



Project no. 028408 (CIT5)  
**SPReW**  
Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work

Specific Targeted Research Project  
Priority 7: "Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society"

## Deliverable 1

# Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work

*Conceptual framework and state of the art*

Due date of deliverable: October 2006  
Actual submission date: October 2006

Start date of project: 01/06/2006

Duration: 24 months

Lead contractor:  
FTU

Final report

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)		
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	





# **Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work**

*A state of the art report*

Workpackage 1: state of the art of the current research and conceptual framework for analysis

Edited by Patricia Vendramin (FTU)

Project no. 028408 (CIT5)

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## Introduction

The SPReW project focuses on the factors leading to solidarity or tensions in intergenerational relations, in the area of work. Recent researches raised the hypothesis that the younger generation has different attitudes, forms of participation, expectations and engagement in work than the older generations. The pessimistic view concludes to an increased individualism, but this assumption is not founded on robust research. The project will provide a better understanding of the evolving relation that generations have to work. Such changes have important consequences on intergenerational relations at the workplace, on solidarity between generations, and on the relevance of specific work and employment policies as well as on other public policies.

The relation to work can be analysed through different angles: value given to work, expectations associated to work, vision of the future, relation to precariousness or mobility, more generally the construction of an identity through work and the linking with other key values. A link is also established between the relation to work and other correlated issues: family formation and lifestyles, intergenerational relations in society, social inclusion or exclusion. The gender dimension and the position of migrants are constitutive and transversal aspects of all research tasks. The project also analyses age policies related to work and employment and identifies good practices. The research methodology combines qualitative, quantitative, comparative and participatory approaches.

The key objectives are to draw out social patterns of relation to work for different generations, including the gender dimension; to study articulations with other societal fields (family formation and lifestyles, intergenerational relations, social cohesion); to develop awareness of public authorities and social actors on the generational dimensions in the relation to work and employment; to draw out guidelines for youth policies and ageing policies in this area.

### The report

This report is the first deliverable of the SPReW project. It consists of a state of the art of current research on the issue. It gathers the overviews of literature done by each team involved in this first task. In their reports (chapters 2 to 7), each team has pointed out what are the hypotheses, analyses, conclusions that are relevant regarding four key areas of the project: the relation of generations to diverse work components (precariousness, mobility...); the connection with lifestyles and family construction; the intergenerational dimensions; the social cohesion perspective, including gender and ethnicity issues. The first chapter proposes a cross overview of all contributions.

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# Chapter 1: Societal challenges of changing relations to work

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## Introduction

In this introductory chapter we propose a cross-overview of the chapters 2 to 7 that give, through national perspectives, a picture of the current researches and debates concerning the evolving nature of the relation to work for different generations and their societal dimensions. This introductory chapter points out the convergences and divergences in the social contexts. It looks at the continuity and changes in the orientations towards work and the intergenerational challenges it raises. It describes how changes in families and life styles are strongly intertwined with changes in work. Social cohesion and gender are key issues in all these analyses. This overview of researches and debates in different European countries supports the finalisation of the research questions and the selection of hypotheses that will be investigated in the empirical approach during the next steps of the project. This first chapter gathers contributions of all the partners, authors of the following chapters.

## 1. Common trends and divergences in the national social contexts

---

During the last decades, radical changes have occurred in the economic and social spheres. The experience of work has been deeply reshaped by diverse transformations (technological and schooling, among others). The places and roles of generations in work are no longer the same, with some positive results but also negative outcomes. Precariousness, destandardisation of work and diversity in positions and trajectories are shaping nowadays the relation to work. However, this common economic framework is also embedded in national contexts that shape the final outcomes of such common changes.

### 1.1 Common trends...

Durable *mass unemployment* that invaded all Western countries is a key feature that marked the whole life of European citizens. Unemployment remains one of main problems for all generations, but mostly for those who are at the two extremes of the age spectrum: young workers and ageing workers.

On the labour market, new requirements in the areas of flexibility, autonomy and adaptability regarding both the production processes (organisation of work) and the production means (equipment, capital, manpower) have led to *the destandardisation of work*; this constitutes another common trend that concerns all countries. Mass unemployment took place in a labour market confronted with technological innovations; downsizing; high employment decrease in traditional industries; development of services; externalisation of low-qualified workers in

small organisations. Rather than a root, working life has become a permanent flux. These changes lead to the development of new “biographical patterns”.

During the “Trente glorieuses”, the place of generations at work was largely characterised by stability and intergenerational continuity. The organisational and managerial models (mainly Fordist and bureaucratic organisation) referred to statutory principles that gave a place to different age groups and organised full-time permanent contracts. “Age” was a key value that provided the older workers with preferential positions in organisation. Seniority certified professionalism, maturity and experience and supported organisational and technological changes. Seniority also played a strategic role in the social and professional integration of the young workers (Troade, 2006). Such “reciprocal loyalty” (Alter, 2000) expressed a singular relation between workers and the organisation. Workers of all ages were belonging to a shared “economic destiny” (Attias-Donfut, 1988) throughout institutional frameworks (social security systems), which merged the generational destinies and made life trajectories stable and foreseeable. Because they linked life periods to social roles (Gauillier, 1999), legal frameworks reinforced solidarity between generations.

During the 70’s, in the modern countries, this equilibrium got threatened. A series of ruptures took place and uncertainty became permanent (concerning growth rates, employment, investments, etc.). In the 80’s, the labour market grew up both with financial, familial and societal insecurity; rapid changes; greater diversity and lack of solid traditions (Smola, Sutton, 2002).

During this period, a *disqualification of youth and ageing* on the labour market grew up. The youth could benefit from progress in schooling and became the age group with the higher rate and level of schooling, but this did not assure a good position on the labour market anymore. Ageing workers also faced a growing precariousness on the labour market. In a context characterised by lengthening of schooling and the persistence of mass unemployment, the new organisational models contributed to a redefinition of roles and assessment criteria within work; seniority progressively lost its positive connotation.

*Diversification* is another common key trend in the socio-economic contexts. Life trajectories as well as professional trajectories are more and more diversified. There is no longer a common reference to a standard way of life neither to a standard profile of employment and career. Changes in life choices, entry routes in paid work and career paths have significantly transformed the social framework for integration, especially as regard mobility and careers development (Tremblay, 2003). Professional trajectories are discontinued and made of a collection of experiences and jobs.

## **1.2 ...embedded in national contexts**

However, this common economic framework is embedded in national contexts that shape the final outcomes of the trends described above. Within the consortium, we can point out roughly some features that determine the specificities of the social context.

The examination of the German employment systems must not overlook the historical specific situation since the unification. The unification in 1990 forced together two highly populated states, economically strong, with completely different employment patterns and family models, into a single system of law (Bosch/Knut, 2003). Moreover, the German labour market differs from other European countries by having a profession-based structure. Typically

Germany is the combination of internal organisational and external professional labour market. Enterprises react to increased competition first of all with strategies of internal flexibilisation, especially flexibilisation of working time (Promberger, Böhm, Heyder, Pamer, Strauß, 2002; Herrmann, Promberger, Singer, Trinczek, 1999) but also through elastic collective agreements and collective bargaining agreements on plant or enterprise level (Seifert, 2002; Richter, Spitzley, 2003).

In Hungary, the change of political regime, both with a shift from one reproduction model (state socialist redistribution) to another (market economy) has deep impacts on the position of generations at work. The socio-economic context is also characterised by the disappearance of, or a change in the operation/function of, some of the old institutions and the emergence of new ones. Another aspect of the transition is a change in norms and mentality. Expecting an improvement in the standard of life, society was instead faced with mass unemployment and high inflation for which political freedom could hardly compensate (Róbert 1999).

Unemployment became massive throughout the country. Most affected by this were, on the one hand, the oldest segment of the population in active age, which was closest to retirement, and the youngest one on the other hand, which only entered the labour market or was about to enter it. The former was forced to leave the labour market sooner, while the latter had to postpone entry into it.

The fall of communism and the emergence of knowledge-based society affected generations differently: they had to face different challenges. The older generations found themselves in a setting in which their knowledge and experience gained in the previous system might have lost their relevance and thus they found themselves competing with younger people whose education suited better the new requirements. A common threat to all, however, was unemployment, not known up until then and the different generations had to resort to different strategies to fight it. From the point of view of generational differences, it is also very important to note that there are generations, which did not live under the previous system. On the one hand, they were not subjected to its oppression and therefore they did not experience liberation from it, but on the other hand, they were not exposed to the security the system provided in exchange for the oppression. Therefore communication is rather difficult between these younger generations and those which grew up in the lax version of communism.

The situation in France shows a stronger pressure on young workers. Although the diffusion of more flexible contracts is a constant among European countries, France has been the most prolific concerning the multiplication of such contracts, which have been particularly concentrated on the young. For example 80% of the fixed term contracts concern young workers.

In Italy, a stronger tradition of intra familial solidarity is shaping the relation to precarious employment and the extension of the youngsters' life inside the parental family. Italian youth has an increasingly delayed access to adult life: in 2005, 60,2% of 18-34 Italian people is still living with parents, which rises to 74,8% in the case of flexible workers; the male share is higher than the girls' share (Censis, 2006). Anyway, besides economic factors, also cultural and psychological factors seem to be significant.

In Portugal, contrary to other western European countries, industry has never been the most important employer of the working population. It was the tertiary sector that passed directly from last to first place in hiring manpower. Public administration grew strikingly. Along with

tertiarisation, coastalisation and urbanisation have also intensified. Population movements within the country have continued, concentrating populations along the coast and in the urban centres, especially in the two large metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, but also around some foci of urban growth which have resisted the pull of Lisbon and Porto: Braga, Aveiro, Coimbra, Viseu, Évora and Faro.

So, a common socio-economic context, embedded in national frameworks and characterised by a durable mass unemployment, the destandardisation of work, the disqualification of youth and elderly and the high diversification of private and professional life, is thus supporting a changing relation to work that presents some major trends but also questions for the future.

## 2. Continuity and change in the relation to work

---

As summarised by our German partners, the concept of work orientation (or relation to work, depending on the translation of concepts) relies on studies in the 70s and 80s. The *patterns of interpretation* and *practical everyday-life orientations* were in the spotlight of interest (Neumann, 1984). Patterns of interpretation are socially acquired knowledge, which results partly from own experiences and partly from collective experience, i.e. family-, profession-, group- and class-specific processes of socialisation. For different areas of life different patterns of interpretation are available. It is necessary to differentiate between worldviews and everyday-life orientations. Worldviews are an interpretation of the societal totality in the perspective of the subjective relevance (Schütz, Luckmann, 1974). Everyday-life orientations are self-evident patterns of action, which structure work-, family- and leisure-life. Everyday-life orientations are usually defined by non-conscious motives. The theoretically constructed work orientation “is in its content an initialising force comparable with the concept Motive.” (Friedrich/Lantz, 1996, S. 476). An analysis of work orientation is, in this sense, motive-research. Work orientations are social patterns of the individual for his relationship to work. Orientation here is a sociological term and means the norms the individual applies to the relevant areas of his regular daily life. The relevant areas (Schütz, 1971) are, for example, family, leisure and work, etc.

These everyday-life orientations are shaped by socio-economic and cultural contexts. Deep transformations in these contexts will influence the orientations. Work, as individual and societal feature and experience, has deeply changed, so the relation or orientation to work is supposed to have also significantly changed. The debates about the central value of work or the distance to work, the statements about differentiated attitudes of age groups at work, the assumptions about specific women patterns of relation to paid work are all elements that reveal the social concern about these social mutations. The generational dimension in such approach is of high importance. As they have been socialised in different contexts and also because their specific experiences are different, generations are supposed to have more or less different orientations towards work. However, it is not easy to capture such non-conscious structures of consciousness. This section gathers some hypotheses coming from the overview of literature. Targeted qualitative research will help us to go further in the next steps of the project.

## **2.1 A new balance between instrumental and expressive dimensions**

There are two or three (depending on the authors) different dimensions in the relation to work that we can find in diverse analyses, sometimes with different terms but rather convergent meanings (Paugam, 2000; Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau Berger, 2001; Riffault et Tchernia, 2002, 2003). The first dimension is called *instrumental*; it refers to the material expectations, the idea of income, the importance of payment and the possibilities of being promoted. The second dimension is the *social* one; it refers to the importance of the human relations at work. The third dimension is called *symbolic* and has to do with the opportunities to express oneself in an activity, the interest of the work, the feeling of success, the level of autonomy and the social usefulness. Symbolic and social dimensions are sometimes considered together and called the *expressive* dimension of work (Habermas, 1973, 1987; Zoll, 1992, 2001).

There are different assumptions regarding this double or triple reference to work. In many current jobs, according to some analyses, there is no place anymore for the expressive dimension of work. Due to its own dynamics (Habermas, 1973), to the increasing difficulties to “read the social” (Arliaud, Eckert, 2002) and to the current precariousness of the labour market, workers develop mainly an instrumental relation to paid work (Zoll, 1992, 2001). However, meeting both material and subjective needs does not seem possible for everybody. Current situations in the world of work can be interpreted rather as *a new balance between instrumental and expressive dimensions*. What has changed is not the double/triple reference to work but it is rather the weight and relation of these dimensions.

## **2.2 Increased importance of other social areas**

There is an abundant literature about the debates on distance or centrality of work. For some authors, in Europe and in the United States, this situation leads to an increasing distance with paid work (Coupland, 1991; Cannon, 1994; Baethge, 1994; Gorz, 1997; Zoll, 2001) and threatens the social integration or the citizenship of the weakened groups (Bourdieu, 1993; Gorz, 1997; Sennet, 1999). However, other researches develop an opposite analysis and consider that work remains, for all generations, a central value in the construction of social identities, in Europe as in North America (Boudon, 2002; Castel 1995; Wilson, 1996; Hamel, 1999). Nevertheless, if the second group of authors tend to confirm the importance devoted to work, they also reveal the increased *relativisation of the central place of work*. They also observe an increasing *importance of other social areas*, in particular, non-economic areas in the construction of identities.

The young generation is the one who is supposed to have more distance with work. However, this relativisation of work does not mean that young people prepare for a life in the leisure- and fun-society. Many surveys demonstrate that the life-goal “Job and Family” is still crucial. Their distance to work is also questioned by the increased importance of student jobs. Young people can develop quite early a relation to work through student jobs, these jobs are also part of the socialisation process for these young people (Hamel, 2003).

There are different assumptions regarding the place of work for the young generation. The first one is the period of progressive entry into adult roles. During this period, young people are tempted to invest all the activity fields that are accessible to them and not only the work field. When they are confronted to an increased number of responsibilities in private and professional life, young people give more importance to work. A second assumption relates to deep structural changes in modern societies, notably the development of schooling. Tchernia

(2005) suggests that socialisation within the framework of schooling has probably an impact on the way people consider working life. The relativisation of work (especially observed among the highly qualified young) cannot be understood without putting forward the disillusionments caused by the drop in status process observed at the entry into the labour market and more generally, frustration and dissatisfaction towards a social model that does no longer associate education / work and social mobility in a linear way.

Despite possible relativisation of work that can take diverse degrees among generations, as regards some key expectations such as personal recognition or professional identification, generations seem convergent.

### **2.3 Subjectivisation of work**

Paradoxically, debates about relativisation of work are contemporaneous to debates about subjectivisation of work. Once more the young generation seems more concerned. Subjectivisation means the claiming for personal requirements, ideas, demands in work, or, in other words, the introduction of subjectivity in work.

Subjectivisation is linked to the change of economic, professional and task structures as well as the increasing use of new work and organisational concepts (Heidenreich, Braczyk, 2003). In the 60s and 70s subjectivity of labour was considered as a source of disturbance and insecurity for the economic use of labour (which was 'objectified'). At the contrary, the present-day companies consider the subjective factor as a resource for economically successful work processes. This nowadays re-subjectivisation is supposed to free potentials formerly trapped by bureaucracy, to mobilise commitment, to replace expensive control mechanism with cost-free and more effective self-control, virtualised rule-by-self-control, and flexible planning by introducing improvisation (Moldaschl, 2003). Especially amongst younger adults there is an increasing desire to introduce their subjectivity into their work (Baethge, 1988/1991/1994).

Subjectivisation seems to go hand in hand with "blurring the boundaries" (de-limitation) that characterises the dissolution or weakening of societal standards and norms of work. In the post-fordist labour society especially the male standards of normality are affected. Blurring of boundaries presents a point of culmination of subjectivisation of work. First of all, blurring the boundaries leads to a new combination of person and manpower in the work process, and is secondly characterised through a massive seizure of the person of the worker, which is concentrated along the dimensions flexibility and self-organisation (Kratzer, 2003). Blurring the boundaries thus means that orders and rules (modes of regulation of performance), as well as hierarchies and bureaucracy (modes of regulation of the employment of manpower), are being replaced by self-organisation and flexibility.

A pathological point of culmination of subjectivisation is the over-investment in work. Many examples can be found in managerial professions, executive positions or ICT professions, but not exclusively. For these workers, work is always a priority. Most of their time and energy is devoted to work. They have excessively integrated the norms and work culture of new organisational models.



## **2.4 Sense of belonging and collective dimension**

The professional commitment of the old generations was sustained by their sense of belonging to a collective and by the concern to integrate well in the group by adopting social and professional behaviours in accordance with their role (GIP-MIS, 2004). In this integration logic, the socialisation framework dominates the individual differences.

On the contrary, among young people, this sense of belonging to a collective, which is really important in the eyes of the old workers, is relegated to a position of secondary importance, in favour of the intention of being recognised as an autonomous individual getting under control one's life, instead of being confined to one function in the firm. In this perspective, philosophers like the Canadian Charles Taylor put forward the idea of the "ethics of authenticity".

Their particular ethics can also explain their weak investment or even a risk of disengagement when they feel compelled to do something, when they are not recognised for their work, or not interested in the tasks that they have to do. Conversely, they can put a lot in their work when their ability to take the initiative is recognised and when their work allows to express their potential and to meet their needs of searching a meaning to life (Vakaloulis, 2005). Young people expressed a logic of subjectivity (Dubet, 1994) and in the meantime, they distance themselves from the « integration logic » of the old generation.

Young people are often criticised for individualist behaviours, which would mark a break with the traditional working class culture ruled by strong collective solidarities (Beaud, Pialoux, 1999). A finer research carried out in big firms reveals a more complex reality (Gautié, Guillemard, 2004; Vendramin, 2004): indeed, the divide between generations seems to correspond to different modes of linking and structuring individual and collective dimensions. This difference can largely be explained by the evolution of the human resources management and the changes in work organisation (Troadec, 2002)

Older people express a strong identification with the work group and a symbolic opposition to the hierarchy, which is coupled with a collective human resource management, ruled by logic of qualification and accompanied by wage negotiation with unions (Dubar, 1991). But older people experience an individual work process, which reflects a divided and compartmentalised work organisation.

On the contrary, the entry of young people into firms is concomitant with the growing individualisation of the relation between employers and employees. Thus, young workers do not identify with peer groups. They view their relations with their colleagues as a relation between individuals embedded in networks built and ruled by affinities (GIP-MIS, 2004). But they value and experience cooperative work activities, consistent with the evolution of work organisation (a logic of competence instead of a logic of qualifications, decompartmentalisation of production units, activities in network etc.).

In brief, instead of contrasting the individualism of the young and the solidarity of the older generation, distinguishing the "cooperative individualism" of the young generation from the "individualist communitarianism" of the older generations would be more accurate (Thuderoz, 1995; Delay, 2005; Vendramin, 2004).

## **2.5 Vision of the future, relation to risk, relation to work**

The young generation is often depicted as a generation “in negative”: without distinctive characteristics, without precise age boundaries, avoiding conflicts, invisible in the society, lacking of future, for-ever-young. No surprise if, in relation to work, they look less ideological and more instrumental, as it has been said. Moreover, their diverse conceptions of time – in particular their different idea of “future” – seem to be a key-dimension in the analysis of the cultural and social factors affecting the relationship to (and the meaning of) work. The difficulty to picturing themselves in “any” future, for both male and female youngsters, is likely to be a significant reason for their instable work paths, just like the specific labour market constraints, i.e. the low employment demand or the job precariousness.

Youth is often depicted as a without generation: without values, without dreams and strong passions; without a vision of the future. However, authors suggest (Diamanti, 1999) that the proliferation of “negative” definitions, that insist on what the absences and the lacks are, might be an effect of the position of the observers and of their incapacity of seeing a “way of being young” which shows to be different from that they were used to. In this sense the strategy of hiding and protecting oneself into the private, the small, the present (family, friends, associative voluntary groups, the day-by-day work project) as opposite to the search for public, collective and to the projection into the future engagements, might be something young-people of the 80<sup>ies</sup> learnt from their parents and teachers, and from the experience of a country in an enduring crisis (Italy, country of Diamanti). Some central elements of the description of this invisible status are the alliance with the parents and the strategy of reversibility, together with a contradiction between the way young people conduct their life and the issues they protest for. This results in avoidance of definitive choices in work and life matters; the double attitude of dealing quite easily with the instable offer coming from the private sector, on the one hand, and of protesting against the presence of the private in the University, on the other hand. In this sense, young people seem to demonstrate against themselves more than against the system or the old generation (Diamanti, 2005).

The main problem of the young generation does not seem to find a job but to keep it (Facchini, 2005). Young people got used to the risk, provided the emergency net offered by the family. Diamanti (2005) describes this tolerance to - or even search for - the risk as the only way to prove their own value to build an identity now that other practicable challenges are precluded. Cavalli (2002) tends to underline the paradox and yet the actuality of the complicity between children who do not protest against their helping and sensitive parents, and parents who are competing with them on the labour market or in defending their retirement benefits, in order to be able to guarantee a safety net for their children. The flexibility goes together with the invisibility and they both are a symptom of a polycentrism and globalisation which involves everybody, young and adult people but that the latter seems more ready to recognize. Finding individual, contingent and adaptive answers for collective problems seems to be the strategy, a conscious one. And at the same time it seems to reflect a generalised way of focusing on the individual specific and contingent problem instead of looking for “solution for everybody”. The suggestion is that young people are often called invisible because it is how we prefer to see them in order not to see into ourselves.

The relation to work of young generations seems to evolve from *roots* to *paths*. The idea of a position to hold and where to make roots has faded away, leaving space for the idea of a path, to be often randomly crossed. The significance given to this path is not unique, and this plurality of meanings is the reflection of the many different prospective and expectations

young people have towards work: desire of a professional growth, yearn for independence, and need of security (Gosetti, 2005).

In addition to the late entry into the working life previously noted, the young have to face an entry which is often gradual, chaotic, and discontinuous rather than linear, instantaneous and definitive. The length of their insertion process (which becomes for most of them a real phase of precariousness) has got longer and it is done through shorter and spreader spells of employment than in the past. Indeed, a longitudinal analysis shows that there is no more only one scheme of entry into the working life, and they point out an increasing complexity within professional paths.

### 3. Intergenerational dimensions

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#### 3.1 *Collide between generations?*

Due to the 80's transformation of the work framework (destandardisation of work), the intergenerational processes of transmission and solidarity, efficient for previous generations, seem to be blocked in a growing number of situations. Since the 80's, the existence of a "reciprocal loyalty" and the recognition of "a common destiny" appear more and more threatened. The relations between generations is also threatened by the reinforcement of the coexistence of two models of valorisation of employment; the creation of specific areas of employment for the young workers; the exclusion of ageing people; mass unemployment and precariousness at work; but also some discourses that support doubt about ageing people.

Due to this rupture in the intergenerational regulation and also because of the increasing diversity in attitudes and beliefs throughout age groups, many researches have suggested the idea of "collide between generations" (Ferry, 1986; Grand-Maison et Lefèvre, 1993; Light 1988; Beaud, Pialoux, 1999, 2003; Lancaster, Stillman, 2002) which would impact on various issues: management processes and "resistance to changes" (Marquié, 1995; Lagacé, 2003); integration of ages in work (finding a job also supposes a collaboration between ages in an organisation); experiences of conflict, violence or exclusion in the workplace (Cultiaux, 2005b). From this point of view, the experienced workers represent, for young people, an unreachable goal or, at the opposite, a counter-model. For ageing workers, the newcomers sometimes threaten their security in employment (particularly when restructuring is at stake) or, more basically, threaten the values and representations of the world in which they were recognised.

In a quite determinist perspective, some authors analyse these situations as resulting of a "struggle for power" between diverse generations that haven't had the same paths and opportunities for integration. Some authors suggest moderating this reading, particularly when we try to explain the relations between GenXers and Millennials (see chapter 2, section 3). For Chauvel (1998), for instance, this idea of a "clash between generations" refers to a precise period of our recent history when the 80's youth questioned the model of society of their elder. Nowadays we are quite far from the radical ideas of this period. At the opposite, with precariousness, young people seem primarily seeking a place, even uncomfortable, in the current society and its operating forms.

### 3.2 Characterising generations

Characterising generations means identifying significant life experiences (Jurkiewicz, Brown, 1998) and considering all of them as specific “phenomena related to situations and social interactions” (Rioux, 1969). Regarding this definition, “generations at work” are usually defined referring to some significant events that occurred during an historical step of capitalism and the transformation of the social frameworks of work.

In sociological work, different interpretations of the word generation are used. Familial generation are placed on the sociological micro level, societal generations on the macro level. At the societal level of generations, three dimensions are distinguished.

*Political generations* define themselves, according to Mannheim, through birth in the same historic-social life community; the nexus of generations is characterised by participation at important societal events such as wars or cultural changes and units of generations are characterised by the closeness of the content of the minds of the individuals (Mannheim, 1928/1964). In the consortium, Hungary illustrates the situation of political generations with strong repercussion within work through the discovery of mass unemployment or the disqualification of knowledge and competences build during the former regime.

*Cultural Generations* define themselves through specific experiences, attitudes and styles. Cultural generations have to do with changes in the values system, stereotypes regarding ICT and age, individualisation, changes in schooling. It seems that many young people today have no difficulties to combine value orientations, which are part of traditional values, with modern values. Adults on the other hand tend to draw stronger borderlines.

*Economic Generations* are composed of cohorts with specific economic chances and risks. The entry into the job market (for example the Baby-Boomers) is so an important factor for the professional life course. Economic generations are differentially confronted to mass unemployment; insecurity of trajectories; flexibility; changes in organisational models, etc. Effect on generations of economic changes can be differentiated. In Western capitalist countries, the growth of good jobs in terms of qualification and working conditions (managers, white-collar workers) is profitable to the seniors of today. The baby-boom generation took advantage of the education system’s development and the concomitant modification of the employment structure. On the contrary, the following generation suffers from the deterioration of the relation between the education system and the employment structure. There is a lower probability of ascending social mobility. In brief, young people are less privileged than the precedent generation on the labour market, in the economic distribution and in the status structure. Cohorts, born between 1920 and 1950, benefit from the Welfare State development. On the contrary young people know unemployment, an increased contribution period and a Welfare State retrenchment. As a consequence, they will not benefit fully from our social model. Furthermore, the future of our social model is uncertain. According to Chauvel (1998), nowadays generations are characterised by a shortage of the advantages that the precedent generations enjoy. Some scholars complete Chauvel’s point of view. For instance, Galland (2005) estimates that differences between generations are less worrying than differences within the young generation. Social and economic heterogeneity among young people would be more significant than the drop in status of the whole generation.

Köllö (2002) looks at the labour market position of older generations in Hungary in the decade following the change of the regime. He points out that the labour market position of the older generations was endangered by the change of the regime for many reasons: the erosion of their knowledge acquired at school, the devaluation of their practical experience accumulated through work, their disadvantages in the area of IT and languages.

The specific combination of cultural / economic / historical-political dimensions constitute the roots of generations. All these three dimensions are intertwined. *They shape the specific orientations towards work of each generation.* Transversal to generations, more classical social discriminating factors intervene in the shaping of work orientations, mostly social and financial resources; gender; ethnicity.

### **3.3 Areas of cooperation and tensions**

The age groups at the two extreme of the working age scale seem to support the security of the mid-age group (most of the researches and policy concerns focus on young workers and old workers). However, areas of cooperation or tension between generations are not so clear. Moreover, distribution of economic resources between generations has changed.

The keyword of the “new social inequality” between generations is based on post-materialistic orientations and the life-style centring of the young generation, a finding that Steinrück had already formulated in 1986. Other authors see the origin of growing generational conflicts less in differing values and work orientations: “New lines of conflict, as for example the tension between pensioners and young workers contributing to social security or the tension between permanently employed and young unemployed or between spending on education or spending on pensions rather refer to “materialistic” conflicts” (Sackmann, 2004 p. 44).

Within private life, we see a strange articulation with (supposed) intergenerational tensions within work and increased intergenerational solidarity within family (lengthening of family support to youth). In general the older generation supports the younger generation financially, while the younger generation supports the parent-generation in every-day life. The financial support of their children is possible for the parent-generation because the “public contract of generations” provides them with the required material possibilities. The “public contract of generations” thus is the prerequisite for the “private contract of generations”.

## **4. Changing families and life styles and work concerns**

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The evolutions described above (the lengthening of the schooling period, the difficult entry into the labour market) influence young trajectories beyond the professional sphere. They contribute to the delaying of the decision to live together and to have children, but they also make young adults more dependent on the help of their parents, as financial and housing independence arrived later in life.

