (offer) is not interesting or when the other aspect of the situation is blocking the use of the opportunity, the result is not using this opportunity. First and cheapest solutions may not be viable from long-term perspective. This may constitute a substantial problem. Third essential aspect is the quality of the personal relationship between the teacher or street level worker and the young person. We need to understand young people more and we need to develop a more supporting stances when addressing their problems. The intervention must be timely. In many cases, years passed and nothing 'positive' happened. Finally, we need more cooperation among institutions, because when it happens, it brings promising results.

Conclusion

We will concentrate on social policy related questions in the conclusion of this book. The primary intended contribution of this book was to show the interactions between young people and institutions in a ‘from the bellow’ perspective. It can be added to the family of research which in the past followed a similar perspective and it was inspirative for our own approach (Jordan et al. 1992, Clasen, Gould, and Vincent 1998, Walther 2006, Down, Smyth, and Robinson 2018, Sirovátka and Spies 2018 and others). We believe that this approach was fruitful to show that the policies cannot be designed only from above. Rather, the practical experience from the functioning of the policies should be systematically used for their design and implementation. Insight into concrete cases and situations may help.

Concerning the addition of this book to the aspects relevant for the development of social policy theory, we see the main additions in the reflections of intuitive judgements and choice, orientation and counselling, and the interactions between street level workers and young people concerning work opportunities and quality of work offers. While these topics are not completely new in the theory of social policy, this book brings valuable insights into the more concrete aspects of these problems, allowing for further development of corresponding research and policies. To give an example, only due to NEGOTIATE research, we have found the great importance of the orientation of young people during their education process. The focus on this helps to close a specific gap because this aspect was not well covered in the previous comparative ‘transition regimes’ research. These are many aspects in which this book adds empirical evidence and contributes to the explanation of specific aspects (namely, thinking of young people about saving money for the future, understanding the relevance of housing, presentation of discourse as a specific source of ideas for decision-making process), and better understanding the reactions of young people to insecurity.

During our research, we tried to map the complicated relationships present in the life stories of young people. Voice of young people was the most important source of this reflection. We have shown that the transition from school to the labour market is a crucial step – it significantly constitutes the future lives of young people including, e.g., family formation, self-esteem, health, and economic situation. We have also shown that the concrete conditions of work have a high impact. Presented stories are only rarely stories of success. Rather, we noted many situations of new starts or going in circles (that situation is the same all the time, for example, Lisa, Herbert, and others). We have found the worst situation of some people who are poorest among the poor. These people are usually left completely without help, although these are people who really need the help so much. We can speak about ‘reversive targeting’ in this context. For us, one of the greatest paradoxes is that for quite a long time the perspective that some people are not employable, their situation is hopeless, they do not deserve the effort, they can be left aside or neglected, or they are the reserve army of labour is shared both by people in need and official authorities.

Agency of most young people is clearly limited by both their own abilities and by structural conditions. Success is often highly dependent on own abilities and personal interactions, while

not much structural help is offered. In such a context, the general strategy of young people often remarks ‘fighting in the corner’ rather than the career and development process (see, e.g., story of Violet). This also helps to explain some behaviour which is not preferred from the perspective of the state. What is good and bad is always normative. Very interesting for us was to see how one type of moral motivation led to a different type of immoral activity or how one person seemed to be moral in one aspect and immoral in another aspect. I saw such cases when respondents preferred taking care of their relatives (poor mother living without a partner, disabled child, elderly parents) over other moral behaviour or when they worked aside but they were not willing to claim any social benefits.

To overcome the insecurity in the lives of young people means that there should be a developed transitional system. We normatively suppose that with the development of the system of transitional regime we can expect the emergence of win-win situation because ‘negative’ behaviour rooted in the necessity would be reduced. This is a twofold learning process. We need to understand what young people need and support them (in most cases) in going their own way and young people should be guided and offered real life opportunities. This also means being able to recognise when young people need help and when they are able to help themselves. Some young people learned not to rely on other people in their job search. Josephine commented on her activity.

“It is so that you come meet someone and you tell him: ‘find me a work’. However, when one thousand other people do it, it is a long waiting, and this is useless. And so, I rather go myself and ask myself.” (R41: 90)

This is at least partially happening. When comparing the stories of different respondents, we concluded that the strategy of workers of the Employment office towards the unemployed was differentiated with varying offers as well as different pressure to look for work. We should also not forget that leaving too much space can be interpreted as neglect when assessed from a different perspective.

Concerning the ability of the system to help, we noted that the system is clearly bound to the rules and not very flexible in reacting to sudden and immediate problems of people in need. Latent conflict is present in situations when the image of the wanted result and the strategy of solution is completely different between a young person and a street level worker. Such situations are often difficult to be assessed meaningfully because there is almost always three-side communication included (employer, unemployed, Employment office).