As a consequence, young people have to consider a wider range of living arrangements and housing (single with their parents, with friends, with a partner) providing more or less autonomy and delaying their definitive independence. They remain dependent on the families for much longer periods than it was previously the norm. Another consequence is the

increasing and constant pressure on the public finances of many European countries and the possible erosion of the level of support for young people, which increases the emphasis on the families' role. Associated to personal resources (qualifications, soft skills or psychological factor like motivation), family resources (education, economic capital...) are traditionally significant in the transition process. But the extent of this role is questionable.

Moreover, leaving the family house is a complex process, with several departures and returns, in particular among students and young people under 25 years old. In all countries, even more in Italy, youth has an increasingly delayed access to adult life for economic reasons (labour market, public policies, housing problems in cities) but also cultural and psychological reasons. In Hungary, some researchers see the prolongation of youth as stage of life. The prolongation of the youth stage promotes other roles, such as the single, or even the "pre-single" stage. As a result of the ongoing economic shift, youth's paths of integration into adult society change. This is true in general but in post-socialist states even more so: challenges of a newly set up market economy and those of worldwide economic changes appear at the same time. As a consequence of this, the path to work status becomes more open for the youth while it is more insecure and unpredictable. Most studies and research data on youth consider the prolongation of youth as a stage of life as a significant development.

There is an increased and changing role of families whole over Europe, for economic reasons on the one hand and for cultural and psychological reasons, on the other hand. In Italy, this new kind of family has been called by the researchers a "long family" (Buzzi, Cavalli, De Lillo, 2002). Several factors are involved in generating this new phenomenon: occupational restrictions, together with housing problems (especially in large cities) seem to be the main factors inducing young people to delay plans for autonomous living. Family compensate for the shortage of jobs and for the lack of public policies addressed to young people, like unemployment allowance. Some authors underline this role played by families as an integration of welfare state provision and even as a mean to control social and labour market conflicts (Sgritta, 2004). Anyway, besides economic factors, also cultural and psychological factors seem to be significant and, in particular, a new relationship between parents and children. In addition of giving children psychological and emotional support as traditional families used to do, new families show the "reciprocal need of children and parents to protract the stay in the family": if youngsters are often unwilling to leave the "home nest", their parents often want to prolong the self-gratification they feel being capable to offer their children more than they have had in their young years (Cigoli, Scabini, 2004).

Family was perceived as an organic entity based on an unequal and hierarchical order, without possibilities of debates. This traditional model is now eroded. Feminist claims, progress towards gender equality and the evolution of family law has changed family relationships. The family is not any more the sphere of the authority, but a sphere of private life, where the individuals can express their affectivity (De Singly, 2000; Baudelot, Establet, 2000).

Families are very active in helping their children to find a job, too. More than two-thirds of employed young people in Italy found their job through personal and family network, instead of institutional channels. In more recent years, the problem does not seem to find a job but to keep it: the turnover rate of young people 15-34 is eight times higher than older people.

Having one's first child has been delayed. This is not because young people would be uncertain about wanting children but because of the increased time spent in education and a

change in commitment to permanent relationships by men and women in the second half of their twenties. Leaving the parental home mostly coincides with marriage or cohabitation with a partner, and is not simply correlated with finishing one's studies or entering work.

There is another important consequence of educational expansion, which is described by Beck as the individualisation and diversification of life courses. Two types of life courses can be separated with regard to youth's life courses: a "standardised life course", and a "life course of choice" which allows more complexity in, and the interchangeability of, life events. A "life course of choice" is more typical among higher strata of society, while "standardised life course" among middle and lower strata. Prolongation of youth, therefore, is more marked among upper social segments but is increasingly oozing down into other segment, thus becoming a general trend among youth (Gábor, 2002).

To conclude, the new relations between the young and the family can be seen as a paradox: the family, which is not safe from uncertainties and risks, constitutes a place of refuge, a space ruled by confidence and mutual aid. In the family, « *the war of generations does not exist and does not appear, despite the crisis and certainly because of it* » (Baudelot and Establet, 2001). The relationship between generations can certainly become strained at the scale of the society, where the wage gap between generations is widening, where unemployment and involuntary part-time employment hit more frequently young people, but the relationship between generations are on the contrary peaceful inside the family, governed by solidarity and affection. The same youth is protected and sustained here, but excluded and exploited elsewhere.

The Hungarian partner also points out that, in their country, neither the State, nor the families were prepared to handle such a sudden upsurge in unemployment. Families were forced to support the child who, after leaving school, could not find a job for months, or in some cases for more than a year. This inflicted an additional burden on the generation of the parents, which was already affected severally by the decrease in the relative value of wages and by unemployment as well, and who therefore had an interest in the child's employment as soon as possible.

## 5. Challenges for social cohesion

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Changes in work and relation to work raise challenges as regards social cohesion. Dualisation of the labour market, precariousness of young workers, place and status of women, exit of work of ageing workers, exclusion of non native workers, changing role of families, access to citizenship, integration of youth in work constitute crucial issues for the cohesion of society. In the inclusion / exclusion processes, work appears to be a determinant factor, however, how these processes operate for all generations and what are the intergenerational dimensions are not obvious.

A first challenge for social cohesion concerns the youth. *The period of socialisation of youth to work tends to be replaced by a period of instability and risk.* This creates potential areas of tensions between generations. The disappearing of specific work areas for youth that were supporting their socialisation and entry into the core jobs both with the increased level of education and time spend in schooling are the common framework of job instability for the youth. However, the issue of job instability can be seen from different points of views. A first

one is the different influence of social factors in getting job instability “a bridge or a trap”. A recent survey in Italy on freelancers and temporary workers shows that for workers who occupy strong positions (i.e., high qualified people), moving free on the labour market can be a great opportunity, while young people with low qualification, few contacts, low entrepreneurship are likely to be trapped in an enduring risky situation (Fullin, 2004). However, the way people experience job instability is not only a matter of level of education. Roulleau-Berger and Nicole-Drancourt (2001) analyse the more or less long period of instability as a work socialisation process of youth that seems to be not possible anymore at school or in the core jobs. However, such a path to stable job is risky and can lead to exclusion processes. The increasing destandardisation of young people’s transition between education and work also contribute to blur their perspective of social integration and participation in society as citizens. They are caught in a certain “yo-yo” transition between youth and adulthood, a socio-political vacuum without clear status.

*The adequation of institutions and public intervention is also questioned by the changes in the economic, cultural and social spheres.* Institutions of the welfare state are no longer in line with current development of society. The balance between active workers and non-active workers progressively undermines the welfare systems. As an example, the Belgian model of social security, positively assessed in the eighties for its efficiency regarding poverty issues, is currently considered as critical because it does not succeed anymore in integrating in employment whole groups of the population: low-qualified workers, migrant workers, women, ageing workers (Moulaert, Reman, 2006). Young workers do not have enough opportunities to value their investment in education and social mobility is not linear anymore (education/work/social mobility); at the same time, older workers are disqualified and loose their place in the work and competences hierarchies.

The State intervention has been thought for occupations and careers today totally out of time, while in addition the capability of families to support professional careers of their members cannot be widened anymore (Bertolini, Rizza eds, 2005).

The need for freedom and independence characterising many life projects of today’s young men and women should not be left aside to the neo-liberal politics; they require new forms of welfare and social organisation. Those could vary from recognising the importance of non-market activities such as care and training, to a different retirement system, the harmonisation of work and life times, the extension of active life, new balance between security and freedom. Other approaches are more radical, claiming for a thorough change of social regulation: work is not going to be a reasonable mean of wealth distribution and social protection any longer, societies need new forms of social security, especially based on “citizenship minimum income”, independent from any working performance.

In a perspective of social cohesion, *it appears also important to pay attention to regional differences but also to differences between cities and countryside*, and moreover to understand the explicative factors and social consequences of these differences. For example, traditional differences in attitudes towards work between young people living in the North and the South of Italy are confirmed by an important survey (IREF, 2001): breaking down the data by geographical area indicates that young people living in the North of Italy tend more to see work as a form of professional identity, while those living in the South are more likely to believe that work has the primary function of supporting the individual financially. According to the latest numbers of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) (employment office) by now, there are 4,37 millions people unemployed, unemployment in East Germany is twice as high



(16,7%) as in West Germany (8,8%). Work problems and work related problems are also rooted in economic zones and the situation of large cities, small cities or countryside can be highly different. Housing in large cities is an important factor that has to be taken into account in the access to independence of youth or in the examination of professional mobility; integration in communities too.

*Unemployment becomes a forced way of life for a growing number of employees in various ways.* Unemployment, as well as overinvestment in work, the pathologic point of subjectivisation, represents danger of isolation and lack of citizenship. From a social cohesion perspective, belonging to certain communities is important. Unemployment leads to de-solidarisation and isolation; the own social situation is being experienced as separated from the self (Morgenroth, 2003). For the examination and study of processes of social closure on the micro-level of every-day actions the concept of belonging is useful. Belonging to is of great importance in the unofficial spheres of every-day life (Neckel, 2003). Who belongs to which group, or is assumed to by third parties, will influence the chances of taking care of interests and articulating needs.

*The situation of workers, and particularly young workers, with migrational background on the labour market is worsening in all countries.* In Germany, the chances for education and employment especially of young people with and without nine years of elementary school and especially of young men with migrational background have decreased enormously in the postfordist work society. In Hungary, the situation of Roma is worse than the situation of the non-Roma population with the same educational background (or the lack thereof): their chances of access to employment are only half of the other group's; the jobs they are typically hired for are three times as unstable as those of their non-Roma counterparts. Unstable employment has become general, therefore social disintegration reached even those who do have jobs: the lack of systematic jobs brings forth the lack of systematic life-style, bread-and-butter worries, a lower level of state social benefits and company welfare and, in certain cases, the loss of entitlement to those. In France, young from immigration are faced with a risk of unemployment twice as high as a young whose parents are born in France. Furthermore, people of foreign origin get bad jobs more frequently, and they rarely occupy manager's position. Today, there is a decoupling of cultural integration and economic integration. Social and cultural behaviours of young people from immigration are similar to the other's behaviours. But they suffer from discrimination on the labour or housing market (Béhar, 1998). This gap feeds feelings of resentment.

As regards women, there is a lack of research on the mid-age group, the age group in which gender issues are highly crucial. There is also a *lack of approach of gender questions in research work about generations at work*. Most of the effort is dedicated to youth and older workers. However, we find *unquestioned assumptions such as the lower importance of the professional status for women*. They refer to the double socialisation of women in which the various moments of the socialisation through work and family combine to specific constellations (Geissler/Oechsle, 1996). Thus women would cope better with the loss of employment by excluding work from their identity. Unlike men, women do not feel that the end of working life means the end of their lifetime as they create new roles and identities. This kind of assumption is not supported enough by robust researches.

*The worsening of women place on the labour market* is better documented. Authors in France notice that unstable careers and drop in status compared to the level of education are more frequent in the tertiary sector, mainly composed of women, whereas the relationship between

education and employment is stronger in industrial sectors (Lefresne, 2003). In Hungary, in the past decades, social opportunities of women have also worsened in many respects, their relative disadvantages, compared to men, increased. A large share of these disadvantages has to do with the aggravation of labour market position of women. Twenty years ago the employment of women in Hungary was among the highest worldwide, whereas female employment today is similar to the lowest in Europe. Moreover, four times as many women as men depend financially on their families. The changed labour market conditions after the regime change strengthened views approving of the traditional division of labour within the family. The general accepting of, and agreement on, these roles (the “man as a bread-winner” and the “woman who takes care of household duties”) strengthened in general, even in the case of the youngest generation. On the other hand, the concept that “women have to work for the livelihood of the family as well” became almost entirely exclusive. In Germany, the educational gaps between girls and boys, between foreign and German young people augments. The female gender emerges as a winner from this process while more than 20% of the young men from the lower social classes are given the slip. (Shell- Jugendstudie, 2006) Although 70% of the 2500 questioned young people under 25 are aware of the demographic change and the problems related to it, and although half of the young people consider their relationship to the elder generation as tense, there seems to be an avoidance of confrontation. They react to the changes by increasing their willingness to performance and to adapt to the existing conditions (ibid). The authors of the 15<sup>th</sup> Shell Jugendstudie were looking in particular for a “war between the generations” and discovered surprisingly that we are rather faced with a “war between the sexes” (ibid).

This draws rapidly the general framework in which orientations towards work are changing. How can we characterise these orientations now? How to capture the generational dimensions of these orientations? Are there emerging divides or new potentials that have to be taken into account in the public/private spheres? Giving some answers to these questions is the purpose of the SPReW project.

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## Chapter 2: View from Belgium

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### **Introduction**

This report of the Belgian team proposes an overview of existing researches in the field of the project. It points out diverse assumptions, conclusions and analyses, who may opposite, regarding the intergenerational dimensions of the relation to work. In a first section, the report outlines the main changes in the social frameworks of work that have an impact on the way relation to work has to be considered today. The second section goes through the current scientific debates about the relation to work. This section is not exhaustive; it is a piece in the whole overview of the consortium. Section three summarises some generational dimensions of the relation to work that can help to define the hypotheses that have to be explored. In the following section, point 4, the report focuses on specific issues outside work, but that are connected with work: family formation, transition from family to work, access to autonomy, parenthood, citizenship, exits from the labour market of ageing workers and management of diversity. Finally the last section gathers some data about generations in Europe and in Belgium in order to give a national and European perspective to all the former hypotheses and analyses.

## **1. The social frameworks of the relation to work**

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During the last decades, radical changes have occurred in the economic and social spheres. The experience of work has been deeply reshaped by diverse transformations (technological and schooling, among others). The places and roles of generations in work are no longer the same, with some positive results but also negative outcomes. Precariousness, destandardisation of work and diversity in positions and trajectories are shaping nowadays the relation to work.

### **1.1 From stability and reciprocal loyalty...**

The period after the Second World War is characterised, in occidental countries, by the standardisation of the way of life around paid employment and the key place of work. Paid work is not only a constraint. It is also a way of emancipating from the rural family's farm or from the traditional sexual roles within families (Laville, 1996). In Europe and in North America, the baby boom that qualified this generation goes along with an increased development of schooling and an enlarged position of the youth in key positions in a society engaged in a modernisation process (Langlois, 1990). In the 60's, this generation represents a large part of employment, controls the trade unions and supports the development of a new social security system (Dumont, 1986).

During this period, the place of generations at work is largely characterised by stability and intergenerational continuity. During the “Thirty Glorious”, organisational and managerial models (mainly Fordist and bureaucratic organisation) refer to statutory principles that give a place to different age groups and organise full-time permanent contracts. They also consider “age” as a key value and provide the older workers preferential positions in the companies. Seniority certifies professionalism, maturity and experience and supports organisational and technological changes. Seniority also plays a strategic role in the social and professional integration of the young workers. (Troade, 2006). This “reciprocal loyalty” (Alter, 2000) was the sign of a singular relation between workers and the organisation. Workers of all ages were belonging to a shared “economic destiny” (Attias-Donfut, 1988) throughout institutional frameworks (social security systems), which merged the generational destinies and made life trajectories stable and foreseeable. Because they linked life periods to social roles (Gauillier, 1999), legal frameworks reinforced solidarity between generations.

### **1.2 ... to the “destandardisation” of work**

During the 70’s (oil crisis), in the modern countries, this equilibrium is threatened. A series of ruptures take place and uncertainty becomes permanent (concerning growth rates, employment, investments, etc.). In the 80’s, the labour market grows up both with financial, familial and societal insecurity; rapid changes; greater diversity and lack of solid traditions (Smola, Sutton, 2002).

On the labour market, such changes and uncertainties lead to new requirements in the areas of flexibility, autonomy and adaptability regarding both the production processes (organisation of work) and the production means (equipment, capital, manpower). The labour market is confronted to technological innovations; downsizing; a huge decrease in employment in traditional industries; the development of the services sector; the externalisation of the low-qualified workers in small structures; the transformation of recruiting conditions and mass unemployment. Working life is a permanent flux. Changes have no starting point and no end, and there is no chance for individuals to understand the standard sequence of a successful trajectory (Sparrow, Cooper, 2003). Beck (1986) analyses this new framework for the labour market as the *destandardisation of work*. He observes how these changes affect the structuring of stable careers for most of the workers and, at the opposite, lead to the development of new “biographical patterns”. Nowadays, professional trajectories are mainly chaotic and individuals are frequently isolated because professional life is not structured anymore by targets and permanent regulations.

### **1.3 Differentiated generational positions in destandardisation of work**

Those changes in work pave the way to a widespread flexibility of organisations but also of individuals. Young workers and low-qualified workers have to face more or less long periods of precariousness characterised by a collection of atypical jobs and the perspective of permanent changes.

During those years, the youth also faces its progressive *de-qualification* regarding to previous generations. The youth can benefit from progress in schooling and becomes the age group with the higher rate and level of schooling, but this does not assure anymore a good position on the labour market. At the opposite, the young generation obtains less from their school investments than the preceding generations (Bourdieu, 1978). Even if the diplomas of higher



education have still a selection role (selection of elites) and if they always give advantage on the labour market, lots of young people consider that having a university degree is more important for personal expectations than for engaging oneself in a high position in the economy (Gorz, 1997).

In fact, the place of young workers in the labour market progressively becomes very specific. On the one hand, they can have some benefit from the fact that “youth” is more and more considered as a key feature to take over some jobs – particularly commercial jobs (Eckert, Maillard, 2002b) – and also, more generally, youth is a guarantee of adaptation to the “New Spirit of Capitalism” (Boltanski, Chiapello, 1999). On the other hand, the better jobs (regarding security, wages, working conditions) are mostly for the core workforce (middle-aged men). Young workers are largely occupied in “specific areas of employment”. These specific areas result “from the progressive development of organisational models of employment which are not the standard dominant form and which are creating flows of recruiting rather than stocks of jobs” (Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau-Berger, 2001, p. 101).

Ageing workers are also facing a growing precariousness on the labour market. In a context characterised by increasing periods of schooling and the persistence of mass unemployment, the new organisational models, based on new principles, contribute to redefine the roles and assessment criteria of work in which seniority progressively loses its positive connotation. Expressions like “ageing workers”; “older workers” and “elderly workers” gradually substitute former terms like “seniors” or “experienced workers” (Troadec, 2006). For those who are older than 50 years, those changes are often associated to relegation in jobs or tasks close to the exit of working life. Lack of motivation, standing back or “suffering at work” have been observed among ageing workers (Dejours, 1998; Caradec, 2001; Le Roux, 2006). These trends are threatening personal identities, through the decay of communities and the symbolic disqualification (Francfort et alii, 1995; Delay, 2006).

## **2. Current scientific debates about the relation to work**

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Sociology traditionally gives a central place to paid work in the modern societies and in the process of social integration. This activity, and its division (Durkheim, 1978), binds everybody to each other to build the society. As a consequence, it provides the individuals with an “ontological security” – which is conceived as “the trust of the individuals in the stability of their own identity and in the reliability of the social and material environments” (Giddens, 1994) – or a “security of life” (Castel, 2003) for all generations. Currently, paths to the knowledge-based society significantly change the social framework for integration, especially with regard to mobility and careers development (Tremblay, 2003). Trajectories are discontinued and made of a collection of experiences and jobs.

Access to employment and integration in the labour market becomes a critical issue, particularly among young people who are primarily concerned by these changes and for whom socialisation through work is difficult. It is also a drastic change for ageing workers who are facing restructuring and have to start a process of integration once more. For all generations, the nature of relation to work and the place given to work are questioned and discussed throughout recent scientific debates.

## 2.1 A central place for work?

Does paid work remain a key value for the young workers? Does it always play a central role in social integration, particularly for the younger workers<sup>1</sup>? There are two readings on the evolution of the central place of work.

Many researches demonstrate how more and more workers “are hung up between the injunction to work and the unfeasibility of working in the prescribed forms” (Castel, 2001). This dilemma results from insecure professional trajectories and from concrete obstacles to the integration of young people (OCDE, 1998).

The lack of opportunities to find some stability in one’s professional situation goes along with the blurring image that the youngest have of their future (Linhart, Malan, 1990). They “think about the possibilities of identification that work could provide, but they cannot materialise them. [...] For some of them, paid work becomes an intangible reality” (Zoll, 2001).

For some authors, in Europe and in the United States, this situation leads to an increasing distance with paid work (Coupland, 1991; Cannon, 1994; Baethge, 1994; Gorz, 1997; Zoll, 2001) and threatens the social integration or the citizenship of the weakened groups (Bourdieu, 1993; Gorz, 1997; Sennet, 1999). In this perspective, work is a secondary value in their existence. Thus, the current context encourages young people to find other paths across, out of work. The “generation X” (term designating people who reached adulthood in the late 1980s) does not look for full-time and long-term involvement in a company because they expect new forms of activity and alternative areas for the development of their existence and identities. From this viewpoint, generation X is no more defined by its relation to employment. Its members have a personal project which is more important than the goals of the organisation in which they are engaged (Gorz, 1997). They prefer to spend time in leisure, with their family, with their close friends and in community activities; all these involvements are the support of their identity.

However, other researches develop an opposite analysis and consider that work remains, for all generations, a central value in the construction of social identities, in Europe as in North America (Boudon, 2002; Castel 1995; Wilson, 1996; Hamel, 1999). The survey about “Young Europeans and their values” (Galland, Roudet, 2005) confirms that, in Europe and in Belgium, all generations still have a strong relation to work. Moreover, young people also associate work with happiness and consider it as important as health, money, family and love (Baudelot, Estabiet, 2000). Their distance to work is questioned. Young people can develop quite early a relation to work through student jobs, these jobs are also part of the socialisation process for these young people (Hamel, 2003). Moreover, new technologies enable them to test their capabilities and to build specific competences that they cannot learn at school.

For another category of workers, not linked with age, the relation to work is characterised by over investment in work. Many examples can be found in managerial professions, executive positions or ICT professions, but not only. For these workers, work is always a priority. Most of their time and energy is devoted to work. They have excessively integrated the norms and work culture of new organisational models. Such profiles of workers are sometimes called workaholics. They do not take into account classical regulation of work. They have a high

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(1) The reader would note that most of the researches quoted in this part mainly consider as “young”, people born after the mid- 70’s. As we will see (point 4), many of these researches concern workers belonging to two different “classical” generations: the generation X and the generation Y.

interest for their work; they work under the pressure of time; they cannot (or do not want) to delegate tasks; they are completely available for their work. Their over-investment in work threatens their health, their social inclusion and their sense of citizenship. Such a profile is not bearable during a whole professional career, so these workers lay open to burnout or exclusion. Burnout is a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward. The irony of burnout is that it happens to the same person who previously was enthusiastic and brimming over with energy and new ideas when first involved in a job or a new situation. This type of person generally has a very high expectation of what can be accomplished. As time goes by and all of the goals are not achieved, the enthusiasm dies and a sort of listlessness sets in.

Other researches observe that the increasing precariousness of the professional trajectories does not seem to imply necessarily a more distant relation to work (Castel, 2001). Nevertheless, if these authors tend to confirm the importance devoted to work, they also reveal the increased *relativisation of the central place of work*. According to Galland and Roudet's analyses of European value survey, the results for Belgium show, in diverse proportions, the same desire to see work having a lower place and the same positive attitude towards leisure. A significant difference between age groups (particularly between opposite groups – youngest and oldest) concerns the priority that has to be given to work relatively to other areas of life.

Other researches corroborate this trend. They observe an increasing importance of other areas, in particular, non-economic areas in the construction of identities (Sassen, 2001). They point out the desire for a more balanced lifetime between work and other social activities and for more closeness between personal and professional achievements. More and more, the individual trajectories cannot only be "careers". The trajectories become a process in which the desire of self-realisation and self-expression wish to be recognised by subjects living multiple involvements in a diversity of social areas (Hinault, 2006). To summarise, the image of success seems to be organised around the desire "to have a pleasant job" as well as "to build a happy couple" (Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau-Berger, 2001).

The main difference among the attitudes of age groups is the following: more often for youth, work remains a key value but not necessarily the only one and not the first one. However, if the relativisation of the place of work can be observed, in diverse proportion within age groups, this can be explain by various processes.

Tchernia (2005) proposes two assumptions to explain this attitude among *young workers*. Youth is the period of progressive entry into adult roles. During this period, young people are tempted to invest all the activity fields that are accessible to them and not only the working field. When they are confronted to an increased number of responsibilities in private and professional life, young people give more importance to work. A second assumption relates to deep structural changes in modern societies, notably the development of schooling. Tchernia suggests that socialisation within the framework of schooling has probably an impact on the way people consider working life. Regarding this second assumption, the author considers two possible impacts. The first one is that highly educated young people have more distance and a more critical view of both working life and the other activities in which they are engaged. The second impact of schooling concerns the relation between the educational level and the relativisation of work's place in life. Explanation can be founded in the disparity between the expectations and the concrete work experiments. For the younger generations, the relation to work is not anymore an internalised constraint coming from the outside. If they do

not find any identification opportunities in the job, the young workers react to this constraint in creating a subjective distance with work, which makes work bearable.

For *ageing workers*, the retrospective assessment of their trajectory can lead, in the second part of a career, to reassert the value of other areas that were left behind, when the level of investment in work does not give anymore the symbolic and material return that can justify it (Delay 2006). This attitude is also observed among *workers at the end of their career*. This is a quite classical process through which the proximity with the exit of the labour market has a rather negative impact on the relation to work (Caradec, 2001): the diminishing expectations of ageing workers can thus be understood as an increasing distance with the economic sphere (Delay, 2005; Vendramin, 2005). However, we have also to associate this relativisation of work with the concrete working conditions offered to some ageing workers.

## **2.2 Evolving nature of the relation to work**

The nature of the relation to work is also part of the current scientific debate. The main question is to understand the relation that can exist between a relative distance with work and a changing nature of the relation to work.

There are three different dimensions in the relation to work that we can find in diverse analyses, sometimes with different terms but rather convergent meanings (Paugam, 2000; Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau Berger, 2001; Riffault et Tchernia, 2002, 2003). The first dimension is called *instrumental*; it refers to the material expectations, the idea of income, the importance of payment and the possibilities of being promoted. The second dimension is the *social* one; it refers to the importance of the human relations at work. The third dimension is called *symbolic* and has to do with the opportunities to express oneself in an activity, the interest of the work, the feeling of success, the level of autonomy and the social usefulness. Symbolic and social dimensions are sometimes considered together and called the *expressive* dimension of work (Habermas, 1973, 1987; Zoll, 1992, 2001).

In most of current jobs, according to some analyses, there is no place anymore for the expressive dimension of work. Due to its own dynamics (Habermas, 1973), to the increasing difficulties to “read the social” (Arliaud, Eckert, 2002) and to the current precariousness of the labour market, workers develop mainly an *instrumental* relation to paid work (Zoll, 1992, 2001). Work tends to become simply a job and, whatever can be its environment, workers favour the social status and the income that the job offers. Given that they cannot find satisfaction in their job, this later becomes a mean to ensure a quality of life, outside the workspace, and is the way to access to consumer goods. In this perspective, people – and particularly young people – do not want to consider work as a key value and to devote lots of efforts to a company. In other words, work is a “transitional” value because it makes possible to achieve other goals (access to autonomy, access to a higher social position, etc.), which vary according to some classical variables (level of schooling, social position...).

Recent analyses also reveal *the increasing importance of post-materialists values and self-development at work* for young workers (Arval, 2003; Dose, 1997; Inglehart, 1977; Smola, Sutton, 2002). As regards both social and symbolic dimensions of work, the post-materialist thesis states that after stressing on economic and physical security, the modern societies pay more attention to the sense of belonging, individual experiment and quality of life (Galland, 2005). Young workers engaged in jobs that they find poorly interesting as regards the content or the possible gratifications tend to reach a compromise between a request of sense

(Pauchant, 1995) and the nonsense of their activity. They emphasise the opportunities to have fun, to have pleasure, to have good relationships at work (Zoll, 1992, 2001; Baethge, 1994). For this reason, even if they are occupied in temporary jobs, they also consider the quality of the relationships at work as a motivating factor. Many young people also consider as crucial the access, throughout work, to social and professional recognition, to training opportunities and to self-development. All these aspects are playing a key role in their job appraisal (Tchernia, 2005; Delay, 2006). These young people pay attention to the opportunities offered by a job to develop their personality, to express the best of themselves and to meet people. They consider as crucial the feeling of success, having responsibilities, having a job that makes a correct use of their competencies. Such a job must also allow for creativity or be socially useful.

Even if they refer to different dimensions of the relation to work, those two trends (“instrumentalisation” of the paid work and expressions of post-materialist values) are not necessarily opposite. Tchernia (2005) explains that work is an area of life in which both values can be reached. The basis of work is completely linked to a materialist approach of life in which everybody has to supply as best as he can to his basic needs. However, work has also a significant role to play in a post-materialist vision. It can be the place for expressing self-potential. Changes that can be observed in attitudes could mainly express the imbalance between the different dimensions of the relation to work but also the rather high level of expectations that young people have regarding work (Delay, 2006). However, meeting both material and subjective needs does not seem possible for everybody. Identification through work requires a significant autonomy, larger room for manoeuvre and possible self-determination in the execution of work (Zoll, 2001). This is possible only for a very limited number of jobs, for example, in academic work, for engineers or in research, which require a high degree and authorise room for initiatives. For all the others, the majority of the young workers, it remains only standard work, which in the current context does not provide any more opportunities of identification, as it was the case formerly.

The achievement of personal expectations is also facing new practices in human resources management. They require an increased flexibility at work but, at the same time, they cannot allow to achieve individual expectations as regards status and symbolic recognition. This lack of recognition creates a divide between the young workers who have no resources to gain such recognition of their involvement in organisation and those who hold strategic positions, increase their resources and continue to build their identity (Hinault, 2006). The same practices also favour new requirements and values in organisations that tend to exclude ageing workers, sometimes constrained to drastically reduce their expectations to the level of a “contractual” relation, mainly based on a basic exchange: work for money (Cultiaux, 2005a).

### **2.3 Precariousness and integration**

In relation with those debates, some authors propose to question, more fundamentally, the definition of what can be a secure integration in work. In a context of increased precariousness, the classical concept of successful integration referring to permanent contract and full time employment is open to discussion (Hamel, 2003). One can ask the following question: *is precariousness always a threat for social integration or could it be considered from the perspective of an individual process of integration?*

As a starting point, it is important to consider that the position of young workers on the labour market is more characterised by the high diversity of the entry routes into paid work than by its precariousness, which is relative. As Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger (2001) observed, the workplaces allocated to young workers in the fifties and the sixties did not belong to the hard core of occupations. The difference now is that the classical access to the labour market, after schooling and a necessary short period for finding a job, does not constitute any longer the main entry route into the labour market. However, this doesn't mean that a period of flexibility cannot lead to a good job providing rights and opportunities as good as those which are associated with job security (Hamel, 2003). In that sense, if the group of "precarious young people" (with low qualification in atypical jobs) became, in the 80's and 90's, the emblem of the young worker and if their integration in the labour market became a key issue for both researchers and public policies, they actually represent a minority of the youth, more or less mobilised in training structures (Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau-Berger, 2001). Current experience of integration for the youth is above all characterised by an increasing diversity of individual trajectories and a diversity of strategies that young people are more or less able to organise in order to face the uncertainties concerning the future of their working life (Linhart, Malan, 1991).

Part of the young people have their personal project as regards integration in paid work; they have the required resources to achieve their personal goals, through their family support or thanks to student jobs. These later represent opportunities to have a quite early socialisation in work and to develop significant links with work. Another part of the young people is characterised by his indecisiveness. For them, the uncertainties about the labour market are translated into an inability to take decisions about their future (specialising in something, involvement in working life). For others, the integration in working life is sometimes a "laborious and doubtful route" characterised by a collection of temporary jobs and more or less long periods of unemployment. Those who will be unlucky will experiment the "galley" (Dubet, 1987); they will have to struggle for years before gaining a secure job, if they succeed in it. This last category, which represents the "precarious youth", is not homogeneous too and could be divided into specific categories referring to the specific problems they have to face in their integration trajectories (Dubar, 1987). It is important to keep in mind that youth is not a homogeneous category (as well as other age groups) even if many researches tend to present conclusions derived from analysis of a sub-category of young workers as applicable to the whole category (Trottier, 2000).

In the approach of integration and precariousness, it is also important to take into account the fact that not all the young workers regard insecurity as a misfortune. Some of them seem to have interiorised it as a challenge – and even as a motivating game (Hamel, 1994) – that is a usual path in the new design careers (Tremblay, 2003; Boltanski et Chiapello, 1999). At the opposite, for these young workers, classical work is seen as too rigid, with too constraining frameworks. The highly qualified young workers do not want to engage themselves in too regulated workplaces. It is particularly true when they have experienced (themselves or through relatives) the fact that the access to a classical and regulated job is not today the only path to a secure and good job; at the opposite, permanent contracts are no longer perceived as a guarantee of security (Trottier, 2000).

### 3. Intergenerational dimensions

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Different socio-economic contexts have shaped different “generations” of workers with specific attitudes, integration and expectations towards work. Such differentiated generations and contexts have also defined particular interrelations often called “conflict” or “clash” between generations in the literature. We will look at the basis of such assumptions.

#### 3.1 A typology of generations

According to a standard approach, a generation is defined as a particular group that shares birth years, age and significant life events at critical developmental stages, divided into five-seven years (Smola, Sutton, 2002). Then, characterising generations means identifying significant life experiences (Jurkiewicz, Brown, 1998) and considering all of them as specific “phenomena related to situations and social interactions” (Rioux, 1969). Regarding this definition, “generations at work” are usually defined referring to some significant events that occurred during an historical step of capitalism and the transformation of the social frameworks of work. Literature – and particularly North American literature (Lancaster, Stillman, 2002; Smola, Sutton, 2002) – generally refers to four cohorts, described briefly as follow:

- “Traditionalists” (or “Veterans”) are born between 1900 and 1945<sup>2</sup>. They are the children of the depression and they honour work, have respect for the leaders and loyalty to institutions. In return, they expect to receive a job for life.
- “Baby boomers” (or “Boomers”) are born during the after war’s boom of births, between the years of 1946 and 1964 and are now considered like “ageing workers”. They value health and wellness, personal growth and involvement.
- Generation X-ers (or “Gen X-ers”, “baby busters”...) are born from the mid 60’s to the late 70’s and represent the core of the active population. They have learned to be resourceful and independent. As over the years they have seen mergers and downsizing destroying people they care about, they do tend not to trust companies or the individuals who manage them.
- Generation Y-ers (or “Millennials”) are born between the years of 1979 and 1994 and they are just now beginning to enter the workforce. It is the first generation born into a highly computerised world. They are also “highly influenced by the individualism of their parents, and competitive or value-for-money ethos of societal structures” (Smola, Sutton, 2002). Their place in the labour market is consequent to the changes that transformed the *wage society* towards a *post-wage society*.

The precise definition of the generations is likely to be discussed according to the social context or to the pertinence to consider generations as homogenous cohorts (Dufour, Fortin, Hamel, 1994). However, World War II and May 68, on the one hand, and the 74 and 78’s oil crises, on the other hand, can be considered for Belgium as ruptures between social frameworks of work – as the analysis of Boltanski and Chiapello (1999) about the various stages of capitalism also confirms.

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(2) Obviously, the precise ranges between dates vary relatively to the social context observed by the authors.

### **3.2 Collide between generations?**

Due to the 80's transformation of the framework of work (destandardisation of work), the intergenerational processes of transmission and solidarity, efficient for previous generations, seem to be blocked in a growing number of situations. Until the 80's, the existence of a "reciprocal loyalty" and the recognition of "a common destiny" appear more and more threatened. The relations between generations is also threatened by the reinforcement of the coexistence of two models of valorisation of employment; the creation of specific areas of employment for the young workers; the exclusion of ageing people; mass unemployment and precariousness at work; but also some discourses that support doubt about ageing people.

Due to this rupture in the intergenerational regulation and also because of the increasing diversity in attitudes and beliefs throughout age groups, many researches have suggested the idea of "collide between generations" (Ferry, 1986; Grand-Maison et Lefèvre, 1993; Light 1988; Beaud, Pialoux, 1999, 2003; Lancaster, Stillman, 2002) which would impact on various issues: management processes and "resistance to changes" (Marquié, 1995; Lagacé, 2003); integration of ages in work (finding a job also supposes a collaboration between ages in an organisation); experience of conflicts, violence or exclusion in the workplace (Cultiaux, 2005b). From this point of view, the experienced workers represent, for young people, an unreachable goal or, at the opposite, a counter-model. For ageing workers, the newcomers sometimes threaten their security in employment (particularly when restructuring is at stake) or, more basically, threaten the values and representations of the world in which they were recognised.

In a quite determinist perspective, some authors analyse these situations as resulting of a "struggle for power" between diverse generations that haven't had the same paths and opportunities for integration. Indeed, the post-war demographic pressure and the rise of the birth rates in a quite short period of time gave to the baby-boomers a huge strategic advantage, by giving them a power that largely exceeds that of any other generation before (Ricard, 1992). For Rioux (1969), the "social security system" that has been built is the key factor in the rupture between boomers and GenXers, essentially because work does not provide anymore the opportunities to maintain such a system. This system is nowadays replaced by a scattered regulation, putting an end to the labelled "social rigidities" (Langlois, 1986).

Some authors suggest moderating this reading, particularly when we try to explain the relations between GenXers and Millennials. For Chauvel (1998), for instance, this idea of a "clash between generations" refers to a precise period of our recent history when the 80's youth questioned the model of society of their elder. Nowadays we are quite far from the radical ideas of this period. At the opposite, with precariousness, young people seem primarily seeking a place, even uncomfortable, in the current society and its operating forms (Flamant, 2004). Moreover, according to more critical perspectives, the definition of a generation itself would be questioned. For instance, a distinction between "the generation of the baby boom" and "the boomers" should be done because they did not all benefit with the same supports of the seventies. In addition, it is necessary to distinguish the "effects of age" and the "effects of generation" (Hamel, 2003), even if those effects could have merged in specific contexts (Langlois, 1990). The effects of age refer to intergenerational processes, independent of specific times or "social times". They are closely connected with personal situations and trajectories and are mainly explained by biological and psychological factors.



While the inscription of the person in historical or social life experiences explains the effects of generation.

To explain some types of “conflicts” or tensions between age groups, some researches thus suggest to focus on the organisational dimension. Flamant (1997, 2005, 2005) observes that co-presence of specific age groups does not necessarily lead to conflicts. Anxiety can, for example, be relativised through ritual forms; it can also be taken into account by managerial processes. As a result, conflicts between generations can be seen as a consequence of a lack of such regulation or such processes. Other analyses point out the role played by managerial decisions in keeping barriers between age groups. For example, to avoid long-lasting modernisation crises, some companies link their reorganisation with new wage policies. Very often, we see “organisational sub-systems” in which these young workers are carrying out the new service or product, based on new professional logics, different from those previously used (Troadec, 2006). As a result, these modernisation strategies create some “generation impacts”, which make more complex co-operation and co-construction of sense within collectives at work.

### **3.3 ICT at work: a generational digital divide?**

There are a lot of stereotypes associated to technology and ageing, which can be summarised shortly: the youth is familiar and outstanding with ICT, while the aged workers are out of phase. The stereotype is not only linked to the “young” image of ICT and the Internet, it is also based on discourses and practices at the enterprise level: ageing workers are reputed to be slower in learning, less adaptable to technological change, and more reluctant to new methods of work. When company restructuring is translated into pre-retirement schemes or redundancies, these stereotypes are used to stigmatise ageing workers (Behaghel, 2005).

Several recent studies however criticise these stereotypes. Facing to ICT challenges, ageing workers develop compensation strategies, based on anticipation, coherence and experience. Most of the difficulties met by older workers are due to organisational factors rather than to technology itself. For example, continuous time pressure threatens the behaviours of verification and anticipation, which are typical of older workers; organisational change based on in-depth functional analysis is more favourable to older workers than technology-pushed changes (ANACT, 2005).

ICT-related stereotypes also play a part in identities of ageing workers. Confronted to negative stereotypes, individuals develop behaviours and identities corresponding to the stereotype in which they are locked, and which fosters early exits off the labour market. But when ICT use, autonomy and job satisfaction are convergent, individuals develop a strong and specific identity of aged but experienced worker (Gaillard & Desmette, 2005).

In statistical terms, the generational digital divide is however a matter of fact, but it has to be shaded by various factors. On the one hand, in all European countries, statistical data on Internet access and ICT use reveal a “generation gap” between young and ageing workers. Figures drastically drop after 55 years (Eurobarometer, 2001; Cullen, 2005), together with an increasing gender gap among ageing workers. The gap is widening with age. On the other hand, the gap may be variable according to social contexts. There are huge disparities among countries; for instance, in some countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland), the rate of ICT users at work is not very lower after 50 years than before and the generation gap starts later, round 60 years. But such a situation might be

explained by the fact that the employment rate of 50+ workers is higher among skilled and educated jobs than in low-skilled jobs. Skilled ageing workers are really dealing with technological change: in clerical, commercial and technical jobs, 70% of them have learnt new technologies during the past three years and only 20% of them have met difficulties (Eurobarometer, 2001; Behaghel, 2005). However, ageing workers have less access to ICT training than the younger, mainly after 55 years. In some countries, such as Belgium, a paradoxical situation is rising: there are much more ICT training initiatives for retired people than for aged workers.

## **4. Societal challenges of a changing relation to work**

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Different generations in changing social framework and working environment raise specific issues for each generation, from their integration in paid work to their exit from work. Different generations also mean different socio-historical references coexisting at the workplace. One of the challenges for companies as well as for public policies is to manage those issues taking into account diversity, and through that to promote quality and equal opportunities for all groups of workers.

For all generations, the relation to work is connected to others social fields. For the youth, the nature of the relation to work will have influences on family formation, transition from family to work, access to autonomy, parenthood, citizenship. For ageing workers, a key current debate concerns the management of the exits from the labour market. This section goes through diverse European research projects that have analysed some of these societal challenges that have interconnections with the SPReW generational approach of the relation to work.

### **4.1 Transitions from family to work**

A European research project has analysed the transitions from family to work (Fate, 2004)<sup>3</sup>. The overall aim of Fate was to examine the role of the family in enabling transitions from education to work. The research covers nine countries in Europe. The results give us some interesting elements on the place of work in these transition patterns. The current context impacts, for the youth, on the nature of the transitions from education to work and its regulation. The restructuring of labour markets, the increased demand for qualified workers and the European policies aiming at upgrading skills to adapt and compete at a highest level within a global economy, led in recent years to the extension of educational pathways.

As a consequence, young people have to consider a wider range of living arrangements and housing (single with their parents, with friends, with a partner) providing more or less autonomy and delaying their definitive autonomy. They remain dependent on the families for much longer periods than it was previously the norms. Another consequence is the increasing and constant pressure on the public finances of many European countries and the possible erosion of the level of support for young people, which increases the emphasis on the families' role. Associated to personal resources (qualifications, soft skills or psychological factors like motivation), family resources (education, economic capital...) are traditionally significant in the transition process. But the extent of this role is questionable. What does it

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(3) Fate project: [www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/policy/fate/](http://www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/policy/fate/)

mean, in terms of insertion, if a family cannot support anymore one of its young? What if parents are already confronted to a precarious situation? What is the impact of the changing nature of parenthood structures on this issue? The nature and diversity of entry routes into the labour market for young people have changed the traditional patterns of access to autonomy.

## 4.2 Youth citizenship

The increasing destandardisation of young people's transition between education and work also contribute to blur their perspective of social integration and participation in society as citizens. They are caught in a certain 'yo-yo'-transition between youth and adulthood, a socio-political vacuum without clear status. This issue has been studied in another European project Yoyo<sup>4</sup>; the aim of this project was to analyse limits and potentials of young people's active participation in their transition to work.

At the national and European levels, participation is at the core of some public policies in different areas: labour market policies focusing on *employability* of young people; in education and training through *lifelong learning*; in social policies, through *activation* programmes; and youth policies dealing with youth participation through civic and political *involvement*. However, as noted in the final report of the Yoyo project, the lack of integration between those politics seems to contribute to the fragmentation of their citizenship status and reduces motivation. The authors of the report particularly point out the lack of integration between "hard" politics (education, training, work), where individual motivation is seen as an expected contribution of young people while de-motivation is addressed as an individual deficit, and "soft" politics (youth policy) aiming to enhance young people's motivation by providing opportunities. Young people who have bad starting positions are quite likely to multiply demotivating experiences. As a consequence, policies are also challenged to integrate the employment strategy with a "citizenship" strategy.

## 4.3 Parenthood and work

Family design, decision to found a family and the negotiation of boundaries between work and family are also influenced by the delaying of the youth's independence and participation. A recent European research on "Gender, Parenthood and the changing European Workplace" (Transitions<sup>5</sup>) observed that the intensification of work seems to go along with an intensification of parenting.

The experience of intensification of work is a particular challenge for new parents who have to combine work and family loads in a particularly demanding, competitive and pressured context. Moreover, the impact of national and workplace policies to support parents – lengths and payments of leaves, childcare options, opportunities to work part-time, flexibility, etc. – is undermined both by current workplace practices associated with work intensification and new parents' concerns for future job opportunities in a rapidly changing context. Indeed, even if flexible working policies and practices can bring opportunities to integrate paid work and families, in the context of intensification of work it can also lead to blurred work-families boundaries or long working hours that intrude on family time and energy. Moreover, new parents are often reluctant to take family related leaves because work is partially covered

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(4) Yoyo project: [www.iris-egris.de/yoyo/](http://www.iris-egris.de/yoyo/)

(5) Transitions project: [www.workliferesearch.org/transitions/](http://www.workliferesearch.org/transitions/)

while staffs are away: it is passed to overburdened colleagues or accumulates to be dealt with on the return to work. The study also points the importance of identifying and supporting the most at risk parents.

#### **4.4 Managing the end of working life in an ageing society**

Demographic ageing and the management of career end become progressively the main concern of the policies regarding ageing workers (OCDE, 2005). In the last decades, as an answer to mass unemployment, diminishing work demand throughout early retirement was the main tool used to support a new distribution of work (Jamouille et al., 1997). As a consequence, the balance between the group of active workers and the groups of non-active workers progressively becomes inadequate to ensure continuity of the welfare systems. For many observers, the Belgian model of social security, positively assessed in the eighties for its efficiency regarding poverty issues, is currently considered as critical because it does not succeed in integrating in employment whole groups of the population: low-qualified workers, migrant workers, women, ageing workers (Moulaert, Reman, 2006). On the other hand, apart from new migration flux, ageing workers constitute, in most of the rich countries and for the next decades, a key resource available for paid work (Guillemard, 2003).

The European Union as a whole will face a shortage of workers in the future as fertility rates decline. At the same time, there will be a growing strain on social welfare systems as life expectancy is increasing. With the objective of rising employment rates of older people, the EU is promoting policies aimed at abolishing early retirement schemes, setting up more flexible working hours, improving health and safety, and developing access to lifelong learning. Many countries are trying to develop measures to target these objectives<sup>6</sup>. One must note, however, that the intergenerational dimension of the issue is not always tackled. Age management policies in companies often only focus on ageing workers as an isolated group.

#### **4.5 Managing diversity**

Even if we could be sceptical regarding the idea of “collide between generations”, the fact is that individuals who are working together today were socialised in different stages of the capitalism. They refer to different values (i.e. collective improvement vs. individual development) to justify their involvement (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999). Companies and public policies are facing the need to manage this diversity, not only through specific answers to each generation’s issues, but also in a global approach.

*However, managing diversity at work is not only a matter of generational mindsets. It also concerns gender and ethnic groups. As regards the relation to work, the gender perspective is lacking in this report as well as the ethnic perspectives. These two perspectives are however extremely important for the following steps of the SPReW project. These points will be completed.*

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(6) On this issue, the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions has many interesting publications <http://www.eurofound.eu.int>

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Yoyo project: [www.iris-egris.de/yoyo/](http://www.iris-egris.de/yoyo/)



## Chapter 3: View from France

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### **Introduction**

The state of art of the French team presents the facts, the debates, and the theory that could be relevant to understand the relation to work of the younger and older generations. It also analyses the existing literature on the relation to work, whether this literature is quantitative, qualitative or theoretical. The first section sketches the entry process into the labour market of nowadays young people in France, as well as their position in the employment structure. The second section gives a close look at the social and economic inequalities between and within generations. The third section analyses the concrete relationship between generations, in the family, where young are usually protected, and at work, where young people invent new forms of relationships based on affinities instead of traditional solidarity. The last part presents the debates around the changing relation to work, and the hypotheses that can explain the observed changes.

### **1. Young people faced with employment: the entry test into the working life**

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#### **1.1 Young people access to employment in historical perspective: transformations and permanent features**

It is often said that the situation of the young faced with the employment is not the same that before "the crisis" when the young used to have a direct access to the stable employment whereas today they would go slowly into the unstable employment. Such a view is simplistic for several reasons: on the one hand, it overestimates the ability of the 70's crisis to explain the changes of the models of occupational integration; on the other hand, it encourages to be focused on the changes at work, so neglecting the permanent features which characterise the long-term systems of entry into the employment of the young. In order to go beyond these limits, C. Nicole-Drancourt and L. Roulleau-Berger suggest a comprehensive and historical reflection on the evolution of the young "*process of putting into work*" observed in France during the last 50 years. Their analysis emphasises a situation, which is not fundamentally degraded, anyway, not in the terms usually used.

During the 50's, the great majority of the young was confined in the doors or in the bottom of the employment structure (skilled and semiskilled workers, employees, private services workers), to the borders of the employment or the inactivity (apprentices without contract, or

salaried and non-salaried family aids), or even outside the market activity (the non-working). Thus, before getting gradually into the hard core of the production system (big firms' internal markets, factories, corporations), the young went through poor and not very attractive areas of activity. Nevertheless, such young jobs were concentrated into the sectors where a set of social and cultural controls produced occupational values, and prepare the way for a real process of work socialisation in the sense of an acquisition of knowledge and skills.

The same process is observed in the case of the *trente glorieuses*<sup>7</sup> young people. Indeed, these ones were kept on the periphery of the modern employment because of the mechanisms of *selective exclusion* adopted by the firms in order to regulate at best the intergenerational competitions. Except for a tiny minority, who have higher education or coming from selective technical courses and avoiding consequently shortcuts, few of them accede to the protected jobs of the great industrial and administrative concentrations. Most of them have to content with weakly qualified, badly paid, unstable, and strongly competitive jobs of the external markets (building sector, small production factories of consumption goods, jobs in the sector of services and trade). However such jobs are real springboards toward *the area of strong wage integration* since they allow an accumulation of competences and a first occupational experience, which will be associated to a broader field of development. Thus, the schemes of entry into the working life are similar to those of the previous period excepting that the mechanism of professional socialisation slips from *the traditional areas of activity to reserved ones*.

On the other hand, in what Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger call the post-wage society these areas of putting into work and of occupational socialisation are replaced by a set of unusual forms of employment (fixed term contracts, part time, interim working, state financed jobs) which alternate with unemployment spells. The progressive allocation to these specific jobs areas could limit the possibility of acquiring real occupational skills. Indeed, the multiplication of precarious contracts is essentially devoted to satisfy the firms' need of flexibility, in a process of cost reduction and wages adjustment facing the economic fluctuations. Even the jobs subsidied by the state, which could be useful as areas of reception and apprenticeship are sometimes used by the employers as means of hiring temporally a cheap working force. As regards measures of occupational insertion aid in the public sector, they are likely to sometimes confine the young in the non-market sector and they could discredit them in the labour market.

Thus, the fact that the young are deprived of the wage model and the valorised positions is not really new, but the real changement is the result of the fact that they may not take advantage of the process of experimentation and occupational socialisation conducting to it according to Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger. This process supported by the community (in particular with the family and the small-scale production) during the 50's, by the market (in particular with the small capitalistic industrial firm) during the 60's, becomes progressively the problem of the young who have to settle alone since the 70's the essential question of their "putting into work".

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(7) The thirty-year boom period after the World War II.

## 1.2 A problematical access to the employment: magnitudes and trends

Today for a large part of the young and especially for the less qualified ones, the access to the employment is characterised by the difficulty of getting a first occupational experience and an access to the valorised positions, by unemployment periods which becoming quite frequent and the development of unstable occupational routes. It is an uncertain and progressive occupational insertion.

### 1.2.1 A high unemployment rate, a weak activity rate, and a strong sensitivity to the current fluctuations

Let us observe at first that the French youth is extremely affected by the country's structural level of unemployment. The conjunction of several factors explains this strong vulnerability to the risk of unemployment. Two of them are:

- A "specialisation" in the precarious jobs (which will be considered later on this document) whose temporary characteristic generates frequent unemployment spells. Indeed, the end of a fixed term contract or that of a precarious one is the first reason of unemployment far before resignations or lay-offs.
- A special condition as "novice". Indeed, France belongs to the group (which do not includes Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands) of European countries where the risk of unemployment is higher for the young than for the other cohorts. Searching for an appropriate job, and in the employer case, the appropriate employee, are more or less long process, which contains an inevitable phase of experimentation.

However, the young have a period of unemployment that is clearly below its average. Consequently, their level of employability is greater than the one of older workers. These two characteristics of young workers (higher unemployment risk and high degree of employability) point out another characteristic of the young employment: its strong sensitivity to the business cycle (*a period effect*) producing a high external mobility at the beginning of their career<sup>8</sup>. This working mobility is an external one and it does not concerns the same social and working reality that the internal mobility. Actually the young concerned are very different: the external mobility concerns for the most part the more vulnerable of the young, in particular the less qualified and those working in small-size firms while the internal mobility concerns for the most part, the young who have a good position in terms of qualifications and working conditions, in particular young technicians as well as office and executive workers (see. Céreq, 2005). Hence, the external mobility appears as a withdrawal solution adopted by the young without internal mobility rather than an offensive strategy of career.

Finally, in order to define the position of the young in phase of occupational insertion, the argument of employment instability seems to be more relevant than the argument of exclusion. Moreover the high rate of youth unemployment does not mean that the absolute number of unemployed young workers increased. Actually, the proportion of young who are unemployed is weaker because of the decrease of their number in the labour market from: 4.5 million in 1970 to 2.3 million in 2005. This poor rate of activity is a mechanical consequence

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(8) Among the young who have left the education system and working after their 5 first years in the labour market, 69% have moved once to another firm (while over the whole working population this percentage is 27%) and about 3 out of 5 have known more than 3 different employers.

of the increase in the duration of studies observed since 30 years associated to the specific model of occupational insertion in the Latin countries (a slow entry into the labour market and a longer stay in schools and universities, frequently as full-time students). In this manner, almost half the young between 15 and 29 are kept out of the labour market. In this case, the initial training system has two roles: it is an immediate refuge against the high risk of unemployment, and it is a way of getting a better future position in the queue of jobs by obtaining qualification always higher. In other words, this particular situation (which associate a poor rate of activity to a high rate of youth unemployment) means that despite a low number, the young in the labour market (among whom a great part of them are poorly qualified or unqualified) have high risk of being affected by the unemployment.

### **1.2.2 Increasing complexity of professional paths: the phase of insertion becomes longer and chaotic**

In addition to the late entry into the working life previously noted, the young have to face an entry which is often gradual, chaotic, and discontinuous rather than linear, instantaneous and definitive. The length of their insertion process (which becomes for most of them a real phase of precariousness) is getting longer and it is made through shorter and spreader spells of employment than in the past. Indeed, a longitudinal analysis shows that there is no more only one scheme of entry into the working life, and it points out an increasing complexity for the professional paths. Henceforth, there is a set of intermediate situation and temporary jobs between the end of schooling and the obtaining of a durable and stable job<sup>9</sup>. Although the diffusion of more flexible contracts is a constant among European countries, France have been the more prolific concerning the multiplication of such contracts which have been particularly concentrated on the young. For example 80% of the fixed term contracts concerns the young. Hence, temporary jobs are today the norm of entry into the working life.

There are two different hypotheses in this case: the first (see for instance Lefresne, 2003, Fondeur and Minni, 2004) states that the more and more difficult insertion of the young could be the beginning of a more massive process of destabilisation for the whole of the wage earners. In this case, as the current victims of the multiplication of fixed-term contracts, the young would be at the “avant garde” of an increased flexibility affecting all the workers. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the analysis of the per age rate of stable employment which shows a gradual diffusion of temporary jobs via the newcomers in the labour market. The areas of precarious jobs which allow employers to test more flexible forms of employment would be the beginning of an unavoidable disappearance of stable jobs and of a structural change in the wage relations whose vectors would be the young.

According to second hypothesis the exclusion and the precariousness of the young is the result of a "choice" made by the French society concerning the organisation of labour, which is characterised by the coexistence of an age group of workers comfortably established and well protected (the 30-50 age group) and two age groups affected by the exclusion and the precariousness (the young and the seniors). Extreme ages become flexible margins while

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(9) In 1982 only a tenth of the young did not have a stable job three year after the end of education. Today there is more than one quarter. And among the young who have a stable job three years after being come out from a training course establishment less than one got his job directly; one fifth stayed with the same employer while still having a precarious position; one sixth got a stable position after a first atypical contract with the same employer; the others experienced atypical jobs with different employers. One quarter of the young who have come out from the school system since less than three years divide their time between employment and unemployment.

better jobs (in terms of stability, wages, work conditions, social advantages) are reserved to workers between 30 and 55. In other words, things go as if younger workers and older workers had to support the "price" of the preservation of the protected core (workers between 30 and 55).

## **2. Young people: the generation who has been sacrificed? Similarities and differences between and within generations**

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### **2.1 *Inequalities between generations***

Each generation has to cope with different social situations and events during its life cycle. Using statistical materials, L. Chauvel (1998) takes a close look at these different situations, which influence the "fate" of each generation.

According to him, although mass unemployment may be less visible than May 68' events, it strongly shapes the new generation's fate. Baudelot and Establet (2000) share this point of view. When comparing the social situation of people being 30 years old in 1968 and people being 30 years old in 1998, the most relevant area is labour market changes (growth in unemployment, in part-time or precarious jobs, fall in status, lower starting salary). These labour market difficulties obstruct the future's view and jeopardize the capacity for building individual and collective strategies. More precisely, Chauvel estimates that three major factors mould a different lot to the young people.