From my perspective, too much restriction is not working well, because it makes people less trustful and angrier (they concern it to be unjust) and it did not bring promising results in the stories we have witnessed in this book. I suppose to limit most enforcing activities used in the past, such as street cleaning in exchange for benefits, the need to accept any work despite its unacceptable conditions, need to attend institutions without relevant reason, and expulsion from the system after one fault, when a young person is actively trying to correct the situation. It does not mean to avoid sanctions completely in cases when they are necessary.

Education system is (with some exceptions) functioning well, but we have some doubts about the system of career counselling, prevention of dropout, remedial activities, and about the ability of young people to use attained qualifications on the labour market. There should be more concern to question why some fresh graduates are refused when there are workplaces offered and how to enhance their transition. This means cooperation with employers. While the share of dropouts is generally not very high compared to other countries, in our sample it constitutes the most visible and substantial problem. This is the place where most young people miss their life chances. Less formal learning should be supported as a viable alternative for further competence development.

While many applaud the flexibility of employment protection legislation, we noted in this book that this is providing substantial problems. Generally, flexible contracts are not functioning well when they are not used as intended (here we still suppose that these contracts were not created with such expectations of creating permanent insecurity). We mean the cases where fixed-term contracts are rotated for a long time and they provide unjust insecurity to workers. While we appraise the screening function of these contracts, the idea that they provide permanent insecurity should not be accepted. Some employers try to avoid social security contributions by using inappropriate forms of employment contract. Again, creating insecurity in this way is best avoided when these contracts (namely self-employment contracts, agency work, and work contracts) are used as originally intended – for specific situations. This means that they are generally worthy and valuable instruments enabling people in appropriate situations, but their misuse should be controlled and remedied, building a commonly shared view in public space that such misusing is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, providing a viable alternative is the best way to achieve misuse of these contracts.

To conclude, we have found that insecurity matters, but it is only a small part of the greater picture of being able to live a worthy life in contemporary society. It is not something to be neglected or avoided. This is not a question of blaming someone concrete for perils notable in the presented lives (however this would be easy). Instead, we should focus more research and social policy on the concrete aspects of the described problems with the intention to improve the transition system gradually incrementally to the state which will marginalise above-mentioned problems and which while staying original is closer to such systems in developed western countries.

Policy implications

We reflect that the transition system is a system in which the change of one parameter can change the balance of the whole system and the changes have to be done in a way which respect key institutions/ways of living in the Czech society. Our general policy implications follow four main strands of thinking. First is developing a more guided and controlled transition process, allowing young people to choose well and have a second chance. Second is the development of the labour market (including both legislation and cooperation with employers), as we believe that without changes in the labour market, changes in other parts

of the transition system are doomed to fail. Third is the strengthening of the security of young people in transitions. Fourth is the intentional support of the most vulnerable and avoiding ‘those are too disadvantaged to be helped’ approach. More concrete implications of our book for policy making are as follows:

- Further develop outreach policies for direct addressing of dropouts and helping them to return to education, if possible.
- Do a systematic evaluation of the orientation, counselling, and guidance system and change the system to assure the standardised quality of counselling.
- Develop a link between active labour market policy and education to allow young people to get a qualification which is recognised and accepted in the labour market.
- Do not allow systematic replacement of employment contracts with partially undeclared work contracts and illegal work. Offer positive alternatives, allowing young people to escape from the necessity to accept such contracts.
- Increase unemployment protection of young people. Set the basic standard of unemployment protection level finding a working (win-win) compromise among various criteria and stances of key societal (inc. political) actors.
- Pilot experimental use of additional unemployment protection based on inclusion of a young person with ‘contract of activity’.
- Continue to develop cooperation among key subjects on the labour market including schools, employers, Employment office, and NGOs.
- Give specific attention to the suppression of drug market in deprived communities.
- Further strengthen education, development and public discourse promoting more mutual trust, giving opportunities, assessing people due to their real skills and situation, and reducing assessment based on stereotypical thinking about gender, race, health handicaps and other aspects. It does not mean concealing ‘real problems’ which some young people may have.

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Annex:

NEGOTIATE INTERVIEWS (done 2016)						
N	Sex	Born	Fam. status	Children	Work status	Main story
R1 Bonny	M	1991	single	none	pedagogic worker with children	leaving home, ruthless life and change
R2 Karin	W	1993	single	one	social services	family/child
R3 Ben	M	1991	single	one	unemployed	employers/work
R4 Ken	M	1996	single	none	employed	employers/work
R5 Vendelín	M	1974	cohabiting	eight/five	unemployed, occasional jobs	employers/work
R6 Otto	M	1972	single	one	unemployed	raising in Institutional care
R7 Magda	F	1975	divorced	two	foster care/cleaning	resilience
R8 Bruno	M	1974	cohabiting	three	unemployed	permanent unemployment, poverty
R9 Roman	M	1994	cohabiting	one	employed – public cleaning	school dropout/occupation
R10 –	F	1954	widow	seven	–	<i>not used in this book</i>
R11 Jake	M	1993	single	none	employed	phlegmatic
R12 Peter	M	1991	cohabiting	none	employed (mechanic)	calculating
R13 Quido	M	1994	single	none	unemployed	youth
R14 Derek	M	1991	single	none	unemployed	return to education
R15 Simon	M	1971	married	two	employed	imprisonment experience, debts
R16 John	M	1971	single	none	unemployed	education and languages
R17 Clara	F	1992	single	none	employed (shop assistant)	strategy
R18 Sophie	F	1991	single	one	unemployed	single motherhood
R19 Janine	F	1992	single	none	unemployed	orientation/education

R20 Ellyn	F	1992	single	none	unemployed (found job)	psychical problems
R21 Vanda	F	1991	married	none	employed	transition from education to labour market
R22 Betty	F	1992	single	one (expecting second)	unemployed	working without work contract
R23 Helen	F	1974	divorced	one	unemployed	working conditions
R24 Eugenie	F	197?	cohabiting	two	unemployed	bad relationships with street level workers
R25 Sabina	F	1970	married	one	unemployed	health problems, employability
R26 Fred	M	1975	single	none	employed	choice of profession
R27 Tony	M	1972	married	two	employed	insecurity
R28 Alice	F	1971	divorced	three	working	single motherhood, job offers
R29 Lucy	F	1975	married	three	working	housing, children, lone motherhood.
R30 Melinda	F	1970	married	two	unemployed	discrimination
R31 Herbert	M	1974	married	yes	unemployed	blocked opportunities
R32 Violet	F	197	divorced, cohabiting(?)	two	employed	orientation in the labour market
R33 Ron	M	1991	single	none	employed (food delivery)	quality of education, self-employment

CITISPYCE INTERVIEWS (done 2014)

N	Sex	Age	Fam. status	Children	Work status	Main story
R34 Vanessa	F	16	single	none	student	choice of profession
R35 Laura	F	20	single	none	unemployed	quality of education/work experience
R36 Rebeca	F	17	single	none	studying	career identity
R37 Lampert	M	16	single	none	studying	choice of occupation
R38 Ray	M	22	single	none	not working	Imprisonment
R39 William	M	20	single	none	occasional jobs in construction	orientation to manual work
R40 Lars	M	17	single	none	studying	-

R41 Josephine	F	18	single	none	working (cleaning)	relationship between majority and minority
R42 Sandra	F	21	single	none	working (call centre)	relationship between majority and minority
R43 Tobias	M	20	single	none	working (garbage collection)	education, enlightenment
R44 Rupert	M	20	single	none	studying	locality
R45 Randolph	M	21	single	none	studying	youth
R46 Bob	M	19	single	none	unemployed, working occasionally	trap of poverty, influence of relatives
R47 Leila	F	16	single	none	studying	choice of profession, working abroad
R48 Rudy	M	15	single	none	studying	choice of profession
R49 Robin	M	19	single	none	studying	–
R50 Gwen	F	21	cohabiting	one	unemployed	Parenting, without income, housing situation.
R51 Mortimer	M	17	single	none	studying	drugs
R52 Maria	F	21	cohabiting	two	parental leave	housing
R53 Steve	M	21	cohabiting	(one child of his girlfriend)	unemployed	drugs and prison
R54 Amanda	F	19	cohabiting	one	parental leave	discrimination
R55 Patricia	F	16	single	none	studying	
R56 Leo	M	16	single	none	working (earthworks)	no education
R57 Harrold	M	18	cohabiting	none (two of his girl)	unemployed	alternative lifestyle (selling drugs)
R58 Barbara	F	23	single	two	unemployed	early motherhood
R59 –	–	–	–	–	–	<i>not used in this book</i>
R60 Rosalie	F	16	single	none	studying	danger in locality
R61 Pablo	M	18	single	none	unemployed	motivation
R62 Felix	M	18	single	none	employed	brother help

R63 Antonia	F	21	single	none	working in NGO	housing, helping children
R64 Max	M	17	single	none	studying	-
R65 Trevor	M	17	single	none	studying	-
R66 Natalie	F	16	single	none	studying	choice of school
R67 Greta	F	19	cohabiting	one	parental leave	motherhood/life plans
R68 Lisa	F	18	single	none	unemployed	no education, low motivation
R69 Philip	M	23	single	none	unemployed	school drop out
R70 Rachel	F	21	single	none	studying	resilience
R71 Doris	F	18	single	none	studying	strategy
R72 Nancy	F	23	single	none	unemployed	strategy, drop out, housing
R73 Alan	M	24	single	none	employed (wash dishing)	school quality