First of all, distribution of economic resources between generations has changed. Young people experience a deterioration of their relative economic situation. For example, in 1975, 50 years old workers earned 15% more than 30 years old workers. Today, the difference is higher (40%). Thus, young people have to cope with a cutting back of their relative wage, as well as their relative income (Hourriez and Roux, 2001). In France, this income deterioration is all the more worrying that young people are not eligible to a public income support. As a consequence, the children of the most disadvantaged sections of the population suffer a risk of poverty (Charvet, 2001). These economic and social inequalities are even more striking when adopting the cohort perspective suggested by Louis Chauvel: it becomes easy to realise that the young who benefited from the 60 and 70' growth are the privileged seniors of today. In the same vein, the growth of good jobs in terms of qualification and working conditions (managers, white-collar workers) was profitable to the seniors of today. The baby-boom generation took advantage of the education system's development and the concomitant modification of the employment structure. On the contrary, the following generation suffers from the deterioration of the relation between the education system and the employment structure.

The second phenomenon underlined by Chauvel is the lower probability of ascending social mobility. Children born in the 70's do not know the ascending mobility that enjoyed their parents. Furthermore, they are faced with a drop in status in comparison to the education level that they achieved (Forgeot and Gautié, 1997). Indeed, the second education's revolution (which took place in the 80's and is characterised by a growth in diploma and a lengthening of the study period) has led to a depreciation of diploma: with the same diploma, young

people of today do not get a job as good as their predecessors<sup>10</sup>. At the end of the 90's, one young among 5 would experience a drop in status and this phenomenon concerns more frequently children of the working class (Giret and Lemistre, 2006). The lot of poorly qualified or unqualified young people is worst<sup>11</sup>. In brief, young people are less privileged than the precedent generation on the labour market, in the economic distribution and in the status structure.

The third issue underlined by Chauvel is political. Cohorts born between 1920 and 1950 benefit from the Welfare State development. On the contrary young people know unemployment, an increased contribution period and a Welfare State retrenchment. As a consequence, they will not benefit fully from our social model. Furthermore, the future of our social model is uncertain. Indeed, it is dependant upon the political support of a middle class, from which young people are partly excluded, and young people would be less involved in traditional political institutions that sustain the Welfare State (unions, party, etc.), though they are politicised in another way (Muxel, 2001).

Thanks to these analyses, Louis Chauvel puts forward a “scarification effect”: the “fate” of each cohort is conditioned by the situation that the cohort encountered at thirty years old. In other words, history matters, and the first stages of adult life influence the next steps.

## **2.2 The nowadays young people: a generation characterised by a collective shortage or by a deepening of social inequality?**

According to Louis Chauvel, nowadays generations are characterised by a shortage of the advantages that the precedent generations enjoy. This shortage shows itself in three dimensions: disillusion in progress, spreading of uncertainties, and social fragmentation. Uncertainty invades many spheres of young people life (labour market situation, social status, private life) and leads to a disillusion. In addition to these misfortunes, there is a reversal of the social homogenisation trend. Chauvel recognises these deepening social inequalities, but seems to estimate that young people are not characterised by diversity, but by a collective shortage. It is true that the young generation does not experience the social progress that the precedent generations enjoyed (social advancement, social risks' reduction, social conditions' equalisation, and middle class' development).

However, some scholars do not share Chauvel's point of view. For instance, Olivier Galland (Galland, 2005) estimates that differences between generations are less worrying than differences within the young generation. Social and economic heterogeneity among young people would be more significant than the drop in status of the whole generation. There would be an increasing diversity of trajectories on the labour market (Lollivier, 2000; Lefresne, 2003; Rose, 1998). After a transition stage, most of the generation can enjoy a stable occupational situation: indeed, among 25-29 years old people, 70% of the active population get a stable job, whereas, among 20-24 years old people, 28% of the active population have a job with temporary contract and 20% are searching a job. But a part of the young has to cope with uncertainty on the labour market for a long time. For this part, the sequences of unemployment and precarious jobs could last and instability is not limited to the first stage of

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(10) With the exception of the students in the prestigious higher education institute with competitive entrance examination

(11) See further details in the latter part of this section.



labour market history. This part of the young generation would run the risk of durable social exclusion.

This hypothesis can be supported by several empirical works and in particular the studies on the young people with few skills (or without skills). Among this category, unemployment rate is higher: 37% of young people without any qualification are still unemployed five years after leaving school, whereas 18% of the young with a secondary stage diploma and 8% of those with higher education degree are in this case. Furthermore, the risk of losing one's job is higher for the poorly qualified workers: a young worker<sup>12</sup> without any qualification suffers a high risk of being unemployed one year later in France (21%, to be compared with 12% in Spain, 6% in Sweden and 2% in Denmark). Education is the most reliable assurance against the risk of unemployment and the key to a stable situation on the labour market (Lesfrene, 2003). Besides, education may be more discriminating than ever on the labour market. The risk of being unemployed is multiplied by 4.5 for a young without any qualification in 2002 (whereas the ratio was 2.5 in 1975). Three categories are at risk: the 160 000 young who leave school without any diploma, students that leave the university before the end of the licence and a non negligible proportion of young who hold a university degree, but nevertheless get an unskilled job. Indeed, there would be two problems in France: the "production" of school leavers without any diploma and the failure of many schools and universities' courses to meet society and employers' needs. But the social consequences of these problems are not exactly the same.

Some detailed studies contrast the persistent unemployment of the least qualified and the intermittent unemployment of the more qualified. The latter know a professional instability at their entry on the labour market, but with a progressive adaptation to the labour market (Lollivier, 2000). In other words, a part of the youth is faced with some difficulties at their entry into the labour market, but they experience an ascending mobility at the end (Lefresne, 2003). On the contrary, a part of the youth is likely to remain in an uncertain situation and to be excluded from society, even if the economic situation improves. The young usually benefit from the employment growth period (for example between 1997 and 2001), but unemployment reduction is smaller among young without any qualification or just the "brevet" during these periods. These structural difficulties are all the more worrying than they concern 20% of schools leavers.

In brief, education is one of the most striking factors of economic inequalities, but gender is also discriminating. Although girls hold higher diploma, their employment trajectories are more uncertain: higher unemployment risk, part time job, lower wage, unskilled jobs, etc... The inequalities between men and women exist at every education level, even if the difference in unemployment rate is lower for the young with a university degree. These inequalities are usually explained by different choices of school or university courses, in line with the traditional division of labour: tertiary sector training versus industrial training, scientific and technical education versus literature and human sciences. But employment opportunities are not the same in industrial and tertiary sectors. Unstable careers and drop in status compared to the level of education are more frequent in the tertiary sector, mainly composed of women, whereas the relationship between education and employment is stronger in industrial sectors (Lefresne, 2003). Gender differences are partly structural, but they also reflect employers' discriminatory practices and prejudices against women. To conclude, gender inequalities

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(12) Here, a worker who leaves the school system within the 5 precedent years.

constitute not only an injustice problem, but also an inefficiency problem as far as skills are wasted (Baudelot, Establet, 1992). Some equality trends are however detectable: young women of today would enjoy a higher benefit from their education than their mother.

To sum up this section, instability does not affect the young equally. There are also ethnic inequalities. Young people from post-colonial immigration and French overseas department and territories are faced with difficulties in different areas of social life (school, labour market, and housing). Young of foreign origin suffer a higher risk of unemployment. According to March 2001 results, the female unemployment rate is 34% among the 15-24 years old population of foreign origin (to be compared with 22% in the whole female population) and the male unemployment rate is 27% (to be compared with 16% in the whole male population). According to the analyses of the Céreq, a French research centre on qualifications, a school leaver without a secondary level diploma and whose parents are born outside France are faced with a risk of unemployment twice as high as a young whose parents are born in France. Furthermore, people of foreign origin get bad jobs more frequently, and they rarely occupy manager's position. Today, there is a decoupling of cultural integration and economic integration. Social and cultural behaviours of young people from immigration are similar to the other's behaviours. But they suffer from discrimination on the labour or housing market (Béhar, 1998). This gap can feed feelings of resentment.

Difficulties encountered by young people of foreign origin are the results of inequalities in the education system. But they are also due to employers' discrimination, which can take insidious forms (exclusion justified by the clients' pressure, by the colleagues' fear, by the self-fulfilling expectations of skills providers or temping agency). This exclusion is not only unacceptable, but also dangerous: it can jeopardize social cohesion.

This brief review of literature suggests that inequalities between generations are coupled with inequalities within the young generation. The social fate is different according to cultural, ethnic, social backgrounds, education level or gender. Trajectories on the labour market are diverse (Rouilleau-Berger, 2002). Furthermore, inequalities within the young generation are deeper than inequalities within the precedent generations (Charvet, 2001). To conclude, analysing inequalities between generations should not prevent from analysing inequalities within generations. Both perspectives are empirically founded and complementary (Baudelot and Establet, 2000).

### **3. Relations between generation at work and in family**

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#### **3.1 New family relationships in a changing society**

The evolutions described above (the lengthening of the study period, the difficult entry into the labour market) influence young trajectories beyond the professional sphere. They contribute towards the delaying of the decision to live together and to have children<sup>13</sup>, but they also make young adults more dependent on the help of their parents, as financial and housing independence arrived later in life. These evolutions have an impact on the life

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(13) In the 60's, the women age at the first marriage was 23 years old, whereas it is 26 years old nowadays. In the same vein, among the generation born in the 50's, a majority of women (56%) were already mother when being 25 years old. Among the generation born in the 60's, 42% were mother when being 25 years old (Robert-Bobée, 2006).

conditions of the families. The protection mechanisms of the Welfare State (income insurance, family policy, etc...) do not protect against new risks that families have to prevent. The families have charge of their children who are studying or who do not succeed in finding a good job (Charvet, 2001).

### **3.1.1 Children and parents living under the same roof for a longer time**

Living with parents concerns a majority of young people until 23 years old, according to diverse surveys<sup>14</sup>. This phenomenon is twice as important in France as in Finland among 25-26 years old people (20% according the INSEE, to be compared to 9% in Finland). Most of the time, living with one's parents is not a choice: among young people, three quarters would like to live alone or with their girlfriend or boyfriend, but only 45.5% of them are in this case.

Moreover, leaving the family house is a complex process, with several departures and returns, in particular among students and young people under 25 years old. For a non-negligible part of young people, the first accommodation is financed or provided by parents, and three quarters received helps in diverse forms (Bonvalet, 1998). This situation causes inequalities between young people. For instance, students are generally more helped than active young people (Mouillart, 1998).

### **3.1.2 Permanency and intensification of solidarities among generations...**

The interventions of families become diverse as far as social transformations make more likely the life's trials. Life's ups and downs call for new forms of supports: financial support, accommodation, domestic work, but also moral support against the sadness caused by a break-off, against the anxiety caused by exams or by work pressure and against the fear of unemployment or failures, etc...

In brief, families have to face more and more entreaties to cope with the lengthening of the youth. This situation is sometimes described as a "familiarisation" of the young problems, for lack of public intervention (Charvet, 2001).

Besides, surveys tried to estimate this private help. Three quarters of the 135 milliards francs that circulate among households for private help in money or in kind come from ascendants who want to help their descendants (Lollivier, 1999). A survey on the relation between generations carried out in 1992 by the CNAV and managed by C. Attias-Donfut put forwards the fact that 65% of parents provide a financial help to their 19-36 years old children. This survey also shows that these familial supports deepen the inequalities among young people as far as these supports depend upon the parents' incomes: these supports are more frequent and higher in families belonging to privileged classes.

These exchanges are ruled over by three principles (equality, merits, and needs) that can coexist, although needs criteria dominate: parents' wages being equal, the young people who receive more money are in a more precarious situation. This support is a way to prevent a risk of descending mobility of their children. Families help more frequently students and

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(14) INSEE, enquête « Logement », 1996. INSEE, enquête « Jeunes et carrières », 1997. See also C.Villeneuve-Gokalp, « Le départ de chez les parents : définition d'un processus complexe », in : *Economie et Statistique*, N°304-305, 1997.

unemployed people, as well as people aged under 25 (see de Barry, Eneau and Hourriez, 1996).

### 3.1.3 ...despite (or thanks to) the evolutions of the family

Young people expressed a will of emancipation from the family, but, in the mean time, family is still view as an important value by a majority of young people (95%). Indeed, it has to be said that the family has evolved during the last decades (Galland, Roudet, 2001).

Family was perceived as an organic entity based on an unequal and hierarchical order, without possibilities of debates. This traditional model is now eroded. Feminist claims, progress towards gender equality and the evolution of family law has changed family relationships. The family is not any more the sphere of the authority, but a sphere of private life, where the individuals can express their feelings (De Singly, 2000; Baudelot, Establet, 2000).

This fundamental change can be spotted in the evolution of the couple as well as the evolving relationship between parents and children. The functioning of the family institution is now subordinated to the personal blooming of its members, though the institution still fulfils its traditional responsibilities: proprietary handing on, a refuge against social competition and, in the same time, a provider of financial and intellectual resources that are useful to acquire a social status. But these exchanges are voluntary and the family success is not directly measured by a professional success, but by the personal fulfilment of its members. The aim of these exchanges is to favour personal autonomy, which is becoming a central value.

However, this evolution is incomplete – women's entry into the labour market is not coupled with a reorganisation of domestic tasks on a large scale- and its effects are diverse among social groups: parents from privileged groups can easily negotiate new forms of educational relations and find a support on school to sustain the project of their children, which is not the case of the groups at the bottom of the social scale (Beaud, 2003; Dubet, 1994).

Moreover, the nowadays family is a union of fragilities: fragility of marriage due to a higher probability of divorce, hesitation over the respective place of children and parents when the hierarchical model is abandoned, fragility of the filiations relation when the divorce cause the breaking-off of the link between father and children (a quarter of the cases today), hesitation over the status of the new spouse and the children of the reconstituted family. To face these uncertainties and the anxiety, families invest more and more in « school capital » to pick up the word of Bourdieu (Théry, 1998).

To conclude, the new relations between the young and the family can be seen as a paradox: the family, which is not safe from uncertainties and risks, constitute a place of refuge, a space ruled by confidence and mutual aid. In the family, « *the war of generations does not exist and does not appear, despite the crisis and certainly because of it* » (Baudelot and Establet, 2001). The relationship between generations can certainly become strained at the scale of the society, where the wage gap between generations is widening, where unemployment and involuntary part-time employment hit more frequently young people, but the relationship between generations are on the contrary peaceful inside the family, governed by solidarity and affection. The same youth are protected and sustained here, but excluded or exploited elsewhere.

## **3.2 Young and older people at work: some divergences**

### **3.2.1 A deeply changing context**

Different studies allow estimating the differences between young and older people's views on the concrete dimensions of their work (relation to their hierarchy, the content of their work, the new technology of information, the innovation, the union, and the job satisfaction...). We suggest the possibility that these divergences are partly the results of the transformations occurring at work and in the society during the last decades. These transformations contribute to shape the specific modes of apprehension of the work sphere for each generation whose socialisation occurred in different historic, economic, professional and social context according to their birth year and the time of their entry into the labour market. Indeed, to sum up the precedent chapters, the context that the generation born after the World War II knew was characterised (schematically) by a stable world, with social rules and points of references, without mass unemployment, with founded expectations of ascending social mobility, and with the development of the Welfare State (Chauvel, 1998). These generations worked in organisation that did not allow much freedom, that were centralized, ruled by the principles of Taylor, bureaucratic and in which the social pact relied on the logic of a mutual loyalty (Alter, 2000, 2004).

The society and organisations' rules described above contrast with the social and organisational background in which the nowadays young generations evolve. Young people grew in an unstable world, characterised by a high unemployment, an erosion of the employee status, a growth of precarious jobs, a likely risk of fall in status at the beginning of the professional life, a retrenchment of the Welfare State, and an extension of uncertainties in almost every sphere of life (Castel, 2003). The uncertainty gets into firms that have promoted flexible organisations to be competitive and to adapt to the market inconstancy. The « reactive productivism » that is progressively substituted for the organisation model of Taylor causes « the intellectualisation, the variety of tasks, the responsibility of workers », but is coupled with the end of the « job for life » and work intensification (Askenazy, 2004). New generations have to cope with a different social world that shapes their views and behaviours in a different mode. The following sections try to explain these divergences.

### **3.2.2 Subjectivity logic and integration logic**

The professional commitment of the old generations was sustained by their sense of belonging to a collective and by the concern to integrate well in the group by adopting social and professional behaviours in accordance with their role (GIP-MIS, 2004). In this integration logic, the socialisation framework dominates the individual differences (Dubet, 1994). The old people are receptive to this logic because they were socialised in a world favourable to this logic: stable work team, clearly defined tasks and occupations, collective human resources management.

On the contrary, among young people, this sense of belonging to a collective, which is really important in the eyes of the old workers, is relegated to a position of secondary importance, in favour of the intention of being recognised as an autonomous individual getting under control one's life, instead of being confined to one function in the firm. In this perspective, philosophers like the Canadian Charles Taylor put forward the idea of the "ethics of authenticity". Indeed, he observes that the Canadian and American young people are concerned about being honest without lying about their motives, and that they think

themselves as responsible of their choices. In other words, young people want to be completely fulfilled in their job according to an “individual and introspective process” (Hinault, 2006).

This young people ethics can explain why the young people do not tolerate disrespect from the hierarchy or from the customers, as it is underlined in some studies (Zarifian, 2005). Their particular ethics can also explain their weak investment or even a risk of disengagement when they feel compelled to do something, when they are not recognised for their work, or not interested in the tasks that they have to do. Conversely, they can put a lot in their work when their ability to take the initiative is recognised and when their work allows to express their potential and to meet their needs of searching a meaning to life (Vakaloulis, 2005).

Young people expressed a logic of subjectivity (Dubet, 1994) and in the meantime, they distance themselves from the « integration logic » of the old generation. Different factors work in this trend. Firstly, the traditional frameworks are disintegrating: blurred frontiers between occupations, instability of the collectives, lack of a clear professional recognition in the service activities for example (Thévenet and Neveu, 2002). Secondly, the drops in status at their entry into the labour market after a longer study period nourish a blow to their pride. To efface this injury, young people demand recognition of their professionalism and their individual skills (Hinault, 2006). Demonstrating one’s capacity and getting confirmation of it allow to restore the self-esteem, which was jeopardized by the discrepancy between the job and the initial level of qualification. Thirdly, the desire to lead one’s trajectory can be interpreted as an interiorisation of the society and firms’ injunctions to build one’s skills and career path (Rouilleau-Berger, 2001), to develop one’s employability, to be flexible (Hinault, 2006).

### **3.2.3 Seniority and skills**

Young people do not make any link between the seniority on the one hand and the quality of work on the other hand (Delay, Huyez, Levrat, 2005). On the contrary, older worker view concrete, prolonged and repeated professional activity as a necessary condition for acquiring skills (Zarifian, 2005). Here again, these two perspectives can be explained by a different socialisation process (Troadec, 2002).

Indeed, the nowadays young people arrived in the firms latter, with a higher degree than older workers (Galland, 2001). As a consequence, they attach a greater value to skills learned during the initial education and training and they are less likely to recognise on-the-job training. Furthermore, their entry into the professional sphere is less linear. They experience a diversity of intermediary situations before getting a stable job (Lefresne, 2003). Thus, they internalise the idea according to which the quality and the scope of the skills result from the renewal and the multiplicity of professional experiences in diverse areas (Delay, 2005). Finally, firms and managers demand more diverse tasks from young people than from older worker (Hatzfeld, Durand, 2002). Young people have charge of this organisation flexibility. To yield to these special entreaties, young worker have to develop training strategy in order to adapt themselves to their diverse functions (Hinault, 2006). Moreover, a dualistic organisation can sometimes be observed, with older workers filling one function and good all-rounder young workers (Francfort, Osty, Sainsaulieu, Uhalde, 1995).

### **3.2.4 “Individualist communitarianism ” of the older workers versus “cooperative individualism” of the young workers**

Finally, young people are often criticized for individualist behaviours, which would mark a break with the traditional working class culture ruled by strong collective solidarities (Beaud, Pialoux, 1999). A finer research carried out in big firms reveals a more complex reality (Gautié, Guillemard, 2004): indeed, the divide between generations seems to correspond to different modes of linking and structuring individual and collective dimensions. This difference can largely be explained by the evolution of the human resources management and the changes in work organisation (Troadec, 2002)

Thus, older people express a strong identification with the work group and a symbolic opposition to the hierarchy, which is coupled with a collective human resource management, ruled by logic of qualification and accompanied by wage negotiation with unions (Dubar, 1991). But older people experience an individual work process, which reflected a divided and compartmentalised work organisation.

On the contrary, the entry of young people into firms is concomitant with the growing individualisation of the relation between employers and employees. Thus, young workers do not identify with the peers group. They view their relations with their colleagues as a relation between individuals embedded in networks built and ruled by affinities (GIP-Mis, 2004). But they value and experience cooperative work activities, consistent with the evolution of work organisation (a logic of ability instead of a logic of qualifications, decompartmentalisation of production units, activities in network etc.).

In brief, instead of contrasting the individualism of the young and the solidarity of the older generation, distinguishing the “cooperative individualism” of the young generation from the “individualist communitarianism” of the older generations would be more accurate (Thuderoz, 1995; Delay, 2005).

## **4. Importance and conciliation of different social spheres, and relation to work**

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Does the relation to work that young people develop is different that the one of older generations? Are the youth lazy? Unmotivated by work? Incapable of putting a lot into one’s work? Are they suspicious towards firms and shaped by other values such as friendship or leisure? These prejudices are largely spread, at least in the media and in the view expressed by some managers. Recent French and European surveys on values’ change allow providing some answers to these questions. The results qualify the statement of a decline of the young attachment to work and the deterioration of their involvement in work.

### **4.1 The attachment to work: a protection against social insecurity and a potential sphere of personal blooming**

In this perspective, the results of the third wave of the European Value Survey carried out in 1999 are interesting (Galland & Roudet, 2001). It allows to compare the answers of the 18-29 years old to the answers of the whole population, and to introduce a generation perspective. Furthermore, by completing the two first waves carried out in 1980 and 1990, it gives the possibility to analyse values changes and evolution for two decades. The results of Ipsos/Chronopost’s survey carried out in 2005 also allow comparing the answers of 15-30

years old people on the one hand and people aged 50 and over on the other hand (Delay, 2005).

According to this last survey, a majority of people polled (70%) declare “they would not hope to live without work”. The proportions are slightly different among young people (76%) and seniors (63%), but the attachment to work is still important at the two extremities of the population pyramid. In brief, the decline of work importance among young people is not entirely founded empirically. Furthermore, entry in professional life is still viewed as a formative step towards adult life. Nowadays, as in the past, employment contributes towards the process of the identity construction, thanks to financial independence and the possibility to put oneself to the test (Dubar, 2001).

Young people still attach a great value to work because it can come up to two major expectations: a protection against social insecurity and a sphere of personal blooming. Indeed, young people grew up in a society marked by high unemployment rates, and they want to find a place in a society that has kept them outside stable employment, in the area of inactivity or precarious job. Unlike their parents who benefited from employment growth and enjoyed an ascending mobility, the nowadays young generations are faced with difficulties in the labour market. Far away from the revolutionary aspirations of the Mays 68’s generation, the new generation does not criticise the society, but the precarious lot that they experienced, and the gap between the promises of this society and the reality (Chauvel, 1998, quoted in: Flamant, 2005). Besides, aware of the necessity of a stable employment to construct a personal life, they are likely to increase the value of the protection offered by a traditional employment contract. This attachment to statutory and financial security is coupled with the importance given to the possibility to express one’s self through work.

Most of young people do not view work as a social and moral duty or as an end in itself, but as a way to progress and to achieve personal blooming (Tchernia, 2005). This wish to achieve a personal fulfilment in the professional area would be more important among young people than among seniors according to Ipsos/Chronopost survey (Delay, 2005). Thus, young people develop strong expectations towards intrinsic facets of job: the content and interest of tasks, the relation with colleagues, training opportunities, and possibilities of experimentations, in the double perspective of a personal development and a widening of skills. To conclude, young people express more post-materialist values (self fulfilling, personal blooming), but also more materialist expectations (in terms of security for example).

#### **4.2 The preponderant influence of the socio-professional group**

However, it has to be said that the socio-professional group is a strong discriminating variable that influence the answers. Indeed, whatever the age, the groups at the « bottom » of the social scale do not view work as a way to achieve personal fulfilment, contrary to the « upper » groups. Personal interest in work is more frequently a concern among people with diploma, in particular among the more qualified young people: 67% say that it is important, to be compared to 27% among the least qualified (Delay, 2004).

These results are coherent with the ones of two surveys carried out in France. The first one analysed by Baudelot and Gollac (2003) shows that unemployed people and workers with precarious job attach greater value to work. The lack of work makes people suffer. The other survey carried out by INSEE shows that blue-collar, clerks, and a part of the intermediary professions attach less value to work than to other life spheres, contrary to managers or



intellectual professions, for whom work constitute an essential element of their identity, on an equal footing with other spheres of personal realisation (Garner, Méda, Senik, 2006).

This result is not surprising considering the striking contrast between the working conditions and work benefits of the different socio professional groups (wage level, interest of task, relations with colleagues, health at work, degree of liberty and creativeness). «Here is the paradox. The word « work » applies to situations where work is exhausting, boring, and unpleasant and to situations where work is a source of pleasure, without constraint (...). Using the same word for these two different situations is an evident sign of intellectual fraud. But this is half of the story. People who are happier at work earn more money, nearly universally. This fact would never be underlined enough » (J. Galbraith, 2004 quoted in Garner, Méda, 2006).

### **4.3 A relativisation of the supremacy of work**

According to several surveys the professional life remains a major element of the personal realisation of the young but its supremacy is now disputed by a great part of them. For instance, the French survey Ipsos/Chronopost (Delay, 2005) shows that the relativisation of work is stronger for the young than for the senior while the attachment to work is higher for the young than for the senior. In this way, there are 56% of the young and 50% of the senior who considers that their work is as important as their extra-professional activities. Symmetrically for 42% of the young and 32% of the senior work is not at the first rank of their personal priorities<sup>15</sup>. In a similar logic, one can also observe that the importance given to the "adaptation of hours to the private life" when choosing a job, differs significantly from one age to another. More precisely, there are 33% of the young and 26% of the senior who considers that this criterion is essential. Moreover the difference between the responses of the young and the senior is greater in the case of senior executives with 49% of the young and 13% of the senior. Hence it seems that in addition to the lesser importance given to work by the young (as element of the personal realisation), they also gives a particular attention to the control and administration of their time which appear as an essential parameter in their evaluation of the value of work.

This divergence with the model of the young over-investment in the work is explained by putting forward three hypotheses. The first states that the youth is a transitional period where the young try all the fields of activity and not exclusively the professional one. In this way, according to C. Offe (1985) the multiplication of areas of recognition and the proliferation of social circles reduce the importance of the professional activity. This author also notes that the bursting of the social life in multiple poles (family, leisure...) undermines the ethics of work and relegates this latter behind the other interests of the life. Nevertheless, according to several European surveys the relegation of work by the young due to their different affiliations is rather provisional. Indeed these surveys show that when the young's life includes more adult features (working, being in a stable relation with somebody, having child) they give a higher value to work, which is more considered as a priority in their life (Tchernia, 2005).

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(15)The firm managers have the tendency to interpret this decentering of concerns or at least its symptoms as indicating degradation in the young quality of investment into work. According to a French survey conducted by the social laboratory Adeco, 65% of the managers consider that that the young hired motivation is fallen during the last years. As if the firm response to the decentering of the young interest (from their professional life to their private one) was the feeling of the weakening of the young professional motivation.

Let us note that the explanation of the relativisation of work by an age effect is not fully satisfactory since the differences between generation remain strong: for instance, when the young's life includes all the adult features, less than one out of two agree the idea that working always have to come at first, while among the senior, there are two persons out of three who agree this idea.

The second hypothesis states that the labour is in a durable competition with other spheres also supplying identity, other areas of temporal and affective investment (family, friends, leisure...). And a deep tendency is associated to the development of these polycentric existences: an increasing complexity of the society and its functional differentiation in social sub-systems and differentiated areas of activity and meaning (S. Scher, 2002). According to this view, although the young perceive labour as an important sphere for self-realisation as well as for obtaining incomes and protection, they dispute the over-investment into work and the development of an unlimited labour to the detriment of the accomplishment of other activities. The young as well as the women would be at the *avant-garde* of a deeper change in the relation to work, which should concern little by little the whole society. Indeed the strong increase in women's activity during the last 20 years has not been associated neither to a decrease in the number of child (at least the last years) neither to a rebalancing of the care tasks mainly carried by the women. The coexistence of a plurality of identities and realisation spheres, still mainly claimed by the women, the competition of other activities, the difficulties of conciliation primarily felt by the women (and by some men, especially the young qualified fathers) could explain the change in the values and the current rebalancing, as the women settle durably in the employment. This hypothesis, especially defended by Méda (1995 and 2001), is confirmed by the French survey *Identités* (Garner, Méda, Senik, 2006). Indeed according to this survey, whatever the socio-professional category, family is the great supplier of identity, and on the other hand labour and family are in a real competition as far as affective investment and burden of time are concerned, in particular in the women's case. Consequently, observing the behaviour of the young fathers is essential if the purpose is to verify if they are concerned by the relativisation of work due to the occurrence of other burdens, what has been stress by the French survey Ipsos/Chronopost (Méda, 2004).

The third hypothesis is related to structural evolutions of the societies, in particular the rise in the level of education. There is no doubt that the academic socialisation has a dominating impact on how labour is considered. Indeed, the reflexivity and the critical distance that education allows partially to obtain may encourage the young to clearly identify the pernicious effects and the traps that a too close investment in the labour involves. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by European surveys which shows on the one hand that the weaker the level of education, the more the young are inclined to think that work comes at first, and on the other hand that the young are inclined to relativise this vision as their level of education increases. Thus, it can be noted that the differences between generations do not exist in the population with the lower level of education whereas they are maximised in the groups with the longer studies (Tchernia, 2005).

Finally the relativisation of work (especially observed among the young qualified of the higher education) cannot be understood without putting forward the disillusion caused by the drop in status process observed at the entry into the labour market. Indeed, for those young people who cannot reach the expected positions, the profitability of their investment prove to be poor if not non-existent in the eyes of their initial expectations. This situation can produce a real disillusionment towards occupation. This phenomenon brings a broader questioning about the role played by the degradation of the young's working conditions in the way of

thinking and engaging in the professional area. It is often said that the young have a tendency (because of cultural motives or generational reflexes) to have a purely instrumental relation with work and to relegate it to the periphery of their life even before starting to work. However, it is more likely that the process of withdrawal from the professional world into the private sphere results from a gap between a high initial level of expectations concerning work and the *a posteriori* acknowledgement of a low working satisfaction, work providing in most cases limited opportunities of self-realisation (Hinault, 2006, Mauger, 1994; Aubert, Gaulejac, 1991; Bajoit, Frassen, 1995; Gauthier, Roulleau-Berger, 2001).

This state of art enables us to underline several questions, which could be explored by the empirical study in order to know if the behaviours of young people express a specific relation to work in comparison with older workers. Three points seem to be particularly interesting to deal with:

Firstly, their relation to precariousness. In fact we know that nowadays the entry on the labour market is often gradual, chaotic, and discontinuous rather than linear, instantaneous and definitive. But, we could wonder if young people feel they face with a stronger situation than older workers, if they consider that temporary jobs are today the norm of integration into the working life, and what are the strategies they develop to improve their sort. Another key question consists in knowing if this increasing precariousness concerns all young people in the same way, and even if certain young people are not looking for this instability in order to increase their freedom, to select a good job or to invest other spheres of their life.

The second point is the relation of young people with their colleagues. In fact some studies showed that older people express a strong identification with the work group and a symbolic opposition to the hierarchy, which is coupled with a collective human resource management, ruled by logic of qualification and accompanied by wage negotiation with unions. But also older people used to experience an individual work process, which reflected a divided and compartmentalised work organisation. On the contrary, the entry of young people into firms is concomitant with the growing individualisation of the relation between employers and employees and with the evolution of work organisation in different ways: logic of ability instead of a logic of qualifications, decompartmentalisation of production units, activities in network etc. Hence, we could wonder if young workers are more individualistic, and in the same time value cooperative work activities.

The third point is connected to their professional investment and the place they would give to work in their life. In fact the firm managers often consider that the young's motivation falls during the last years. It seems rather that the professional life remains a major element of the personal realisation of the young but its supremacy is now disputed by a great part of them. This potential relativisation of work could be explained by the will of developing other areas of temporal and affective investment.

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## Chapter 4: View from Germany

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### **Introduction**

Work Orientations will be examined in the following with regard to institutional, work organisational and technical conditions as a framework for the research. Naturally the dramatic situation on the German job market is also an important basic condition for the understanding of work orientation.

The examination of the German employment systems must not overlook the historical special situation since the Unification. The unification in 1990 forced together two highly populated states (FDR ca. 60 Mio. Inhabitants, GDR ca. 17 Mio inhabitants), economically strong, with a completely different employment pattern and family model, into a single system of law (Bosch/Knut, 2003). To avoid a complete collapse of the East German economy after the monetary union in 1991 enormous economic transfers have been, and still are, necessary.

The German job market differs from other European countries by having a profession-based structure. Typically for Germany is the combination of internal organisational and external professional job market. Enterprises react to increased competition first of all with strategies of internal flexibilisation, especially flexibilisation of working time (Promberger, Böhm, Heyder, Pamer, Strauß, 2002; Herrmann, Promberger, Singer, Trinczek, 1999) but also through elastic collective agreements and collective bargaining agreements on plant or enterprise level (Seifert, 2002; Richter, Spitzley, 2003).

The enterprises have markedly increased the proportion of highly qualified employees, to survive despite quickly changing market demands and technical-organisational change (Bosch, Knuth, 2003). Mass redundancies were not typical for the German model of employment. Nevertheless in Western Germany especially the rail services, post office, telecom and industry reduced jobs, but usually, except for the building industry, via social compatible solutions. The typical pattern can be considered as workplace reduction without redundancy.

### **1. About the theoretical concept “work orientation”**

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The concept of work orientation goes back to studies in the 70s and 80s. In the spotlight of interest were the *patterns of interpretation* and *practical everyday-life orientations*. (Neumann 1984). Patterns of interpretation are socially acquired knowledge, which results partly from own experiences and partly from collective experience, i.e. family-, profession-,

group- and class-specific processes of socialisation. For different areas of life different patterns of interpretation are available. It is necessary to differentiate between worldviews and everyday-life orientations. Worldviews are an interpretation of the societal totality in the perspective of the subjective relevance (Schütz, Luckmann, 1974). Everyday-life orientations are self-evident patterns of action, which structure work-, family- and leisure-life. Everyday-life orientations are usually defined by non-conscious motives. The theoretical construct work orientation “is in its content an initialising force comparable with the concept Motive.” (Friedrich/Lantz 1996, S. 476) An analysis of work orientation is, in this sense, motive-research.

Work Orientations are social patterns of the individual for his relationship to work. Orientation here is a sociological term and means the norms the individual applies to the relevant areas of his regular daily life. The relevant areas (Schütz, 1971) are, for example, family, leisure and work, etc. Orientations are usually non-conscious structures of consciousness. They are however not subconscious as they can be brought into the consciousness with relative ease. They could best be described as pre-conscious. Work orientations are characterised by a double reference to work (Schumann, 1981; Geissler, 1984): the expressive dimension refers to content and form of work; the instrumental dimension refers to having to work for ones livelihood.

This double reference to work used to be a firm part of a workers identity: the profession of the fitter for example used to be a profession for the whole life, thus the interest in the specific work content used to be a relatively fixed part of the identity. These days, however, neither a certain profession nor the corresponding work orientations are firm parts of the life of a worker.

What has changed is not the double reference to work – how could it, there are no other dimensions of work orientation-, what has changed is rather the weight and relation of these two dimensions. Thus, some speak of a flexible work orientation. Work orientation necessarily adapts to different work situations. The flexible man (German translation of “The erosion of character” (Sennet, 2000) probably has a flexible identity or at least a patchwork identity (Keupp, 2005), otherwise he could deal with the constantly changing work situations only with great effort.

It all started with the thesis of John Goldthorpe who, in “The affluent worker” (1964) claimed that workers have a mostly instrumental relationship to work. The author himself corrected shortly after this thesis. Numerous other studies confirm the thesis of a double reference to work (Knapp, 1980; Schumann, 1981; Geissler, 1984; Zoll, 1993).



Dimension	Old Cultural Model	New Cultural Model (1980s)
Work Orientation Skilled Workers	Double Reference: Instrumental (necessity) and expressive (identification) at the same time	Split: Jobber (instrumental) or self-actualizer (expressive)
Ethics	Duty against others	Having fun or self-fulfilment/ duty against one's own self
Community	Class solidarity	Everyday-life solidarity
Lifestyle	Adaptation to normality	Trying out new things: Search for I-identity (personal identity)
World View	Dichotomic view	Critical generation in new sense
View of family	Pair relation and nuclear family as natural	Pair relation and nuclear family under pressure for legitimisation
Family	Nuclear family	Singe/patchwork
Social environment	Unquestioned, naturally given pre-existing trust	Trust achieved through communication
Work orientation of young women	Arranging with work – limited perspective until marriage	Autonomy through work – unlimited perspective

## 2. Subjectivation of work and the labour entrepreneur thesis

Martin Baethge tabled the hypothesis of “an increasing subjectivisation of the immediate work process” (Baethge, 1991:6) for discussion. Under “normative subjectivisation of the relationship to work” ... (ibid: 6) he understands the “Claiming of personal requirements, ideas and demands in work” (ibid:7). Especially amongst younger adults there is an increasing desire to introduce their subjectivity into their work (Baethge, 1988/1991/1994).

High demands on the content of work was the credo of the employed in the 1980s and 1990s, both with the young and with the older ones, with men as well as with women (Geissler, Oechsle, 1996; Straus, Hoefler, 1998) The widely spread dimensions of demand on work include “Lifestyle, cultural requirements, personal recognition, possibilities for self-presentation and possibilities for professional identification” (Baethge, 1994:721).

In the boom-phase of the new economy especially in some industries numerous new and modern jobs emerged, for example in the IT and the media sector. The German industry and work research thus focused on the skilled workers from these sectors. Only a few qualitatively oriented case studies were presented which certified these employees to have high content-related demands on the quality of their work (Boes, Kämpf et al., 2006, Krenn et al., 2006; Eichmann, 2003; Pongratz, 2003; Sauer, 2003).

With regard to the education and qualification level there are, for example, vast differences between the mobile health care and the IT-services. However, in both sectors employees were found to possess a great expressive commitment to their work. “In the work orientations high demands on the quality of service they provide are the rule, which the employees try to maintain even when resources are limited or reduced” (Krenn, Papouchek et al, 2006).

Subjectivisation is linked to the change of economic, professional, and task structures as well as the increasing use of new work- and organisational concepts (Heidenreich, Braczyk, 2003). In the 60s and 70s the Subjectivity of labour was considered as a source of disturbance and insecurity for the economic use of labour (which was ‘objectified’). Contrary to that the present-day companies though consider the subjective factor as a resource for economically successful work processes. These days re-subjectivisation is supposed to free potentials formerly trapped by bureaucracy, to mobilise commitment, replace expensive control mechanism with cost-free and more effective self-control, virtualised rule-by-self-control, and flexible planning by introducing improvisation (Moldaschl, 2003).

Mode of objectivisation	Mode of subjectivisation
Goal: Fungibility, predictability	Goal: High involvement
De-subjectivation: Bureaucracy, standardisation	Calculated re-subjectivisation: Reduction of bureaucracy and standardisation
Separation of labour and person	Identity of labour and person
Use of person as labour	Use of labour as person
Exclusion of subjectivity as an interfering factor	Recognition of subjectivity as a resource
Importance of planning (Knowledge)	Return of improvisation (experience)
Gestion (personal and codified as a system of rules)	Contextually driven control (economic, anonymous)
External control	Self-control
Control of achievements by fixed aims, centrally bargained for, permanent	Target agreements, procedural and individualised (MbO)
Motivation through calculated systems of incentives	Quasi-entrepreneur contractual elements (e.g. linked to results)
Logics: Organise, standardise, codify - All a question of power	Logics: economise, individualise, liquefies (de-crystallise )

In current sociological discussions starting the end of the 1990s the concepts of “blurring the boundaries” (de-limitation) (Mayer-Ahuda, Wolf, 2005; Gottschall, 2005; Beck, 2004; Kratzer, 2003; Minssen, 1999) and labour-entrepreneur (Pongratz, Voß, 1998 and 2003; Voss, 2001) are being discussed. Generally the term “blurring the boundaries” (de-limitation) signalises the dissolution or weakening of societal standards and norms of work. In the post-fordistic labour society especially the male standards of normality are affected. (Beck, 1999; Krenn et al., 2006).

In contrast to male-dominated areas of employment in certain economic sectors like industry, finance and public service, other work sociologists have pointed out that the blurring of boundaries in many female-dominated areas in the service industry is not a new development (ibid. Corell, Janczky, Kurz-Scherf, 2005).

Blurring of boundaries presents a point of culmination of subjectivisation of work. First of all, blurring the boundaries leads to a new combination of person and manpower in the work process, and is secondly characterised through a massive seizure of the person of the worker, which is concentrated along the dimensions flexibility and self-organisation (Kratzer, 2003).

Blurring the boundaries thus means, that orders and rules (modes of regulation of performance) as well as hierarchies and bureaucracy (modes of regulation of the employment of manpower) are being replaced by self-organisation and flexibility. The reasons that employees will take part in this de-limited subjectivisation is explained by four factors:

- as in the past, out of fear for their job;
- the desire for self-actualisation and self-fulfilment;
- because discursivity is used as a control modus and communication as a control medium, and thus specific effects of rationalisation are activated;
- because especially the younger qualified employees, such as skilled workers, technicians and academics have internalised a specific pattern of orientation even before joining the company. This pattern is only finalised through company-specific recruitment strategies and patterns of socialisation, but they do not create it. (Kratzer, 2003).

Pressure is being experienced as ambivalent and can be seen as a challenge to do the work in a new way, which is fun. Development of subjectivity and enhanced instrumentalisation for other-determined goals can come together (Kratzer, 2003).

Work with blurred boundaries can be considered as precarious if labour groups are not just affected by single processes of change but if these groups are denied access to the standards of a normal employment relationship with secure bond to the company (Pongratz, Voß, 2003).

To analyse the work orientations and the attitude of the employees about work, industry- and work researchers use the theoretical construct of the labour-entrepreneur of Voß and Pongratz. This was bound to draw heavy criticism. For this reason the researchers presented an explorative case study of 60 (20 female, 40 male) employees from various sectors (mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, car-part just-in-time delivery, IT-services and insurance) (Pongratz, 2003).

The researchers seem to have dismissed the theoretical concept of work orientation. Instead they speak of earning-living-orientation. The researchers claim to have found a wide spectrum of these orientations and they combine these in three patterns of orientation. The labour-entrepreneur is, according to Pongratz, marked by “*specific performance orientations, profession-biographic orientations and patterns of elasticity in relation of work and private life*” (Pongratz, 2003:128).

“These three areas of orientations can be roughly assigned the theoretical dimensions of analysis of labour types: Self-control, self-economising and self-rationalising. The largest span of differing orientations can be found in the area of performance orientation and thus linked, the dimension of self-control” (Pongratz, 2003:128f).

Looking at the performance orientation, performance optimisers can be differentiated from performance securers. Performance optimisers develop a strong interest in “tuning their own contribution in a permanent, self-controlled process of optimisation to flexible task requirements” (ibid. 129).

For Pongratz the characteristic of performance optimisers lies “in the special emotional quality which is often expressed as “fun in work” (ibid 130). The performance optimiser thus shares the subject perspective, i.e. the expressive relationship to work.

Performance securers are primarily aiming for securing reliable results in proven quality (ibid 129). The stance of the performance securers against their work corresponds to rather with the traditional orientation of skilled workers who see themselves as experts. They are satisfied with their performance and in their statements they mention “fun in work” less frequently (ibid 131).

Looking at the profession-biographic orientations the researchers found a mentality of work-related security. A continual life course of wage earning dominates and they have little experience regarding professional or intra-company mobility. They show little interest in the profession-specific job market situation and wait, hoping to avoid becoming unemployed. Considering the patterns of elasticity in relation to private life and work, modes of regulated flexibility dominate heavily.

The theoretical construct of the labour-entrepreneur as expression of change of the societal condition of work is being discussed hotly (Deutschmann, 2000; Kuda, Strauß, 2002) although the assumptions have been corroborated by everyday-life perceptions of the change in work, and thus seem to support the change in labour type. In empirical studies about the distribution of the new type of labourer it is expressed that he is found in certain sectors and areas, but not overly much so. The overall result of empirical studies is that, based on dimensions of the labour-entrepreneur as an analytical figure with the change of society, characteristics of self-control have gained on importance, more or less (especially in the demands on the employees), while the dimension of self-economising and self-rationalising across various groups varies in importance. In some areas, even in some, which according to some authors are characteristically areas for labour-entrepreneurs, a return to the traditional model has been observed in some plants and to a certain point. This applies primarily to the IT-sector and the media sector, although there are conflicting demands on the flexibility requirements and the possibilities of autonomy.

In times of crisis – so the understanding of Dieter Sauer – even in modern service sectors the “Chances of individual development will have to take a backseat” (Sauer, 2003, p17). The questioned employees in the IT and media sector expressed dark and negative crisis experiences (ibid).

### 3. Tendencies of Youth Research

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In his analysis of the change in the German work society Dieter Sauer speaks of an “Epochal Break”(Sauer 2001). In which direction society develops, has been uncertain since the mid-1990s for many people, and especially the young ones. At this point the question arises how young people and young adult men and women perceive the basic structural change of the German work society, and how they react to it.

The job training and taking part in paid employment still takes a high priority in the life-plans of young men and women (Baethge, 1988; IBM Jugendstudie, 1995; Geissler, Oechsele, 1996; Shell Jugendstudie, 2000; Brake, 2003; Scheller, 2005; Hurrelmann, 2006).

The majority of dependent workers and young people with strongly expressed professional orientation still want to work in a job, where they can apply their skills acquired in education and training, where they can improve and develop their qualifications (...), with which they identify and where they can bring themselves in as a person, which offers a good

communication climate and which challenges their creativity and competencies for problem solving” (Baethge, 1994, S. 716).

There seems to have occurred a change of priorities for the youth in Germany. Those youths questioned in the 13<sup>th</sup> Jugend Shell Studie do not live in a work society beyond professional orientation. The life-goal “Job and Family” is still being taken serious and the young people do not prepare for a life in the leisure- and fun-society. Yet they ask to have fun in work or at work. They were well aware that the pursuit of professional goals demands willingness for mobility and personal effort. They were also well aware that the job is no longer the given order into which they must insert and integrate. The profession is in Germany a self-chosen concept of life, which asks for the commitment of the individual (Shell Jugendstudie, 2000).

Two years later the 14<sup>th</sup> Shell Jugendstudie showed a change of priorities for the youth in favour of stronger performance orientation. “In the economically tense situation of the 90s and the beginning new millennium the priorities of both male and female youth have moved towards a society which emphasises performance (Gensicke, 2002, S. 152). The mentality of the majority of young people changed “from the primacy of ecological to the primacy of economic behaviour” (ibid). The priorities of the youth are at the accomplishment of personal concrete and practical problems and so they move away from overarching goals of societal reform. (Gensicke, 2002) This move is called pragmatism. A second important trend with male and female young people is the positive revaluation of emotions. This generalises an orientation previously dominant with girls and women.

Additionally, the structure of the value system changes. Many young people today have no difficulties to combine value orientations, which are part of traditional values with modern values. Adults on the other hand tend to draw stronger borderlines. Young people combine undogmatically conservative values like order, security and diligence with libertarian values liked creativity and tolerance. Young people put together an individual concept of values and regard values according to their personal utility. The strongest difference between youth and society in general is the stronger agreement to social commitment. Thus social idealism combines with a support for conventional values like Order, Security and Diligence. Gensicke explains this surprising combination by stating that the conventional values have a utility for a creative and committed way of life. The glue that combines self-actualisation and conventional values is the young peoples’ drive for security. (Gensicke, 2003; Albert, Hurrelmann, Linssen, Quellenberg, 2002) The educational gaps between girls and boys, between foreign and German young people augments. The female gender emerges as a winner from this process while more than 20% of the young men from the lower social classes are given the slip. (Shell- Jugendstudie, 2006) Although 70% of the 2500 questioned young people under 25 are aware of the demographic change and the problems related to it, and although half of the young people consider their relationship to the elder generation as tense, there seems to be an avoidance of confrontation. They react to the changes by increasing their willingness to performance and to adapt to the existing conditions (ibid). The authors of the 15<sup>th</sup> Shell Jugendstudie were looking in particular for a “War between the Generations” and discovered surprisingly that we are rather faced with a “War between the sexes” (ibid).

## 4. Social patterns of work and relation to precariousness

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Over the past three decades massive changes and structural shifts were observed within the professionally structured work in Germany. Thus the structural shift from the industrial to a service-society and the related changes in the German educational system have created a new segment on the job market, “in which professional qualification, ethnical background, age and gender became deciding criteria for the access to work and job security”(Kronauer, 1999, p10) (Groh-Samberg, 2005).

### 4.1 The professional integration of foreign young people

The chances for education and employment especially of young people with and without nine years of elementary school and especially of young men with migrational background have decreased enormously in the postfordistic work society. (Straus, Höfer, 1996; Kirchhöfer, Merkens, 2004; Mayer, 2004) After an apprenticeship almost 40% of the Turks in Germany remain without a job, while the quota for the Germans is 10% less. (Böckler impuls, 2006).

The comprehensive situation of the professional integration of foreign young people has worsened over time. Because the recession during the early 1990s the German system of the dual vocational training entered in a crisis. The insufficient number of apprenticeships forced a large number of young people into qualitatively inferior job substituting public work. Losers in the fight for the remaining apprenticeships are the migrants, which are represented under-proportionally. Their quota of unskilled 25-29 year olds in 2000 was 30% higher than for the Germans. They are participating over-proportionally often at measures meant as preparation of vocational training. More than half of the migrants are not looking for an apprenticeship or traineeship at all. (Stomporowski, 2004)

This in the self-perception anticipated chancelessness is based on a realistic reflection of personal market chances on the vocational trainee market. Through prejudice and bad advise foreign youths are often pushed into jobs, which are unattractive from a German perspective. These multiple disadvantages are based, in the sense of the theory of assimilation, on under-investment in human capital. Here the low value of education of the immigrant parent generation and the transfer of experiences as immigrant workers in low-qualification jobs to their children play an important role. There are also the difficulties in system-immanent structures of the vocational training system. The selection employed by the apprenticeship providing companies of using high-school graduation marks excludes migrants with lower marks from the vocational training. Further problems are legal insecurity and missing residential and work permits.

Especially in phases of economic decline the chances on the job market for young employees are reduced. An explanation is offered by the Insider-Outsider-Theory. Thus the transaction costs for making an employee redundant are higher for elder employees than for those just starting. Additionally fewer apprentices are employed at the end of their apprenticeship due to their weak position on the labour market.

Considering the job market integration after a completed professional training there are no significant differences between the situation of (West-) Germans and migrants. The situation of young workers in the new Bundesländern is especially serious. From 1991 to 2003 the quota of employment of young people fell from 63% to 45% (Statistischen Bundesamt, 2004).

Their social background mainly determines school- and training-careers of young people in Germany. The German school system is the least democratic as stated by the Pisa-Studies; they also discovered “that the link between social background and school-based development of competencies” (Rademacker, 2006, p. 37) is close. When young people are released from the schools and places of education (universities, fachhochschulen, dual system...) it is vital for a growing number of young people whether they achieve the “transition into the employment-biography as salient part of a standard-biography” (Kirchhöfer, Merkens, 2004) in the rationalised and flexibilised work society. Unemployment for young people under 25 is growing dramatically (IBM Jugendstudie, 1995; Kirchhöfer/Merkens, 2004) In the EU the unemployment rate of the under-25s in June 2006 was 17,4% (Böckler impuls, 2006, H.13).

Long-term employment in a so-called “normal employer-employee-relationship” is for many young people no longer achievable. As the adults, which are faced with redundancy and long-term unemployment, the young people experience in, in the Age of the New Economy in which “work as lifestyle” (Meschnig, Stuhr, 2003) has been propagated, “the magnetic field of distortion of self-worth, psychosocial pressure, loss of orientation and social exclusion” (Kirchhöfer/Merkens, 2004).

Especially since the begin of the 1990s education has taken on a new social-political quality: “It is no longer just about (...) retention of status or ascent through education but – and this is especially true for the weakest of society – it is about education to avoid social exclusion.” (Rademacker a.a.O.). Affected by social exclusion are especially worker families with several children as well as foreign worker families and workers with foreign status. The most important social dimension of social exclusion is unemployment (Groh-Samberg, 2004).

According to the latest numbers of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) (job office) by now there are 4,37 million people unemployed, unemployment in East Germany is twice as high (16,7%) as in West Germany (8,8%). (Frankfurter Rundschau (FR) from 01.09.2006). It is primarily the economic structural change and the change of the welfare politics as well as the weakening of the unions through the neoliberal economics and social politic, which worsened the life and work situation of the worker and the lower level employees in the past years. The development of poverty and exclusion has been marked and since the unification at the beginning of the 1990s by social and distribution conflicts (Groh-Samberg, 2004). In Germany the unions and worker representatives (workers councils) have been unable since long to obtain training- and employment standards for the less qualified. (Grohn-Samberg, 2004).

For the affected worker groups in this “brave new job-world” (Beck, 1999) remains only the trip into the non-existence-securing cheap jobs primarily in the politically desired low-wage area of the industrial and the service sector.

Vocational training, professionalism and paid employment in Germany, especially after the education-expansion since the 1960s, have become the “Axis of Living” (Beck, 1986:220) for women, also. With the continual increase in the employment of women came the expansion of so-called atypical employment forms. The term atypical employment generally includes employment forms like part-time work, mini-jobs, temporary limited employment, dependant small entrepreneurship, and working for manpower agencies.

In Germany the silent expansion of precarious employment conditions has been called “Crisis of the normal employer-employee-relationship” (Mückenberger); this analytical term can be

used to examine all other forms of employment as atypical. Atypical employment can be found primarily in the area of traditional women's work in the service sector.

Blurring the boundaries and precarisation of social security liable employees have been examined especially in qualitative studies with small numbers of cases. The interpretation of written questionnaires with large numbers of cases did not confirm the results of the case studies. On the contrary: is the number of unlimited full-time jobs remained stable throughout the 90s (Bosch, Knuth, 2003). The Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Job office) showed in their latest estimates, compared to 2005, an increase of 129000 to 26,3 million social security liable employees (FR. v. 1.09.2006).

Affected by precarious employment are primarily unemployed men and women. The number of the only slightly employed employees (mini jobber) has increased by 208000 to about 5 million (ibid). The increase of atypical employment conditions does not result from a decrease of the often held for dead normal employment conditions. Both developments together, the sudden increase of atypical employment forms as a result of changed institutional framework conditions and the silent expansion of flexibilised forms of employment conditions have, under the pressure of mass-unemployment, created a "Zone of Precariousness" (Dörre, 2005). The balance of power between work force supplier and work force demander in the Zone of precariousness is marked by very strong asymmetry. Characteristics of precariousness are, apart from low wages, weak job protection, social disintegration and low social standards, loss of meaning, recognition deficits and planning insecurity. Precariousness not only worsens the situation of the afflicted employee, but it affects the whole work society (ibid). The great dynamic of change in the German professional system and on the job market does not result only from the change corporate strategies but also from changed institutional and legal basic conditions since 1980. With the increase of jobs in atypical forms of employment and the silent expansion of precarious forms of employment, subject-oriented demands on employment are being implicitly repressed. (Dörre, 2005)

Institutional, collective bargaining standards and intra-corporate regulations of employment conditions are in Germany under pressure of the strong competition on the job market. Especially the transition between education and employment system faces in many regions, sectors and professions a high job market risk. The transition from the education to the employment system, the transition from the family phase into the employment system is afflicted with a high risk of precariousness and a high job market risk. The catchword of the "Generation Internship" (Stolz, 2005) illustrates the friction of the transition from university to employment.

The pressure on the workers in Germany with regard to their mobility has increased since the beginning of the new millennium. It is even more surprising, then, that mobility does not seem to play an important role, although it often has an existential and existence-saving meaning. In an international comparison of the leading industrial nations the Federal Republic of Germany exhibits medium mobility. 1995 barely 5% of the social security liable employees changed companies with an accompanying move into a different job market region. A comparison of the mobility quotas between 1980 and 1995 shows that the regional mobility, especially amongst the younger age groups and highly qualified, has increased, older age groups however demonstrate a surprising level of lack of mobility, as about 50% of the 40-54 year olds live in the same town as their parents and were not professionally required to be mobile. Due to professional reasons 16% (about every sixth citizen) of employable age is living in a mobile form of life. Long-distance relationships, followed by long-distance



commuters are the most common mobile form of life. The attitudes, too, about moving due to the job market situation reflects a rather low willingness to mobility. Less than a third (of questioned people in one study) would expect unemployed people to move for a job (Schneider, 2002).

The individual decision for or against mobility can be explained using utilitarian arguments in the sense of value-expectation theory. According to this, a person decides for mobility if the subjective expected value exceeds the value of the other alternatives – above all staying. The criteria for the evaluation of the alternatives can be quite different, though. Cost-Benefit evaluations in this sense tend to be based on characteristics of origin and target region, which are compared. While one part of the employees actively and openly deals with these requirements and is partly endeavouring to be mobile, others experience mobility as an undesired necessity and non-influenceable obligation they are exposed to. More than a third (35%) of the mobile forms of life comes to be due to structural obligations, which are contrary to the actual individual intentions. Mobility is accepted as an undesired side effect of employment. Especially weekend commuters and long-distance relationships are marked by the constraint of mobility. Only a relatively small part of the moving workers (19%) did move due to lack of other alternatives and without really wanting to (Schneider, 2002).

The decision whether someone becomes mobile, and in which form, depends primarily on the familial situation of the employee, of his local social integration and his personal attitudes and dispositions. Higher income (79%) and career (64%) are the main motivators to convince employees into moving. (Opaschowski, 2004). Factors, which decide the quality of local life (residential value, leisure value) contribute to the decision whether to be mobile. However, professional mobility does not seem to lead to an improvement of the material situation. Quite the opposite seems to be the case. For most types of mobility significant additional cost occur which are rarely compensated by a potentially increased income. (Schneider, 2002)

The primary characteristic of the mobility structure in Germany is a strong connection to the homeland. The Germans are willing to be mobile if they can commute from their home town or if they have to work at a different place for a limited time. The willingness to move completely for professional reasons is rather low, though. Additionally, willingness to move is negatively affected by the federal system of the Republic of Germany, where the differing school-systems and partly lacking recognition of professional qualifications makes the change of residence for families especially difficult. Also, the Germany typical culture of associations and clubs is based on permanence and stability and not fluctuation.

## 5. Lifestyle and family construction

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Until the 70s male and female biographies in western Germany differed significantly: The ideal of the male life style was that of the family provider, the ideal of the female life style was the family caregiver, the common ideal was the provider marriage. The cross setting of the ideals in a family model was normative and institutionally protected. In the 70s the range and importance of this family model decreased for several reasons. Indicators for this are reduced birth rates, the lower rate of marriages, and changes in the divorce behaviour. The familial life style was until the 70s an unquestioned lifestyle model in the 70s it became a negotiable model to which there was alternatives. Independent from this was “that the realisation of the desire for children even after the 70s would destabilise the female life plan

in its participation patterns of family and employment and would stabilise the male life plan primarily in employment” (BMFSFJ, 2006, p78)”

The integration into employment of the West German women has risen since the 1960s. The rate of employment for women, i.e. the ratio of employed and unemployed women against all women between 15 and 65 years has risen between 1960 and 1998 from 47% to 60%, the rate of employment for men fell in the same time from 90% to 80%. High rates of growth, shorter working times and especially the expansion of the service sector created jobs for women, whose level of qualification also has increased continually. (Auth, 2004). In the GDR the rate of employment for women was higher than in the West Germany. After the unification a massive reduction of employment occurred. In 1960 the rate of employment was at 65%, rose to 89% in 1989 and fell to 73,5% in 1998. Thus, the rate of employment of the East German women has fallen in recent years while that of the West German women has risen.

The increased integration of employment of women can be followed back to the increase of part time employment. For beginners in the job market the rate of part time is relatively low, increases continually with age and reaches its peak with the 35-45 year old women with 50%. For the following age groups the rate of part time employment falls slightly and goes up significantly for the 55 year olds and over. (WSI FrauenDatenReport, 2000). For men part time employment only plays a small role, some men at the end of the Erwerbsleben drop out of the employment system. Part time work is generally marked by lower-qualified positions, lower income, higher risk of unemployment as well as worse social protection (Bauer, 2001).

The gender-arrangement of the solely male breadwinner marriage has lost its power as an ideal and in practical terms. A modernised version of the providing marriage has been developed. The ‘just-housewife’ had become a part-time employee earning additional income, with far-reaching duties in household and raising children (Pfau-Effinger, 1998; Auth, 2002). The male breadwinner turned into a primary provider, the family depends on the additional income of the women (Auth, 2002). On the other hand there is the tendency that men slip into the (typically) female role, or even consciously decide to. A partial but growing number of young men shows the willingness, to take part in societal and familial care-functions, which leads to a new gender-reality (Voß, Weiß, 2005).

The basic change of structure, form and meaning of work and life and the postulated change in the gender-relation has challenged the German industrial and work research. From the perspective of feminist-oriented work research it is urgently necessary to provide the systematic integration of the gender-perspective in the research perspectives and in the research approach within the German and European work research. On the one hand it is pointed out that in the last decades a fundamental change of the gender-relations has occurred and that traditional patterns of gender-hierarchic work-distribution have been eroded. The legal equality of men and women on the one side and the equal level of education of women on the other support this thesis, in addition there is a social acceptance of the change of life concepts and life forms on behalf of the younger generations. An approdment of work- and life perspective of the younger men and women has occurred (Schütz, 2000: critically about this Brake, 2003). It is no longer doubted that there has been a fundamental change in gender-relations in Germany, yet it is undeniably obvious that the “Basic structures of gender-typical segregation and hierarchical organisation, distribution and evaluation of work” (Corell et al., 2005) have not yet been overcome. It seems to be a specifically German phenomenon, “that founding of a family is still the stabilisator of traditional gender-relations” (Kühn, 2004, p.31).

The differing models and the differing practice of employment integration of men and women thus demands gender-sensible categories when examining work-orientations. The starting point is the concept of the double-reference to work, which makes a difference between the manpower perspective and the subject perspective. The manpower perspective is focused on the interest in maintaining the ability to work, on high income and on the security and stability of the job. The subject perspective is focused on the content and form of work. The sense of work can be based on the content or the form of work, on the self-fulfilment or the self-determination in work. This concept is, however, oriented on the male normal biography, its precondition is continual full-time employment. A female work force perspective, on the other hand, is marked by the anticipation of non-employment especially during the family-phase (Geissler/Oechsle, 1996).

This corresponds to the thesis of Voß and Weiß: The labour entrepreneur is female, but certainly not a mother (Voß/Weiß, 2005). In their empirical study they came to the conclusion that especially strong examples of performance orientation can be found with female employees and highly qualified women, whereby a boundary line not only between the genders becomes visible but also between women. That is, between those women who focus primarily on job and career and those who have to take care of caregiver's obligations. Performance oriented women are said to have strong private and professional reflexivity, which they can use to turn conflicting requirements into flexible work strategies. The ability to the flexible handling of conflicting requirements is according to Voß/Weiß traditionally strong and practiced in women and results from the female life situation, and seems to be an emphasis of competency of women. Thus women in professional context are supposedly using a characteristic questions strategic calculating thinking for family.

Andresen and Völker (2005) agree that with the changed modes of employment integration a model of female manpower spreads which corresponds with the so-far male social model of work and life. The socially competent 'autonomous man' is characterised as an entrepreneurial personality, equipped with a certain repertoire of social behavioural techniques, whereby these are instrumental abilities (e.g. network thinking, goal orientation). Men and women interpret required social competencies as gender-related. Men interpret this economically, women see this wider and less specific, e.g. in relation of familial links and solidary thinking. With the new requirements reproductive tasks are excluded even stronger than before from the model of manpower and individualised and gendered even more. It is also feared that the new general ideas of work, performance, the corporate organisation and use might have further negative effects on women: With economising the individualising concept of performance and performance ability is strengthened, which corresponds to a tendentially higher equality of chances within the organisation, yet which will, in the end, lead to a strengthening of social differences since fostering political measures equality (e.g. support of women, which results from the incompatibility of work and reproduction) will lose their legitimacy and will influence the work- and life-chances negatively. We are talking here about the employment-related disadvantage of woman (in the task- and qualification area) and the exclusion of older, low-qualified women as well as older female high-level personnel whose experiences are depreciated.

The professional status is of rather low importance for most women. Time structuring, social contact and regularity of the activity play a large part in their work orientations. This refers to the double socialisation of women in which the various moments of the socialisation through work and family combine to specific constellations (Geissler/Oechsle, 1996). Five variants of female work orientation are to be mentioned.

- in “the primacy of existential security” work “is seen as a means securing long-term and continual existence of the own livelihood, this work orientation assumes (...) a life-long and continual full-time employment as starting point” (ibid p.62).
- in “temporally limited employment” an interrupted work force perspective dominated the subjective relation to work. The earned money is seen as a contribution to the family income. The subjective perspective is focussed on the communication with colleagues and on recognition of work.
- “Work as self-fulfilment” is focussed on areas for personal development in the job, oriented on stimulations and challenges, the level of self-determination, which the daily work routines permit. The subjective perspective dominates the manpower perspective.
- “Self-independence through work” aims for a balance between subjective perspective, manpower perspective and the social structuring and integration power of work. The identity as an employed woman refers to the work content and professional qualification as well as their own income and the social integration due to work.
- “Work as obligation and alienation” is, due to the reference to the manpower perspective and the social structuring and integration power of work (...) both dominant and negative; in both dimensions work is seen as obligation, injuring own interests. There may be subject-oriented requirements to work, but this side does not seem to be redeemable in the frame of existing employment structures and thus is not integrated in the relationship to work. (Geissler/Oechsle, 1996).

The self-assessment of women about their possibilities on the job market is analogue to the objectively observed disadvantages less positive (compared to men). Despite factually being disadvantaged they appear to be more motivated than men, which according to Opaschowski (2004) is an explanation for the choice of jobs which they enjoy and which consciously distance themselves from the exclusively job oriented life concepts. Thus women would cope better with the loss of employment by excluding work from their identity. Unlike men, women do not feel that the end of working life means the end of their lifetime as they create new roles and identities.

The job market risks for women are especially high. If they interrupt their employment to take care of their children, they will have difficulties finding access to the job market again. In this period of life they are often not able to set up a viable professional existence and an independent pension plan. This applies even if they do not interrupt their employment but just reduce it, as part-time work is often only offered in areas of lower-qualified tasks and usually ends in marginal employment. (Pfau-Effinger, 1990; Dörre, 2005). After separation and divorce it is usually the women who take over providing for the children. These so-called single parents are faced with an especially high risk of finding employment only in the precarious zone.

The German Life Course Regime is divided into three phases and imprinted strongly by its focus on the job market. The first phase takes, depending on educational levels, 3 to 6 years and prepares the entry into the job market. Following this is the phase of active employment, which is followed by the phase of retirement. The level of income in the phase of retirement is based on the phase of active employment. The centring of education and pension on the employment is called “corset of the German life course” (Kohli, 1985). The centring of the Life Course Regime on the family provider and the cut of the rules no longer fit the expectations of partnership and family as well as the requirements of the job market. Since the

70s there has been a de-standardisation of the education and professional patterns. The personal responsibility for finding access during the transition between the areas of education, job market and family grows and is discussed as individualisation.

Unlike in earlier times unemployed has become a continual signature of the job market. However, the majority finds a job after the successful completion of vocational training. Often the young employees have already experienced longer phases of job hunting and unemployment. “The results of the increased insecurity and discontinuity at the beginning of the employment process shows in the age of marriage and fatherhood which shifted from 25,9 years in 1996 (male) to 31,3 years in 2003” (BMFSFJ, 2006 p. 80). Men delay the time of marriage and fatherhood, women no longer orient themselves in the choice of their studies on the challenge of compatibility of family and work. “This obviously means that women see the problem of compatibility solely as their responsibility, if they consider it relevant at all” (BMFSFJ, 2006 p. 84).

In Germany families are mainly left alone with the task of providing for the children: “In agreement with the model of a typically male, work-oriented, and a typically female family-oriented life course, institutions of support are embedded in this and politically conceptualised into this institutional framework.” (BMFSFJ, 2006, p.80)

Furthermore there are no established norms in line with the idea of partnership for the distribution of work in the household and the caring and the education of children between the sexes. “Thus the statement remains valid that the model of the “new father” and of the “new partnership” is still an ideal not corresponding to reality” (Mischau, Blättel-Mink, Kramer, 1998 p. 351).

## 6. Social cohesion

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Social cohesion in German social sciences is discussed under the headings of social capital, exclusion and belonging. The discussion about social capital deals with, usually from the perspective of sociology of urbanisation, processes of segregation. Processes of exclusion are usually discussed in job market research as result of processes of displacement, and questions of belonging are examined primarily on the micro-level of every-day life actions.

Starting point for the description of processes of exclusion is the realisation that the unemployment in Germany since the 90s has changed its character for an increasing portion of employees. In the majority of cases unemployment is still a temporary episode of the change from one employment to the next. But a growing number of workers do not manage the change from one employment to the next, or from the education system into the employment-system or from a family phase into the social security liable employment without friction. “The quota of long-term unemployed of the number of unemployed has almost tripled in Western Germany between 1980 (12,9%) and 1997 (34%)”. (Vogel, 1999a) Threatened by long-term unemployment are especially those workers without professional qualifications, or those employed as skilled labour in disappearing sectors of industry, craft or trade. Further aggravating factors are health problems and age (Engelbrech, 1999 p. 3).

The employment-biographical situations at the outskirts of work society are manifold. Unemployment thus becomes a forced way of life for a growing number of employees in various ways. “At the margin of work society we meet the redundant parts of the industrial

workers, of degraded skilled labour of various branches who through the economic structural change ended in a downward spiral on the job market, excluded border-crossers who cannot even succeed in the shadow economy, and superfluous young people without profession who cannot deal with the growing professionalisation of adult life” (Vogel, 1999a).

In Eastern Germany the collapse of the economy after the monetary union led to a collapse of the job market. This created a two-thirds society of a new type (Vogel, 1999b p. 16.) One third of the workers could successfully integrate permanently into the new employment system, two thirds either take unstable positions of employment in the first or second segment of the job market, or they are unemployed. The job market splits into a segment of relative stability, a segment of instability as well as a segment of threatening or factual exclusion of employment” (Vogel, 1999b, p18) “The material resources for large parts of the population are restricted, together with the lack of chances on the job market, giving up any attempt of finding work, and social isolation, a consciousness of social marginalisation occurs (Vogel, 1999b p.19). This consciousness of marginalisation is marked by a dichotomous worldview; it differentiates between those “up there” and “those down here”. Thus the general worldview of the marginalised differs from that of West German long-term unemployed, as they distinguish the social space “inside” and “outside”. Neither in East nor in West Germany it is expected that at the margin of society new forms of social life occur. Unemployment leads to de-solidarisation and isolation; the own social situation is being experienced as separated from the self. (Morgenroth, 2003)

For the examination and study of processes of social closure on the micro-level of every-day actions the concept of belonging is available. *Belonging to certain communities* can combine with unequal chances of education, employment and income and thus become the agar of own forms of social inequality. Belonging to is of great importance in the unofficial spheres of every-day life (Neckel, 2003). Who belongs to which group, or is assumed to by third parties, will influence the chances of taking care of interests and articulating needs. Belonging to is the result of social interactions and represent categories of relationships, which have been negotiated between actors. The own association and group formations and attributions are often linked with each other. The probably most universal pattern of association by boundary formation is the Insider/Outsider configuration, which is used by those already established to defend themselves against the aspirations of newcomers. Belonging to as a result of ascription often disadvantage affected by it. We can distinguish two main classifications: gradual and categorical differentiation. Gradual differentiations of people or groups are classified by quantitative differences and possess an ordinal structure like bigger/smaller or more/less. Categorical differentiations on the other hand make qualitative judgements about people and groups and possess a nominal structure like equal/unequal or similar/different. Gradual classifications are vertical and hierarchic, but they refer to a common, socially shared space of experience and thus to a belonging. Categorical classification on the other hand refers to a mental map with excluding classification. Basis for categorical classification are primarily non-changeable inscriptive characteristics as age, gender or skin colour (Neckel, 2003).

In social reality the described differentiations are linked, gradual and categorical classifications merge into each other. The ideal type of gradual and categorical classification permits the analysis of exclusion semantics in the communication of work- and life environments and is thus for the analysis of generational relations of great importance.

## 7. The intergenerational relations

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In sociological works different interpretations of the word generation are used. Familial generation are placed on the sociological micro level, societal generations on the macro level.

- *Political generations* define themselves, according to Mannheim, through birth in the same historic-social life community); the nexus of generations is characterised by participation at important societal events such as wars or cultural changes and units of generations are characterised by the closeness of the content of the minds of the individuals (Mannheim, 1928/1964).
- *Cultural Generations* define themselves through specific experiences, attitudes and styles.
- *Economic Generations* are composed of cohorts with specific economic chances and risks. The entry into the job market (for example the Baby-Boomers) is so an important factor for the professional life course.

The growing attention for a relationship between the generations is caused by the ageing of the population and the employed population. The ageing of the employed population in Germany does not progress linearly. Starting from the year 2000 the following can be concluded: The share of 55- to 64 year olds does decrease at first (until 2010) somewhat (from 19% to 18,5%) and only after that increases to 23,9% in 2010. The share of the youngest group, the 15-24 year olds increases slightly from 16,7% to 17% in 2010. The absolute number of young working persons will increase in this time as well. Thereafter both relative proportion and absolute numbers of this groups will decrease. It is important to state that these predicted processes “will not occur in the same way everywhere, not even a similar way. The development of the East German population (overall and of employable age) differs substantially from the West German population” (Gottschall, Kistler, Land, 2005 p. 68).

Nevertheless, the proportion of elders in social security liable employees is low. In 2004 in Germany only 41,4% of all people between 55 and 64 years were employed (BMFSFJ, 2005 p. 47, chart in Appendix), the difference between this rate of employment and that of people between 25 and 44 years is 46%. Apart from the processes described above, the health-related retirement before the pension age of large parts of the population play an important role.

Since the 1980s politics and the parties engaged in collective bargaining have tried, first in Western Germany and after the unification also massively in Eastern Germany, to reduce the excessive number of human labour on the job market through schemes of the early retirement. Early retirement and part-time provisions for older workers are often justified with the freeing of jobs for the younger generation when the older generations leaves theirs. Reducing the age of retirement is the result of a common effort of enterprises, unions and older employees themselves, whereby the state either actively creates pathways for an acceptable retirement, or permits the other actors to remodel the existing social security system for this purpose (Kohli, 1993). Many employed no longer orient themselves on the statutory age-limit for the transition into retirement. For most employees the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday marks the “magic” number for transition into retirement, for many workers the age-limit of 55 years is a critical level for an exit from active employment (Stück, 2003). At the end of the working life two different cultures have formed.

- Employees who can realise themselves in their work and who possess the necessary abilities, energies and health want to work for a long time, often beyond the age of retirement.
- Employees with limited room for manoeuvre and with health problems want to invest their remaining energies rather into the new freedom of a premature retirement from working life.

When taking the remaining lifetime into consideration these two cultures differ less than previously thought. Those groups whose health has been affected most have a significantly lower life expectancy than those whose health has been affected less. The desire for premature retirement from working life is nothing but the attempt to realise personal intentions after the working phase. “With unequal work conditions schematic retirement ages produce massive social inequalities, as the less qualified and higher-affected workers will, due to their lower life expectancy, subsidise the pensions of the better-qualified and often also better-earning employees” (BMFSFJ, 2005 p. 87).

The relations between the generations in a company have only been sporadically topic of sociological research. Steinrücke (1986) examined the patterns of interpretation of respectively one worker from the birth years until 1920, 1920 – 1940, 1940-1950 and since 1950. “In the separate dimensions of conflict procession will be shifts from generation to generation which will partly be gradual, partly breaks, partly links (...) of the generation-specific conflict processing pattern, often however be a special character of the conflict processing patterns which contradict each other and hinder joint actions.” (Steinrücke 1986 p.273). The results of this 20 years old study point towards points of connection, shifts and breaks in generation-specific interpretation patterns. Recent studies refer to the disappearance of communication between the generations within a company. A disappearance of the generativity and a homogenising of the staff structures referring to the middle generation, as younger and older labour is rarely employed, have been discovered (Seitz, 2004). The staff of many companies is stuck in the “demographic trap” of there being a high number of those seeking early retirement and very little junior staff. The age structure resembles a “climbed pyramid” of the middle age groups of 35 to 55 years (Stück, 2003). In the companies speechlessness between the generations is the rule and latent generation conflicts occur. Mutual learning processes and exchange occur only rarely (Seitz, 2004).

Corporate strategies of staff reduction and the worsening of the compensational payments of social securities create for many elder employees a zone of Precariousness at the end of working life. The gap between the age of actual retirement and the age at the statutory retirement deepens: The length of time between the actual retirement from working life and the statutory age-limit without pension deductions grows longer. At the end of working life many employees enter a phase of insecurity.

The keyword of the “new social inequality” between the generations is being based on post-materialistic orientations and the life-style centring of the young generation, a discovery, which Steinrücke had already formulated in 1986. Other authors see the origin of growing generational conflicts less in differing values and work orientations: “New lines of conflict as for example the tension between pensioners and young workers contributing to social security or the tension between permanently employed and young unemployed or between spending on education or spending on pensions rather refer to “materialistic” conflicts” (Sackmann, 2004 p. 44).



The cooperation of the generations in working life is seen rather as tense than solidary. The solidarity between the generations is examined especially with emphasis on family and life networks. The performance of family and life networks consists in the transfer of every-day life and financial support, emotional and social cohesion. Older people are not just recipients but equally providers of support services.

At the beginning of the approach to the question about the relation between generations in family and life networks we have the analysis of the household situation. “The majority of men is currently married, also in the highest age group of the over-80s (about two third of all men of this age are married). The proportion of single and divorced men is relatively small. The situation for women is completely different: With age the proportion of widowed women rises significantly (for the over-80s almost three quarters of all women are widowed.) The proportion of the single and divorced women is – compared to men – somewhat higher” (BMFSFJ, 2005 p. 287/8). (Table 21 and 22 in Appendix) In the future an increasing number of older people will live without a steady partner, women more often than men.

The examination of the relationship between parents and children also gives reason to expect changes: “The support between the generations is high and will remain high in future, but may have its content changed” (BMFSFJ, 2005 p. 306). In general the older generation supports the younger generation financially, while the younger generation supports the parent-generation in every-day life. The financial support of their children is possible for the parent-generation because the “public contract of generations” provides them with the required material possibilities. The “public contract of generations” thus is the prerequisite for the “private contract of generations”. If the financial provision of the older generation is worsened due to cuts in pensions then it is to be expected that the “private contract of generations” will also lose its importance. An expansion of the mutual general support services is highly unlikely, as voluntary support is given in the framework of reciprocity and thus cannot be expanded simply based on the functional needs of one side.

The concluding examination of the potential of solidarity between grandparents and grandchildren also leads towards expectations of change. “Although, due to the rising age for the first birth – especially due to the rising number of women who have their first child in their mid-30s, early 40s – there could develop a structure with an important age-gap. Hereby a generation pattern with relatively wide distance between the generations is created.” (BMFSFJ, 2005 p. 308). The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren remains of importance, the age-gap will be wider than before.

Solidarity in private networks and family means the mutual cognitive, emotional, instrumental and financial support. The relations between the generations are controlled by expectations of reciprocity; quantity and quality of support refer to different societal basic conditions, which are currently marked by strong dynamic of change. For the analysis of the relations between the generation in the world of work it should be noted that:

- every-day life private support is only possible on the basis of reliable collective forms of material security, i.e. social security;
- the development of solidary relations between the generations in every-day life requires a life world shared by the generations;
- the voluntary provision of solidarity services is oriented not just on functional factual constraints but on normatively embedded norms of reciprocity.

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## Chapter 5: View from Hungary

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Generations at work

In today's Hungary, twenty years after the political transition, social processes and social phenomena cannot be analysed without taking into account „pre-history”: the process of the change of the regime and the history of the preceding era of communism.

In addition, the change of the regime and the previous political system are in many respects crucial from the point of view of our topic. One of the implications of the transition, which is easier to grapple with, is an institutional change in the labour market as well as in other segments of society: the disappearance of, or a change in the operation/function of, some of the old institutions and the emergence of new ones. Another aspect of the transition is a change in norms and mentality. Communism found Hungary with an emerging middle class, a country traumatised not only by WWII but also by the Holocaust. The new system, which declared all men equal and preached of building a new world, made a taboo out of many aspects of the preceding era. It also inflicted radical changes on the norms of work in the „thaw” following the initial radical oppression: it brought forth the interpretation of „collective property” as „property for everyone to take home”. As a consequence of this the dominant value system considered wangling and speculation, based on free „looting”, rather than actual work performance, as a sign of individual success.

Attitudes towards the rich and successful reveal a lot about a country's entire economy and about social relations (Csepeli, Örkény, Székelyi, Barna, 2004). An element of distrust is suspicion towards the rich, which can serve as a frame of interpretation (in e.g. the over-estimation of external circumstances/reasons). In the distortion of suspicion and envy, merit responsible for outstanding performance disappears and the advantages connected to unmerited achievement seem unjust. The collapse of state socialist systems in 1989-90 and the emergence of liberal democracies led to a fast formation of modern market economy. This change met with exaggerated positive expectations: people expected a rapid improvement in their conditions of living and working, to which was added that „Western” ideals formerly thought to be unattainable suddenly became seemingly accessible for large groups of people. Contrary to these expectations, the political, economic and social transformation was accompanied by major region-wide recession. Millions lost their jobs, real wages of those who remained employed decreased, while the value of social benefits did not keep pace with inflation. Under the deteriorating conditions, people having been used to full employment and a security of living, felt that economic transition is a “zero-sum game” in which some people

can get rich to the detriment and loss of others. For people considering themselves losers of the transition it came handy to interpret their failure by the increasing wealth of others.

Relations established by state socialism almost completely exempted the individual from taking responsibility for his/her own self. This happened through the promise of the state to provide the working people of the country with all the goods on earth – regardless of performance. This influenced the world of work as well, since in a country where unemployment was virtually unknown, there was no real danger of one finding himself/herself without employment.

On the level of norms and values, and this is especially true in cities and in regions impoverished as a result of the disappearance of entire industrial sectors, all the above mentioned factors resulted in a chaos which is unfavourable to work performance and which might well be one of the main reasons for the ill performance of Hungarian economy.

The fall of communism and the emergence of knowledge-based society affected generations differently: they had to face different challenges. The older generations found themselves in a setting in which their knowledge and experience gained in the previous system might have lost their relevance and thus they found themselves competing with younger people whose education suited the new requirements better. A common threat to all, however, was unemployment not known up until then and the different generations had to resort to different strategies to fight it. A number of questions arise from the generational experience of the changes: what kind of differences are there in the attitude of the different generations to work; whether there are generational differences in labour market behaviour and in the tolerance of unemployment; generational differences in solidarity within generations and between them; what and how can the younger generations learn from their parents.

From the point of view of generational differences it is also very important to note that there are generations, which did not live through the previous system. On the one hand they were not subjected to its oppression and therefore they did not experience liberation from it, but on the other hand they were not exposed to the security the system provided in exchange for the oppression. Therefore communication is rather difficult between these younger generations and those which grew up in the lax version of communism (the “goulash communism”) in the Kádár era, or those who lived under the more dictatorial phase of communism connected to Rákosi. All the difficulties of communication are further aggravated by the current political atmosphere in which various phases of communism are obscured and in which secret police officers of the 1950’s are equated with simple communist party members of the seventies and eighties (at least in the rhetoric of the right wing). Even if not directly but this has influence on the relation to work as well. A consequence of this is that recent past becomes a taboo and in many cases the older generations are refraining from talking about, and conveying, their experiences because the typical adjustment of the average individual to the system, which of course often meant party membership (some 800, 000 people were members of the communist party in Hungary whose population is 10, 000, 000) cannot be acknowledged. Thus it is rather difficult to tell stories in general, as the taboo on certain parts of a story often becomes the taboo on the entire story itself.

As a result of this a generational research in Hungary should start with drawing the lines between generations in light of the periods of socialism in which they lived, in which they acquired the most important experiences from the point of view of working, or if their socialisation took place after the change of the regime.

At the same time, what also follows from this is that in studying the various generations in Hungary, we have to bear in mind Hungary's special situation. Older generations grew up and lived in a world, which is not familiar to those living in Western Europe. However, precisely the above-mentioned generational gap created a special position for the succeeding generations too, as younger people who grew up in a system similar to that in Western Europe, did not inherit patterns from the previous generations, which they could carry on, or patterns, which they could rebel against. It is therefore increasingly true for them that "...while it is true, that identity 'continues to be the problem', this is *not* 'the problem it was throughout modernity'. Indeed, if the *modern* 'problem of identity' was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the *postmodern* 'problem of identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open... Identity as such is a modern invention... It was a 'problem' from its birth. It was *born as a problem*, as something one needs do something about..." (Bauman, 1996). In the developed world Beck's statement is generally true: „with a shift in economic levels (economic expansion, educational expansion, etc.) sub-cultural class-identities increasingly wear away, the tradition of social class with a colouring of social rank, disappears, and diversification and individualisation of life situations and life paths begin, which undermines the hierarchical model of social classes and social strata, while its truth content is more and more questioned (Beck, 1999).”

The absence of norms and traditions, on the other hand, also means that this younger generation did not receive guideline for creating communities either, consequently today's world, in our view, is much more individualistic than the world of their other European counterparts. Unfortunately no targeted research has been carried out in Hungary about this generational „lack of foundation”, evidently because of the absence of qualitative research. The same problem emerges with relation to studying extreme right wing youth (Kovács, Kriza, Vajda, 2001, 2002), although these youth are examples of an extreme lack of foundation, which characterises the entire generation. In relation to these questions special emphasis could be laid on the parallel between those socialised in East Germany and the generations that grew up in that geographical area later on the one hand, and on their Hungarian counterparts on the other hand.

## **1.2 Sociology of work, or the lack thereof, in Hungary**

Naturally the political transition had consequences for the themes of social science research and specifically for the Hungarian sociology of work. Prior to the regime change sociological studies focussing on work kept the traditions of “sociographic” qualitative research characteristic to the sociology of work earlier. Under communism one of the main tasks the sociology of work set itself was to show the deceptive nature of the system. With the disappearance of communist power and with the emergence of the strong belief in the self-regulation of the market, this task became invalid and sociology of work basically disappeared. It has not reappeared, at least up till now, even when it is becoming clearer that this belief is false, market does not solve all the problems especially not in a country which before the change of the regime was the “happiest barrack in the communist camp” through exhausting its infrastructure as opposed to developing it, which used up foreign loans for consumption, making its economy fall behind.

### **1.3 Preliminary notes on the overview**

Literature on change of the regime and on its aftermath reveal shows that attention was paid to examining the economic dimension and researchers were less focussed on what role the moral and psychological factors played in the formation of the new economic system (Csepli et al., 2004).

Only very recently have such calls for tenders and research appeared, at the encouragement of the EU, which concern labour, generations of employees, solidarity among employees, etc.; these researches are still in progress, or have not yet been started, therefore their results cannot be presented here.

It means that in our paper we were unable to summarise sociological research in this area, simply because they do not exist. What we could do instead was to collect data which appeared in studies of different focus but which are relevant for us as well. Here we attempt to give an overview of these results and data from research carried out between 2000 and 2006, drawing on a number of quantitative studies and surveys which touch upon – mostly only in relation to another topic - with work and which were carried out mainly in the area of the sociology of youth and the economy of labour. As these studies work with “hard variables” of sociology, they are not suited to grasp the experience of individuals and generations, only to make rather indirect assumptions in connections with that.

A conclusion we can draw from this overview is that the above questions related to the generational differences with regard to work cannot be satisfactorily answered on the basis of these researches without conducting qualitative research.

## **2. Relations to diverse work components**

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### **2.1 Changes affecting the Hungarian labour market after the change of the regime – A short overview**

In the past decade radically new directions emerged in the process of generational reproduction in Hungary, claim the authors of a study (Gazsó-Laki, 2004) focussing on the impact of the political and economic changes on youth. This is natural in a country where not only the political system changes but a shift occurs from one reproduction model (state socialist redistribution) to another (market economy). Problems do not end here though, as world economic trends – a shift in economic models and globalisation - dominant in the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, formed a new working method and reproduction character of capitalism. It is doubtless that these trends significantly conditioned the transition in Hungary. From this angle it is not irrelevant which type of market economy was attainable and feasible for Hungary in the past fifteen years. Through this the notion of market economy is filled with real substance and it loses its former charm of “hopefulness” and “optimism” attributed to it. By the turn of the millennium post-socialist transition ended; the directions in reproduction, which had been established and which became characteristic by then, should be regarded as the functional characteristics of the new system, which are valid on the longer term as well. The possibilities of joining and integrating into the developed world were determined by the conditions of global capitalism, which also “designated” a place for Hungary in the division of labour between the developed “centre” and the developing/undeveloped “periphery”.

## **2.2 Perpetual unemployment and precariousness**

As a result of the shrinking of the labour market after the change of the regime (as many as 1.5 million jobs were cut in the course of a couple of years), unemployment became massive throughout the country. Most affected by this on the one hand were the oldest segment of the population in active age, which was closest to retirement, and the youngest one on the other hand, which only entered the labour market or were about to enter it. The former was forced to leave the labour market sooner, while the latter had to postpone entry into it. While prior to the regime change almost every school-leaver was able to get a job, in the beginning of the nineties unemployment rate was 27-33% in the age group 15-19 and 14-17% in the case of 20-24 year olds.

Unemployment remains one of the youth's main problems even today. One third of the respondents in Ifjúág2004 (2004), a social scientific and sociological study attempting to describe the generational changes that resulted from the social and economic transformations of a changing regime, claimed having already been unemployed during their rather brief "working careers". The overwhelming majority (28%) of those concerned has already been registered as unemployed, a minority (3%) has not, or and another minority (3%) claims having been both registered and unregistered as unemployed. Although there are higher education students who are affected by unemployment (5-10%), this problem mainly impacts those who could not, or did not want to, remain in education. Accordingly, one third of those doing non-remunerated housework, and two fifths of those "on maternity leave" report having been unemployed.

Among the employed, the incidence of those affected by unemployment is even higher: nearly fifty per cent reported having known such a state of affairs. This, however, varies, by occupation: 69% of unskilled and nearly 59% of semi-skilled workers claimed having been unemployed, while "only" a rough 40% of office workers and 37% of professionals made such claims. Although a majority (69%) has been unemployed only once, 30% of 15-29 year olds have known such a condition twice or more. The seriousness of this situation is further indicated by the fact that while for three tenths of the sample the length of unemployment did not exceed three months; the majority of young people suffer from extended periods of joblessness. Taking into account the high proportion of young people affected by unemployment, and the widespread negative social experience it induces, it comes as no surprise that a significant part of the youth (42%) lives in dread of joblessness. Three themes recur: fear of being unable to enter the world of work, losing one's job, or being incapable of re-entering the labour market once having left school.

Neither the state, nor the families were prepared to handle this sudden upsurge in unemployment. Families were forced to support the child who, after leaving school, could not find a job for months, or in some cases for more than a year. This inflicted an additional burden on the generation of the parents, which was already affected severally by the decrease in the relative value of wages and by unemployment as well, and who therefore had an interest in the child's employment as soon as possible.

Based on a survey carried out by Adler et al (Adler, 2005), we can say that it is the group of blue-collar workers with a secondary school diploma where unemployment is least likely. Generally less people are laid off in this group but should they be dismissed, it is easier for them to find another job. In this regard secondary school graduated blue-collar employees are

in a better position than those in managerial positions. The most endangered group, on the other hand, is the blue-collar employees with elementary school education only or even less.

Data from the survey clearly underline the popular notion that if people over 45 lose their jobs, then it is very difficult for them to find jobs again, the period of unemployment is rather long among them.

There are somewhat more men than women among those who are excluded from the labour market for a longer period of time, although the difference is not too big. Three tenths of the respondents in the survey related that they became temporarily or permanently inactive after the age 45. It is more common among the population in the countryside than among people living in the capital.

More than half of the inactive went on disability pension or on old age pension. Every fourth searched for a job but without success, every fifth of the respondents did not wish to take on a job.

Four times as many women as men depend financially on their families. In small towns and in villages reliance on the family is three times as frequent as in bigger towns or in the capital, which can lead us to think that solidarity within the family, as a value and practice, is much stronger in the countryside than in the capital/larger cities. There is a huge difference between those with elementary school education and university degree in this regard: the former group has to rely financially on their families almost twenty times as often as the latter.

In light of this it would be interesting to find out how those involved experience this change in their situations, and how such a society experiences these changes for which unemployment was unknown for forty years.

## **2.3 The position of generations on the labour market**

### **2.3.1 The young - entering the labour market**

In exploring the situation of young people entering the world of work after completing their studies, we draw on a research carried out among Hungarian youth in 2004 (Ifjúság 2004) on various aspects of their lives (work being one of them). The research shows that 39% of the youth aged 15-29 have been employed at some point in the course of their studies. Another 5% claimed to have combined studying and working. As far as the types of occupations are concerned, we see the following. Compared with a previous research carried out in 2000, we can detect a 20% increase in manual jobs that are performed by young people: while in 2000 38% of youth were performing manual jobs, by 2004 this ratio increased to 58%. One third of the respondents claimed to have been employed in white-collar jobs, while one tenth worked as entrepreneurs working primarily in the sectors commerce, industry, and services. Only 1 % of youth worked in agriculture.

The study reveals great differences in jobs and types of work with regard to gender: the overwhelming majority of young men perform physical work, and within that, mainly skilled work (44%), less frequently semi-skilled or unskilled work (22%). In comparison, the proportion of women in blue-collar jobs is 27% who mainly work as skilled workers (27%). Around 25% of the male respondents work in white-collar jobs, which is half of the women in the same type of jobs (most of whom, 26%, are office employees). It is important to point out

that the proportion of female professionals (19%) highly surpasses that of male professionals (8%).

With regard to settlement types, there is a somewhat larger portion of youth in white-collar jobs in the capital (50%) compared to the countryside, where the proportion is 42%. Blue-collar jobs are more widespread among youth in the countryside – 47% claimed to have such jobs. In the country's other towns, the proportion of physical workers is around three fifths (63%), and this proportions reaches nearly seven-tenths (68%) in villages.

The study reveals an improvement in the education of young employees, at least compared with previous decades. There are no workers who did not complete elementary education, and the proportion of those who only have primary school qualifications is only one tenth. The dominance of vocational certificates has diminished; they are now in equal proportion to secondary school degrees (37%). Finally, if we account for college (11%) and university (4%) graduates, we witness the predominance of higher education amongst today's youth. (Of course, the data does not reveal a significant improvement in qualifications, but displays the fact that those with low educational qualifications do not even enter the labour market.)

These quantitative data, however, do not touch upon the problem that, as a result of the current system of taxation and other social contributions, a great many youth, as well as older people, are employed officially with minimal wage although unofficially making more. It means that their health care benefits and pensions are based on the minimal wage only and not on the entire amount the employee receives together with the undocumented extra income. This may create uncertainty, which cannot be shown or handled by statistical data.

### **2.3.2 The place of the older in the labour market**

As far as the older generations are concerned in Hungary, the age group 45-49 is the last one in which economic activity and employability of both men and women is high. In older age groups economic activity decreases rapidly. For several Hungarian authors/researchers „aging population” is the age group 45-64, as opposed to the definition of „aging population” in the EU, which refers to the last ten years before retirement, i.e. the years 55-64.

A study carried out on the labour market position of older generations (Berde, 2002) shows that in 2002 the population of the age group 45-64 counted as many as 2, 670, 000 people, which was 39% of the „employable” population (age group 15-64). Only a little more than half of this large segment of society was employed in 2002 and in the preceding 3 years, which is a very low proportion in an international comparison. Within the age group of 45-64 those aged 45-49 make up the biggest group (30%) as a result of a demographic peak. Therefore in order to keep the economic activity of age group of 45-49 (which makes up 12% of the employable population) on the current level, employment ratios have to increase together with a significant job-creation as well.

The same research points out that the employment ratio of the 49-year-olds did not show a straight increase in the past 2 years, and employment ratio of women of this age demonstrated a decrease of 0.9 percentage points. Following a decrease in 2001, there was an increase of 1 percentage point in the employment ratio of the age group 50-54. Contrary to this, employment of women of 55-59 dropped by 3 and 5 percentage points, that of men of the same age showed an increase of 2 percentage points. The aggregate proportion of the employed within this age group did not reach 40% by 2002; it remained below 30% in the

case of women and only barely was more than 50% in the case of men. Employment of those over 60, on the other hand, is only marginal: it doesn't even reach 10%. Only 6% of women over 60 works, while not even 15% of the men of the same group are employed. Contrary to the other group, the low level of employment in this age group has barely changed.

### **2.3.3 Mobility on the labour market – the case of older generations**

Labour market analysts point out the deficiency in mobility of Hungarian labour force, which often implies a disadvantage in the competition on the market. Low mobility propensity can also prove to be discouraging for multinational companies (wanting to relocate activities to Hungary), which play a significant role in Hungarian economy. Analysts claim that Hungarian workers are reluctant to change their residence for work or their workplace. It is true that there was no need for mobility on the side of the employees before the change of the regime, therefore it is especially difficult for employees whose socialisation took place in the previous system to adapt to the new conditions and expectations. This also means that any kind of move, change, or shift, in the labour market is followed by a fear of becoming unemployed.

In order to illustrate in more details the mobility details of older (over 45) employees, we would like to refer to a study carried out in 2004 (Adler, 2004). As the data underlines, there is indeed very little willingness in this age group to change the place of living or the workplace. The difficulty in interpreting this phenomenon is to distinguish between the reasons for low mobility: it is unclear how much can be explained by socialisation in the previous regime, or by the age factor, or by other economic characteristics of the age group, such as the level of employment.

Data from the survey show that as much as 71% of the respondents did not change jobs after the age 45. 12% of the sample changed jobs once either because of having been dismissed or resigning. Only 5% of the age group claimed to have changed jobs several times. The type of occupation greatly affects mobility. Greatest mobility was found among employees with higher education degrees, least mobile are blue-collar employees. Within the latter group the propensity to move is smallest in the case of blue-collar workers with high school education: 90% of them did not change jobs after the age 45. Inclination to change jobs within the group of employees with lower qualification is less than in the group with better qualifications but correlation is far from linear. Those with elementary education, or less, proved to be least mobile, while on the other end of the scale are skilled workers and those with higher education diploma. The frequency of actual job changes increases in parallel with age: 19% of the age group 45-60, and 32% of those over 60, changed jobs in the studied life-cycle. However, this should not make us assume an increase in mobility, only that members of the older generations spent more time on the labour market and therefore they had more time to experience changes.

Mobility is also affected by the industrial sector. Least mobility is found in agriculture, 85% of those working in agriculture did not change jobs. The proportion of those changing jobs in infrastructure and in the service sector is higher than the average: of the age group in question one third of the employees in these sectors claimed to have changed jobs.

Regarding geographical differences in mobility, the study points out that Eastern Hungary is „least mobile”, which might very likely be the result of the shortage of jobs to be found in that region, accounting for a bigger adherence to jobs.



From the point of view of occupational status groups, most mobile are employees of enterprises (42% of them changed jobs at least once), while no mobility was found among supporting family members evidently, since in their case changing jobs would also mean “changing families”.

Approximately half of the respondents in the sample of the age group over 45 resigned from their jobs, and another half was laid off. A larger proportion of those between 45-50 speak of having left their jobs at their own decision than who were dismissed, while the proportion is reversed in the case of the older populations.

Four fifth of those respondents who were unemployed for a shorter or longer period of time had to leave their jobs at the initiation of their bosses. A large majority of employees therefore is very cautious in leaving their jobs: they resign only if they are certain to find another job within short time.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of those who changed jobs never moved to live in another place, which seems to underline the proposition that geographical mobility of the Hungarian population is very low. Most mobility was reported in towns (other than Budapest, the capital, or county centres): 14% of those living here and who reported changing their jobs have moved to another settlement in order to get a job. Obviously necessity largely affects the inclination to move away.

Those in the highest segments of the qualification pyramid (those with higher education diplomas and high school diplomas) did not give account of moving, while mobility is high among blue-collar workers holding high school diplomas. There is complete immobility among agricultural workers.

Close to one fourth of the respondents who changed jobs were forced to move to another settlement, which is especially true for those living in villages or small towns in the countryside. This is clearly the result of fewer job opportunities in these places. Commuting, on the other hand, has a long-established tradition in Hungary. Educational qualifications, or the type of job, have hardly any influence, it is clearly the size of the settlement that is influential.

## **2.4 Transmission of knowledge**

At the time of the change of the regime knowledge society was interpreted mainly as information society and was handled as a technical question. Having surpassed the interpretation of it as an asset of accumulated knowledge, we interpret knowledge society as the ability and propensity to learn.

Important issues were raised with regard to education policy at a conference of the Political History Foundation in December 2005 on key questions of the National Development Plan. A participating expert pointed out that large differences within a society can hinder equality for all. The biggest obstacle to the distribution of knowledge, he claimed, was inequalities in wealth and incomes, therefore serious efforts need to be made to promote integration, which have to start at the network of elementary education. Mention was made of the expansion of Hungarian higher education in the nineties, which was different from the Western European model in that it took place in the midst of economic recession on the one hand, and in that the

expansion was not based on the establishment of new institutions but on the expansion of old ones.

In modern, knowledge-based societies the acquisition of knowledge assets plays the most important role in defining the chances and opportunities of the youth. Access to these resources is not ensured for everyone equally. Studies attest to the fact that two thirds of the youth leaving school and entering the labour market do not acquire a capital of knowledge, which could be converted into such position in the division of labour that ensures a living.

The study on youth already referred to (Gazsó, Laki, 2004) claims that the level of education in the younger generations is higher than in the older ones, which is a result of technological and social developments. It is especially true today, when the establishment of a knowledge-based economy is wanted. Secondary education has become general among the youth by the turn of the millennium: more than two thirds of the age group 25-29 completed studies in a high/secondary schools, whereas it is true for only half of the population between 45-64. The level of education is especially low in the age group of 60-64, as two thirds of them completed only elementary schools. As far as the potential labour force aged 45-64 is concerned, the proportion of those who completed basic education only is 38%, which means that the population in this age group has gloomy labour prospects.

The proportion of those holding a higher education degree is smallest in the age group 60-64; it is only 11.5%, while 13.6% of the age group of 45-64 has completed studies in a higher education institution. In comparison, as for the younger generation, 15% of the age group of 25-29 completed studies at a university or college.

The chances of employment greatly improve with an increase in the level of education. Furthermore, a higher level of education makes possible lifelong learning, which is a prerequisite of the establishment of a knowledge-based economy. Higher education degree, and secondary education which prepares students for entering higher education, ensure good chances for their holders to gain new qualifications and professions. Given that today knowledge can quickly become outdated, education systems strive to found the basis for systematic continuing education with creating the necessary basic skills and qualifications.

The educational level of the age group 45-64 is lower than that of the youth and the middle generation. However, educational level of the population in the age group, especially until the age 59, is still not as low to explain/justify the great differences in employment: only half of the population 45-64 is employed, employment of those 55-59 does not reach 40%.

Views on the expansion of higher education and its effects vary but literature on it can be classified into two groups mainly: a group of experts argue that the expansion of higher education is not likely to cause problems in employment and that the labour market advantages of those with higher education will remain. The other group is not as optimistic in this regard; experts belonging to this group talk of the devaluation of diplomas and they claim that a large number of people with university/college diplomas are forced to take jobs with lower salaries as a result of an over-supply. The latter group also claims that although educational expansion, especially right after the change of the regime, brought about advantages both for the individual and for the society and by the time of the turn of the millennium more and more negative effects could be felt and the expansion, which is based primarily on an expansion in quantity, is likely to cause a host of further problems. Most studies focusing on the labour market position of higher education graduated employees

approach the question from a micro-economic angle, but some descriptive and comparative studies can be found as well.

Galasi (2004) claims that in Hungary, following the change of the regime, salaries of those who have just the necessary education for performing a given job is highest. Furthermore, the salary of over-qualified employees is higher than of those whose qualifications exactly meet the requirements of a given job. Thus the market seems to appreciate higher qualifications in these extreme cases as well. The same author claims that the chances of those with higher education to find jobs requiring higher education did not decrease with the expansion, quite to the contrary.

Two authors (Kertesi, Köllő, 2005) claim that although there was a slow-down in the increase of the market value of newly acquired university and college diplomas in the year 2000, and the advantages in earning/salaries decreased, but we cannot speak of the increase of unemployment of those holding university/college diploma. Nor is it true, they claim, that younger people with higher education degrees would push their less educated counterparts out of jobs.

Kertesi and Varga (2005) argue that the number of employees with lower educational level is higher than the EU average, their employment is bad, but at this point there is no need to worry about over-supply on any level of the education. What they consider a problem, however, is the fact that educational expansion did not reach poorer segments of society, which will have serious consequences.

In a paper, Galasi and Varga (2005) point out that employment opportunities of career starters with higher qualifications have worsened in the past few years but we should not rush to conclude that the higher education expansion brought only disadvantages for them. They note that time will tell whether this is a passing phenomenon related to a decrease in GDP, or if it is a result in a decrease in the demand for employees with higher qualifications, or if anything else is behind the phenomenon. Györgyi (2004) and Ladányi (2002) see the (un)employment of career starters with higher education degrees in a new light as a result of the educational expansion. It is unclear as yet, they claim, what kind of correlation is to be found between unemployment of this population and the greater flexibility in the supply of highly-qualified work, and between the decrease in the demand for employees with higher qualifications.

Several experts find fault with the way the educational expansion was carried out. Polónyi and Tímár (2001) claim that the expansion was forced and not thought out well. In addition, they assert, the expansion was not based on a change in the old structure of the education and the dominance of those areas further grew where there is already an over-supply. A quick expansion served the interests of school-leavers who have difficulties finding jobs, and higher education institutions, which are financed based on the number of their students. Under the low-wage conditions, it is also favourable for employers to employ employees with better qualifications in jobs where requirements are lower. Polónyi (2004) calls attention to the need in further research into the occupational structure and labour market opportunities of the youth in order to prevent the structural and quantitative over-production of degree-holders. Currently there has been no sufficient data gathered on the demands of the labour market of those with higher education diploma.

The above view is shared by Falusné (2001) who claims that the massive educational expansion resulted in the youth getting into jobs, which require lower qualifications than what their education would allow.

Life long learning creates the basis for a knowledge-based society. This holds true not only for the youth but for the entire population as well, regardless gender or age. In Hungarian society there is a huge gap between the young aged 15-29 and the older generations with regard to educational activity. Even if we interpret participation in training broadly and include here participation in conferences, scientific congresses, distance learning and self-education, still only as little as 3.3% of the age group 45-64 participates in some kind of training and only around 1% of those older than 50. As far as middle-aged employees are concerned, Hungary seems to be lagging behind the EU average: only 1% of those who are employed in the age group of 45-64 participate in some kind of training, and this proportion drops to 0.6 % among those 55-64. Participation in training is related to educational level. The higher the person's qualifications are, the more willingness he/she has to develop his/her skills.

In Hungary, especially prior to the change of the regime, the majority of people were able to find jobs that suited their qualifications. This was considered a given and it resulted in an attitude that performing a lower-qualified job with higher qualifications was degrading and shameful. With the change of the regime job opportunities changed radically and many people were forced to find employment lower than their qualifications. This can cause psychological problems, as well as frustration and dissatisfaction on the side of the large number of youth graduating from higher education institutions. This problem is not likely to be solved by a more thorough survey/analysis of the labour market demands, since by now it has become natural that a young person finishing high school has no choice but to start studies in a university or in a college. Although we cannot cite survey results to support it, we think that in other EU countries this (the discrepancy between qualifications and the requirements of jobs) is less likely to be experienced as „personal tragedy”, since there may be more evident alternatives, such as setting up an enterprise, for youth socialised in those countries. Fighting with these problems is not likely to become a feature of leftist movements.

## **2.5 Expectations associated to work**

### **2.5.1 Perception of organisational and technological changes**

Berman-Bound-Machin (1998) maintain that at the time of the lasting prosperity in the 50's and 60's many people thought that the increase in productivity will sooner or later make possible a radical reduction of working hours, which would have had a formative effect on our daily lives. This is not what has happened however. Although part time employment has become more common, “progress” did not manifest itself in the diminishing of workload but in the shortening of the active life period. Economically speaking, not only do we “grow mature” at a slower pace, but growing older happens faster than 30-40 years ago. The pace of the depreciation of knowledge (along with it the depreciation of man as an economic actor) was further accelerated by the reversal/change in technological development: the spread of information technology and the subsequent transformation in the organisation of labour.

Köllő (2002) in a study looks at the labour market position of older generations in Hungary in the decade following the change of the regime. He points out that in Eastern Europe the

above-mentioned developments were accompanied by the erosion of a part of the knowledge accumulated in the planned economy. Labour market position of the older generations was endangered by the change of the regime for many reasons: the erosion of their knowledge acquired at school, the devaluation of their practical experience accumulated through work, their disadvantages in the area of IT and languages. This could well be further exacerbated by the statistical discrimination, which projected the difference between an average elder and an average youth. We do not always have the necessary means to distinguish between these factors but it is doubtless that aggregately they devaluated to a large degree the labour market value of the work force of the older generations.

### **2.5.2 The difficulties of the older generations on the labour market**

Adler (2002) carried out a research to study the employment situation of people over 45, which touches upon the question of how employees over 45 assess the state of their skills and the change in the setting from the point of view of the speed of work, professional knowledge, professional experience, appreciation at work and the personal relationships outside work. The data reflects how employers themselves perceive changes in the above-mentioned areas, which may well differ from the perception of employees.

Most respondents, two thirds of them, did not report a notable slowing down in their speed of work and only 17% of them gave account of the contrary. Naturally the proportions change with age. A slow-down in the speed of work is characteristic to physical workers rather than to those performing intellectual work. Within the latter group only 3-4% of those in managerial positions reported a slow-down in the speed of work. No correlation can be shown between the perceived slowing down of the speed of work and unemployment.

With regard to the erosion of professional knowledge, only 6% of the respondents felt that their knowledge faded significantly but 81% of them did not think it characteristic. As in the case of the speed of work, the older the age group, the more frequent are the reports of the fading of knowledge. Educational qualifications and the occupational group influence the frequency of reports of knowledge erosion: those with lower qualifications spoke more often of it than those with higher qualifications; this is true with regard to blue collar and white-collar workers as well. Among those who have become unemployed at least once after 45, it is 10% who found their knowledge faded, while this proportion is only 5 % among those who were not affected by unemployment.

As to the appreciation of professional knowledge, respondents claimed to be more often appreciated by younger colleagues than by their bosses and with age it only increases. Men seem to enjoy more professional appreciation than women. The appreciation of those holding a degree is higher than of those who completed secondary school or elementary education only.

The respondents thought that dismissal on the grounds of age was rare. Only 3% of the respondents claimed to have been dismissed because of his/her age and no one of the age group 45-60 reported an instance of that.

As much as 11% reported of a weakening of their relationships after the age 45 but further exploration of it was not the focus of a quantitative research.

Around 20% of the respondents were promoted after the age of 45. Men were promoted somewhat more often than women. Few or no employees were promoted among those who have elementary school education only, and only few had promotions among skilled workers as well. Although there is somewhat more of those with secondary education who were promoted but the highest proportion of promotions occurred among degree-holders. This is true in the case of ways of exceptional recognition (awards, financial rewards, etc.)

As for satisfaction with salaries, around 40% of the respondents are satisfied with their salaries in that they reach or surpass the average. Another 40% of the population is definitely not satisfied with their wage dynamics. Employees in Budapest are the most satisfied with their wages and those living in villages are the least satisfied.

At the same time satisfaction with wages also brings up the question of comparison with experiences from the previous regime where wage differentials were far lower than today, even within one sector but across sectors also. It would be very interesting to examine the reference groups: what is the base of comparison when respondents expressed they were satisfied/dissatisfied with their incomes. The referred quantitative researches were not suited to grasp this question.

### **3. Life styles and family construction**

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#### **3.1 Youth**

##### **3.1.1 Prolongation of youth as a stage of life**

As a result of the ongoing economic shift, the youth's paths of integration into adult society change. This is true in general but in post-socialist states even more so: challenges of a newly set up market economy and those of worldwide economic changes appear at the same time. As a consequence of this, the path of work status becomes more open for the youth while it is more insecure and unpredictable. Most studies and research data on youth point to the prolongation of youth as a stage of life as a significant development. It is indicated by a number of features: compared, for instance, to their counterparts twenty years ago, young people today spend more time in education, they enter the labour market at a later point, form permanent relationships at a later age, they leave parental home and establish independent household at a later point, and their first child arrives at a later age. Time spent in education increases but they also have a "taste" of working while studying; they take on jobs for a long time, as opposed to finding an occupation. Educational expansion is followed not only by a delay in employment but by establishing families as well. Youth are tied to the parental home for those young people who spend more time in education (Ifjúság, 2000).

However, there is another important consequence of educational expansion, which is described by Beck as the individualisation and diversification of life courses. Two types of life courses can be separated with regard to youth's life courses: a "standardised life course", and a "life course of choice" which allows more complexity in, and the interchangeability of, life events.

A "life course of choice" is more typical among higher strata of society, while "standardised life course" among middle and lower strata. Prolongation of youth, therefore, is more marked

among upper social segments but is increasingly oozing down into other segment, thus becoming a general trend among youth (Gábor, 2002).

Research in the eighties and from the early nineties reveal that in the case of skilled workers, as well as in the case of workers who partake in routine white collar activities (especially those with secondary school degrees), leaving school, beginning work, starting a family, and having children are closely correlated. Young people – irrespective of their qualifications – usually get married after entering work and have their first child in the following two years.

It would be interesting to know what is behind the cited prolongation, how it is connected to insecurity experienced by youth, the new employees, in the labour market. The inclination to establish a family after more time in education may be further delayed by existential insecurity, by the doubt about not having found the place that suits one's qualifications and by the hope of finding it.

### **3.1.2 Time spent in education**

Following the change of the regime in the 1990's expansion of public education and higher education took place. It resulted in a sharp increase in the number of students, their number in higher education tripled, and now nearly half of the youth takes part in higher education.

### **3.1.3 Forming permanent relationships and child-bearing**

Ifjúság 2004, a survey research on Hungarian youth from the age group of 15-49, attempting to describe the generational changes that resulted from the social and economic transformations of a changing regime, points out that in the last 10 years having one's first child has been delayed by a couple of years. This is not because young people would be uncertain about wanting children but, the authors claim, because of the increased time spent in education and a change in commitment to permanent relationships by men and women in the second half of their twenties. Data of a survey seem so underline this: while in 1990, 20.3% of the whole population was unmarried, in 2001 and 2002 the figures were 27.1% and 28% respectively. The Ifjúság 2004 data on young people between 15 and 29 shows that this trend is on the increase. The prolongation of the youth stage promotes other roles, such as the single, or even the 'pre-single' stage.

The number of marriages has been decreasing in the past 30 years and the age at which people get married is increasing. While in the seventies 14-15% of women got married until the age of 18 and 40% got married until the age of 40, in the first half of the nineties the respective ratios are 4-5% and 18-20%. Although 'cohabitation' started spreading in the early seventies, it was still looked at as a deviant form of living together. It has become more widespread after the political transition but Ifjúság2000 called attention to the fact that even in 2000 the intention to have children was tied to marriage. This traditional inclination remains essentially unchanged as the data indicates that young people tend to marry around the same time as they have their first child.

Cohabitation is most widespread among people between 35 and 39; it is less common among the younger age groups, while we find 90-95% of the older age groups married. Study shows that in the case of cohabitation usually both parties work.

This is so despite the big difference in Hungarian law in the handling of marriage and cohabitation. The difference is particularly apparent in the case of “divorce” when it comes to the problem of children born from the relationship and common property: the rights of a wife are considered stronger than those of the woman in cohabitation. The growing number of cohabitation after the transition might be the result of the “happiness” over more acceptance of and tolerance toward this type of living together (though cohabitation was never directly sanctioned, only by unspoken norms that were revealed through the behaviour of functionaries of local governments, where social subsidies had to be applied for), which is no longer present in the younger generation who did not experience resistance toward cohabitation in the communist regime.

One fifth of the sample’s subjects already have children, thereby indicating a 3% decrease in comparison to 2000. Reasons for this decrease derive from the fact that, though the proportion of young people having three or more children remains essentially unchanged, fewer decide to have one or two children. Two thirds of children are raised by married parents; one quarter is brought up by parents married under common-law, and 11% are raised by single parents. Though we observed a low number of children in the study, these numbers could easily rise were the young people in our sample to decide they wanted children. Around 18% of respondents in the 15-29 age group decisively declare having no intention to have a/another child; 4% intend to decide according to circumstances; and over three fourths plan to have children. Among young parents, more than half plan on having another child, and less than a fifth of parents with two children claim to want another. Compared to the average, the proportion of those intending to have children depending on circumstances is higher in both groups. A total of 9% of those without children intend never to have any. The low level of intent to childbearing is further illustrated by some of the results in the chapter on the values of youth. In line with the data presented so far, young people with a university degree comprise the highest proportion (around 90%) of those wanting children. However, they are also the group with the lowest number of children. 82% of young people with secondary school degrees, seven tenths of skilled workers, and slightly more than three-quarters of those with no more than primary educational qualifications would like to have children. As far as young people with no more than a primary education and those with vocational certificates are concerned, the intention to have children is lower since they are the group with the highest proportion of young parents amongst them (17% of young people with no more than a primary education, and 37% of skilled workers already have children.)

There is no specific research concerning the background of these trends, though we might suppose, that the decline in the number of children is partly the result partly of the economic difficulties of the country, and partly of the dissolution of previous norms, where a longer relationship unquestionably lead to marriage with children. Adults above a certain age without a spouse were looked at with some sort of suspicion.

With regard to gender differences, gender roles balancing childcare, work and family remains a difficult task in a woman’s life. Maternity support has been undergoing significant changes but the transformed labour market also inflicts difficulties on those wanting to return to the labour market after a long maternity leave (which can last for as long as three years). If return to the labour market is successful, then intense work can make balancing the demands of child care and employment much more difficult and, in some cases, it is successful only if the parents are able to help out with child care.



### 3.1.4 Leaving the parental home, becoming independent

Becoming independent, leaving the parental home and moving into a flat on their own are determining factors in the life of the youth. A large share of students in Hungary still live in the parental house while studying, but in many cases, even after completing studies. The traditional norm is that time comes for moving away from home when one establishes his/her own family.

The average age at which youth usually moved away from home was 26.3 in the eighties, while it increased to 27.7 in the nineties. Since the 90's ownership of flats has been more dominant in Hungary, while flat renting is only a transitional option for the youth. Ifjúság2000 found that 1.5% of those in the sample lived in rented flats or dormitories. Improvement in the housing situation in the past years did not affect the youth's access to flats. In the mid-nineties only less than half of the age group 15-29 lived independently in flats in their own property and Ifjúság2000 claims that only 19% of the same group owned their own flat in 2000 (within this group only half of those aged 23-29 live with their parents still and 19% of them own their own flats, even though 95% of them are already employed). State support for acquiring flats has decreased and the marketisation of the housing sector after the regime change, which necessitates more substantial financial resources for the entry into the market, makes the acquisition of a flat more difficult for the youth, especially those trying to move from smaller settlements into bigger towns or to the capital.

Apart from geographical differences, the acquiring of flats also depends on the family background and the labour situation of the youth. Increasing inequalities in income-wealth have a huge impact on the ways the youth's access to flats and it causes huge differentiation. "The two extremes are the following: a part of the youth live in flats bought by their parents in the course of their studies, while for another part the preconditions to getting flats are a stable relationship (two stable incomes, a „start-up capital” of two sets of parents) and the decision to bear a child and taking out various loans. Numerous governmental programmes have been introduced in this domain, which aim to resolve accumulated conflicts (home loans, "Fészekrakó" – a state sponsored housing support programme), which include previous state supports for buying flats (like "szoc. pol", the support based on child bearing) and some entirely new elements. It is also certain that access to flats in the cities continues to differ from acquiring flats in the countryside. To sum up: access to flats is strongly connected to social (the parents') inequalities, and there are differences in using the household wealth transfers, the welfare redistribution, and the "financing options" provided by the market." (Spéder, Kapitány, Neumann, 2006)

Leaving the parental home mostly coincides with marriage or cohabitation with a partner, and is no longer simply correlated with finishing one's studies or entering work. Ifjúság2000 found that 37% of the respondents moved away from home because they got married or moved in with their partner (however, compared with data from the eighties, there is a decrease in the ratio of those who move away from home when getting married (58% to 46%)). Only 6% moved away from home when starting work and then usually because work was situated somewhere else.

36% of young people between 15 and 29 are independent, live alone or with a family of their own. They form a category, which is more or less financially responsible for their everyday life and that of their family's. From the material point of view, this group contrasts with young people who live with their parents and have not started a family of their own. Young

people defined as independent, whether living alone, or with a family of their own, are on average significantly older (they average at 25.6 years of age) than the so-called dependents (who average at 20.6 years of age). Partially resulting from their age difference, and partially from the pressure of being financially responsible for themselves and their families, 62% of the independent youth work (even while studying), whereas this holds true of only 34% of those living with their parents.

### 3.1.5 Time use

Based on the data of the Ifjúság2004, it can be observed that the majority (47%) of youth between the age of 15 and 29 have 1-3 hours of free time a day, 12% of them have no more than one hour of free time daily, 27% of them have 4-6 hours, and 8% have over six hours of free time per day. Those claiming to have no free time at all amounts to 5%. The older the person is within the same age group, the less free time he/she has. Data indicates that 'settlement type' is important in respect to spending one's free time as well.

It can be asserted that the differences of free time in an average weekday are primarily correlated with the dimensions of economic activity and age category. In comparison to weekdays, the way in which free time is spent on weekends shows significant variations. 23% of young people have only a few hours of free time on weekends, while 24% dispose of half a day. 25% of young people have a whole day of free time, 23% dispose of the entire weekend, and 3% of the youth have no free time. Similarly to weekdays, age fundamentally affects the extent of free time disposed of on weekends: the younger the age group, the more free time they have. The proportion of young people having a whole weekend free is of one third among 15 to 19 year olds; one fourth among 20 to 24 year olds, and only 17% among 25 to 29 year olds. Furthermore, the proportion of young people with a completely free weekend decreases according to 'settlement types': 30% among the capital's youth, 24% among those in county towns, 23% among those living in towns and 22% of those living in villages dispose of such a luxury. The high 'free time surplus' in Budapest can be ascribed to several factors, which will need to be examined in the later stages of the study. To sum up, concerning both weekdays and weekends, the amount of free time a youth disposes of depends on his/her social status.

The few leisure activities young people report doing out of impulse rather than conscious thought reflect actions and decisions, which for the most part, involve only the individual him/herself. In other words, the demand for companionship and communal spirit rarely appears. In fact, the desire for ambitious social activity has almost disappeared from the cultural activities of young people.

The trend of lessening free time is probably also a result of the economic situation of the country, in which people in many cases – worried of becoming unemployed – are not able to fight for their rights against their employees. Behind this phenomenon is also the history of trade unions: the trade unions of communism and the whole system itself totally demolished the belief in any sort of collectivism, resulting in the individuals fighting for their own rights without any sort of co-operation. After the fall of regime there was an ephemeral change with the forming of new trade unions but in a few years they demonstrated a lack of strength that could have really broken the disbelief in them and they practically disappeared over the years.

## 4. Intergenerational relations and the challenges linked to intergenerational relations at work

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### 4.1 Changes in the value of labour market experience during the transition

Literature on the labour market put down the sources of generational earning differences to differences in work experience. The seemingly age-specific earning differences are related more to experience and thus to time spent with working. Their changes, with a given supply, indicate the market value of work experience.

When taking a look at wage differences related to age in Hungary, we have to take into account that parallel to the changes in calendar time, age groups grow older and their place in earning hierarchy changes simply because of that too. This is, of course, intensified by the incredibly fast changes of a knowledge based society where knowledge tends to become outdated fast. Contrary to the world of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when an older, experienced worker was highly valued, now a flexible young person who easily adapts to new requirements and who tends to have more up-to-date knowledge is very often held much more valuable in the labour market.

In the case of those who completed vocational schools, age-related wage differences seem to be insignificant: workers who were born before 1960 reached a somewhat lower level of wages than what they could have expected based on the 1989 wage distribution. The decrease, however, did not surpass 4-5 percentage points even in the age groups most affected by the change. With regard to high school graduates, shifts were more significant: those who were born at the end of the 1940's and at the beginning of the 50's, made more than 10 percentage points less in 1998 than they would have earned if the conditions of the late socialist period had persisted. These changes, however, are insignificant compared to the generational revaluation among those who graduated from higher education institutions: real wages of university diploma holders born in the beginning of the 1950's dropped by more than 20 percentage points in the decade of transition. The largest, more than 20 percentage point, income growth was experienced by those were 20-25 at the beginning of the regime change, that is, who entered the labour market in the years of a major economic change.

The youngest generation started their careers with higher real wages than career starters in the last period of socialism but their income growth seems to be somewhat less than that of those born in 1965-1970. This is connected to the increase in the differences between the wages of career starters and the wages of those who are a couple of years older. The oldest generations (who were still of employment age in 1998) seem to have lost less than those who are 5-10 years younger than them. This may have been influenced by the fact that many people among the oldest generation ended work especially in the first years of the transition.

Can we say it then that the market value of knowledge accumulated under socialism decreased? Studies examining the processes after the change of the regime on a longer term seem to be underlining this assumption. These studies are based on reliable data and are focussed on the business sphere.

Hungarian „transition” can be separated into two differing phases. In the period after the change of the regime demand for unqualified employees showed an unprecedented and sudden decrease. Logically it is appropriate to speak of „the increase of the value of

education”, or the „improvement in the situation of qualified workers”, or the „increase in the value of knowledge” but on the other hand nothing happened to fill these statements with positive meaning: the demand for qualified workers did not increase, their relative wage did not increase but decreased and new workplaces that would have tested their qualifications numbered only a few at this time.

With the emergence of these new workplaces, roughly in the mid-nineties, income trends changed as well: the situation of older qualified employees worsened compared to younger ones and the income output of education and qualification increased only in younger age groups. In their article, Kertesi and Köllő (2001) describe that the income advantages of college/university graduates increased in every age group but the value of education increased a lot more in the younger generations. Income output of secondary education grew only in the case of younger employees; the position of those having completed vocational secondary schools did not improve in general but the wages of young skilled workers (having 1 - 10 years work experience) increased by 10% compared with the wages of their older colleagues. The increase in the value of young and qualified workforce continued until 1999 despite the fact from the mid-nineties an increasing number of young career-starters, graduated from secondary schools or colleges/universities, entered the labour market.

## **4.2 Mechanisms of revaluation**

Age specific income ratios may change for various reasons. These are of course related to changes of knowledge referred to above. In the following section we briefly describe four reconcilable mechanisms in play.

### **4.2.1 Changes in qualification as an indication?**

The number of high school graduates and those with higher education was significantly smaller 10-20 years ago than today. Those in high schools and in universities went through a screening process which was much stricter than today, therefore the mere fact of educational qualification provided more precise information on the individual abilities of the employee than nowadays. It may be assumed therefore that the indicative and rarity value of secondary and higher education decreased and the loss in the income output originating from this led to the decrease in the real wages of older, qualified employees.

This interpretation of the changes is contradicted by that the general increase in the supply of qualified workforce and the weakening of school pre-screening (entrance exams) did not lead to a general decrease of outcomes related to qualifications. Compared to those who completed only elementary studies, even those high school and higher education graduates increased their income advantages who studied in the 1950's. In addition, the value of the matriculation exam and the diplomas increased most among that age group of the youth, where the employers can least draw conclusions about outstanding individual abilities from educational qualifications.

### **4.2.2 Reasons on the supply side?**

Generational differences in incomes may change merely for reasons of supply if the age composition of the supply changes. If parallel to a decrease in real wages there is an increase in the relative number of employees in a given age group, or vice versa, then we cannot rule

out the possibility that change took place because of a shift in supply. Otherwise it would be hard to interpret the situation without significant changes in income. Right at the time (after 1992) when a severe devaluation of the middle-aged work-force took place, their employment level decreased as well, which seems to support an explanation based on demand.

With regard to men, we can speak of a drop in employment in the case of those who were born between 1950 and 1960. As far as women are concerned, the situation of those born at the end of the 1940's and at the beginning of the 1960's changed to the worse.

#### **4.2.3 Differences in productivity?**

In a study Kertesi and Köllő (2001) tried to answer the question whether there is a correlation between the productivity of companies and the age-based composition of their workforce; if there has been a kind of specialisation to employ younger employees for the operation of more productive and state of the art technologies.

What seems to support the hypothesis of the relative devaluation of knowledge gained under socialism is the observation that during transition the correlation between companies' complement of capital and the proportion of young and qualified workforce within the company intensified and there was also an increase in production surplus owing to a higher proportion of young-qualified employees.

#### **4.2.4 Statistical discrimination?**

A notable feature of the transition is that it was accompanied by a strong specialisation of companies, that is, it took place, not insignificantly, through the age-based selection process of workforce competing for new jobs (Köllő, 2002). It seems that those older people, who are either unemployed or are intending to change jobs, competing for jobs suffer serious income losses compared to their peers who have been continually employed. The fact that the wages of those who newly entered the labour market lags far behind the income of their colleagues with similar coordinate (age, sex, place of living, sector).

The assumption may arise that the older the age group, the bigger the production difference is between job-changers and those who did not change jobs, to the detriment of the former: older employees are less likely to be dismissed, therefore the job-seeker minority within their group must have significant qualitative features compared with the majority. If this is so, then the above data do not necessarily point to serious income losses in the case of older employees.

The fact that in case of job changing older people are inflicted on a further, specifically mobility-related, income loss as well, raises the suspicion of an age-based statistical discrimination. It seems that during the recruiting process, when companies cannot have direct experience of the applicant's productivity, companies assess older applicants worse than when they do have direct experience with them. No research is available on this, however, as a result of the insufficiency of statistical data.

A recurring theme of country case studies and economic policy programmes written during the years of the regime change was the well-trained and highly qualified work force of Eastern European countries, which would make the implementation of institutional reforms and market shift easier. Developments since then have questioned this optimistic prognosis: knowledge gained under socialism has been largely devalued and consequently entire

generations descended in social hierarchy. This is a serious burden not only for those involved, but for the entire society as well, and not only from an economic point of view: it will affect career-paths, the pension system and inter-generational relations in general, and it plays an important role in the disillusionment poisoning the re-gained democracy and public thinking heated by tensions as well.

## 5. Social cohesion, social capital

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### 5.1 Unemployment

We would like to refer back to a study carried out by Berde (2002) to give some details about unemployment among the middle-aged. In general, 83% of the respondents of the survey did not experience unemployment after the age 45, 15% of them became unemployed once, while 2% reported having been unemployed more than once. Women are more likely to become unemployed than men. The frequency of unemployment and educational qualifications are in reverse proportion: the more time one spent in the education system, the less the chance that he/she will be excluded from the labour market. The exception might be high school diploma, which seems to have less value in this regard.

Unemployment is one of the biggest risks in life for employed men and women alike. Unemployment implies the shrinking of livelihood (consumption) and material resources, and the questioning of identity at the same time. (There is a difference between the sexes in that while unemployment entirely questions the male/man's role, for women the role of a mother can compensate for the role of the employed.) Out of the unemployment risks in Hungary, Spéder-Kapitány-Neumann (2006) highlight geographical concentration, which can result in a) household / family concentration, b) a more difficult re-employment in a given micro-region. (There is of course dispersed unemployment, in the case of which the acquisition of a new work place is less problematic.) Family and geographical concentration renders it more difficult to cushion the negative consequences of unemployment and results in few resources for household transfers. The resolution of geographical unemployment is made difficult by the character of the housing sector, the low propensity of mobility on the part of those concerned, the very high budgetary demands of initiatives to boost employment (work place creation, provisions for commuting), and the low efficiency of life long learning opportunities provided for the middle-aged population.

“The mass experience of unemployment is the consequence of the economic decline and structural transformation that began after the change of the political regime and is largely responsible for the disappointment and disillusionment prevalent in the early 1990s. Expecting an improvement in the standard of life, society was instead faced with mass unemployment and high inflation for which political freedoms could hardly compensate. (Róbert 1999)

Welfare and poverty studies point out that when unemployment becomes lodged in the household/family there are serious consequences in terms of poverty (exclusion) and exiting unemployment. Employed persons living in the household can offset the individual chances of unemployment risks while the unemployed in the household can exacerbate these risks – it is also common knowledge that family ties and relatives play a significant role in securing a new job. The regional concentration of unemployment and the low mobility due to the

unilateral housing market situation (cf. section 2.2) project the regeneration of unemployment and its household concentration as well as the increase of exclusion. Needless to say, there is unemployment in Budapest and to West of the Danube but in these regions securing new employment is less problematic, therefore the period of time spent in unemployment is shorter.”

A study was carried out in one of Hungary’s most underdeveloped region. Results from this study show that the material and income situation of the permanently unemployed people and their families is very bad in general but is also rather differentiated. Most factors, determining the conditions of life, pointed to the severally disadvantaged positions of people who completed only elementary education (or not even that) and unskilled physical workers, and also reflected the lower than average positions of unemployed living in underdeveloped mainly agricultural regions and villages. A part of the permanently unemployed, although their declared and documented incomes low, maintain an acceptable, average, or even better, standard of live regardless of the length of unemployment.

In the framework of the survey, control-questionnaires were filled out by employees of labour offices who described employment capacity “rather bad” and “poor” in the case of 24% of the interviewed permanently unemployed people. Labour office employees held the proportion of those with low employment capacity was higher in the case of people with elementary education (37%) and below (68%), among people over 50 (50%), among miners and unskilled workers (43-50%).

Employment motivation is a fairly controversial issue. Its examination would be useful not only from the point of view of employment centres and entitlements for unemployment benefits, but also in a broader social context as well. Since work is usually underpaid, and in many cases undervalued, in the legal labour market in Hungary, therefore a large share of Hungarian employees, including the unemployed as well, strive to find compensation for it in the black or grey economy. It is important to study employment motivation among the permanently unemployed from the point of view of length of time and dynamics. Practical experiences and interviews reveal that the bulk of jobless or dismissed people have strong motivation and ambitions, especially in the first months of unemployment, to find stable jobs or start up enterprises. One part of them succeeds at it. Many, however, lose their motivation and self-confidence after continual rejection and failure at finding employment. Although their determination to find a job does not disappear entirely, it diminishes significantly, which then restrains a positive adaptation to the changed circumstances and impedes a purposeful preparation for making use of arising opportunities. After some time, however, unemployed people accept their fates and accommodate themselves to a lower level of life style of permanent unemployment. (Simkó, Lórátné, 2000)

Exploring unemployment would require substantial qualitative research, as the experience of getting laid off and being unemployed, as well as the difficulties of stepping out of the state of unemployment, are only distantly illuminated by statistical data. It would be interesting to learn more about its psychological angles and the effects in action, which prevent re-employment.

## **5.2 Retirement and aging**

After an initial decline in the early 1990s, the ratio of the employed grew significantly among older people (age group 55-59), which must at least be partly due to the raising of the official

retirement age. This is true to an even greater extent for women and even for women aged 55-59.

When assessing old age retirement we must keep in mind that people arrive at the old age pensioner existence from many different directions. In our terminology, an old age pensioner is someone who has reached the retirement age and is receiving some sort of life-long social support, regardless of its title. There is a great difference, for instance, in the situation of someone who entered retirement from a stable, active status and of someone who had spent the years prior to reaching the official age as a disability pensioner or being unemployed. For the first group, retirement means a decrease in activity and income while for the second group, retirement secures an increased level of income that is due for the rest of the recipient's life, while for the last group, retirement brings existential security.

Active people approaching retirement age seem to look very much forward to retiring, yet they do little to prepare for the new phase in their lives, a study shows (Dobossy, S. Molnár, Virág, 2003). The authors point out that only 25% of the respondents between age 55 and retirement said they had specific plans for the first 5 to 10 years of their retirement; 38% did not deal with the question, while as much as one fourth of them revealed their plans to be employed in their old age pensioner status. In reality, the number of pensioners with (legal) employment is negligible. Nine per cent of the respondents between 55 and retirement age actually said they would like to retire as soon as possible in order to make money while in retirement, which illustrates the anomalies of Hungarian the pension system.

As a result of the rapid inflation of pensions in Hungary, being a pensioner implies pauperisation and not the well-deserved resting following life-long working, as in Western Europe. As seen above, many people want to retire as soon as possible, but after the first ten years of retirement it is mostly existential struggle that dominates the retired years.

## 6. Ethnic groups

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Hungary is not a multi-ethnic country. Slovaks, Romanians, and Slovenians, who live close to the borders, are entirely integrated. Jewish population, compared to the surrounding countries, is significant. The Roma are the only considerable ethnic group though which faces serious challenges in the labour market, therefore in our paper we focus only on Roma employment.

### 6.1 Roma employment

This part of our paper is based on the paper of Kertesi Gábor: Roma foglalkoztatás az ezredfordulón – A rendszerváltás maradandó sokkja (based on a study carried out in 2003) (Budapest Working Papers).

Two surveys were made of the Roma population, one in 1993 and in 2003. The age group of the survey was 15-49. Previous studies revealed that there had been an erosion of employment of the Roma already before the change of the regime: between 1984 and 1989 their employment dropped by 10%. This has only worsened with the change of the regime: more than 35% of Roma were excluded from the labour market (45% of these were men and 30% were women). The situation did not change in the second half of the nineties and the 2003



survey finds the same ratio of employment among the Roma. The shock of the regime change affected the labour market position of all generations of the Roma. Early retirement is widespread among Roma (9% in the case of men, 8% in the case of women).

Roma employment is characterised by large fluctuation, short employment periods, i.e. low and unstable employment. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the employment structure: 40% of the employed group works in jobs where people are easy to replace (no qualifications needed, etc.) in construction, agricultural seasonal work, etc.. The high fluctuation is also strengthened by the structure of employment welfare programmes supported by the state and by public work. These are usually structured so that employment is only for a short time (1, 4-5 months), which seems to strengthen the pattern of short employment among Roma, whose ratio is high (17-20%) among those who carry out public work.

The situation of Roma is worse than the situation of the non-Roma population with the same educational background (or the lack thereof): their chances of access to employment are only half of the other group's; the jobs they typically are hired for are three times as unstable as those of their non-Roma counterparts. Unstable employment has become general, therefore social disintegration reached even those who do have jobs: the lack of systematic jobs brings forth the lack of systematic life-style, bread-and-butter worries, a lower level of state social benefits and company welfare and, in certain cases, the loss of entitlement to those.

## 7. Women at work

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In the past decades social opportunities of women have worsened in many respects, their relative disadvantages, compared to men, increased. A large share of these disadvantages has to do with the aggravation of labour market position of women. Twenty years ago the employment of women in Hungary was among the highest worldwide, whereas female employment today is similar to the lowest in Europe.

Work outside home seems to play a secondary role in the value system of women and mothers, which can be put down to a family-oriented attitude in Hungarian society, and to the difficulties in reconciling working and child-rearing. Work is held important for financial reasons and from the point of view of the family's livelihood, while individual ambitions and career considerations play a less important role.

In the sixties and seventies a traditional concept of male and female roles were dominant, which was modified by the eighties in that the proportion of women wanting to work (primarily part time), even without financial constraints, increased.

The changed labour market conditions after the regime change strengthened views approving of the traditional division of labour within the family. The general accepting of, and agreement on, these roles (the „man as a bread-winner” and the „woman who takes care of household duties”) strengthened in general, even in the case of the youngest generation. On the other hand, the concept that „women have to work for the livelihood of the family as well” became almost entirely exclusive. From this it follows that the major cut back in the employment of women tends to put a financial, rather than a psychological burden on the families and on the women concerned.

Particularly notable is deterioration in the employment of middle-aged women, which can be interpreted so that after childbirth and childrearing in the early years, women are unable to return to the labour market in a satisfactory way, so their earlier advantageous labour market positions significantly worsen.

The segregation of women on the labour market and the „feminisation” of certain low prestige jobs continued, which is largely responsible for the stagnation in the income and employment positions of the decreasing number of employed women.

The inclination of employed women has clearly decreased, which points to the fact that under the conditions on the labour market today, there are more counter-incentives to child-bearing than before the change of the regime. The number of women on maternity benefits showed sharp ruptures as a result of the changes in the social benefits for families. The attitude and activity of those in other status fluctuated.

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## Chapter 6: View from Italy

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### **Introduction**

Demographic change, with continuing low fertility rates and continuing increases in longevity, is giving a new centrality to the issue of youth contribution to economic growth. However, young people are becoming a rare and yet undervalued resource in Europe: although higher education and training, their unemployment rate is higher than the average, they are in a higher risk of poverty<sup>16</sup>, they often have to pass a long transition period, marked by precarious contracts and low wage, before achieving a stable employment condition. This situation requires a different comprehension of the attitudes and needs of young people in the area of work, in order to better understand which factors could promote integration in the labour market, social inclusion and could improve intergenerational solidarity.

This state-of-the-art report mainly concerns the Italian situation, obviously contextualised inside the framework of the European social situation and of the international scientific debate. In the first paragraph, we will present some interesting studies on young people culture, their relationship with family and social environment, their prospects for future. In the second we underline some country research contributions to the international debate about change in the relation to work. In the third paragraph, which is devoted to Industrial Relations issues, we will try to describe through European research and analysis, the specific way young workers relate to unions, together with union strategies to meet young workers needs.

## **1. Young people culture**

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### **1.1 Being young**

As Bauman said, “being young means pursuing gratification but also avoiding the consequences and, in particular, the responsibilities they imply” (Bauman, 2002). The peculiar relationship to work of the present day young people can be enlightened from this point of view. It only can be understood through a deeper knowledge of the changed cultural characteristics of last generations. Recent sociological, anthropological and psychological literature provided a clear picture of these new features.

First of all, some authors point to the spreading of conformism and self interest – which affected the public life in Italy during eighties and further – as one of the main reasons of the increasing difficulty of growing up for youngsters (Fofi, 1993): young people, instead of reacting, seem to have fully accepted those models of narcissism, hypocrisy and consumerism given by mass-media (although the spreading among them of volunteering groups may be an

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(16) Joint Report on Inclusion  
([http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_socila/soc-prot/soc-incl/joint\\_rep\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_socila/soc-prot/soc-incl/joint_rep_fr.htm))

evidence of their capability of solidarity). Others are less severe and especially underline the impossibility of a collective identity for this generation, due to the lack of precise boundaries around the teenager condition and, even more, due to the spreading of a social culture where everybody wants to be young (Canevacci, 1993). Whereas other authors point to a lack of distinctive characteristics for contemporary youth as the reason for their “invisibility” (Diamante, 1999). Difficulty of creating a positive collective identity and disillusion are producing a strategy of protecting oneself in the private (i.e. not leaving the family), a paradoxical complicity between children and parents, an increasing incapacity to plan his/her own future. Similar problems have been highlighted also from a gender point of view. In the modernity, young women look at their future in a very ambivalent way, because they feel obliged to choose between divergent time dimensions: time for the work, time for the care, time for the public. As a consequence, they often give up building a life plan and prefer to live in a “short future” (Leccardi, 1999).

In conclusion, the present young generation is often depicted as a generation “in negative”: without distinctive characteristics, without precise age boundaries, avoiding conflicts, invisible in the society, lacking of future, for-ever-young. No surprise if, in relation to work, they look less ideological and more instrumental, as it has been said.

Moreover, their diverse conception of time - in particular their different idea of “future” - seems to be a key-dimension in the analysis of the cultural and social factors affecting the relationship to (and the meaning of) work. The difficulty to picturing themselves in “any” future, for both male and female youngsters, is likely to be a significant reason for their instable working paths, just like the specific labour market constraints, i.e. the low employment demand or the job precariousness.

Here below, a selection of five significant Italian contributions on this topic.

**G. Fofi (1993), *Benché giovani. Crescere alla fine del secolo*, Roma, Ed. e/o** (Despite young. Growing up at the end of the century)

*This book consists of articles and essays written between 1990 and 1993 and addressing young-people issues. The author explores the difficulties of becoming adults for those who have the 80ies and their advocacy of the particularism behind them, and have to confront with the everyday show of narcissism and hypocrisy on both sides of the political spectrum. The picture is one of systematic unfaithfulness to justice and of spread of self interest and conformism, which never arose something more than empty moralism from those who call themselves the ‘new’ and the ‘fair’. And Fofi despairs that the media and the public speeches that take place outside the institutional spaces might represent a true alternative path for those of the young people who are eager to find resources and instruments to interpret the society.*

*Italians’ s love for their defects, their attempt to depict these defects as virtues are seen as national peculiarities, together with what Fofi calls the “catto-particularism”. The latter is a special mixture between two elements of the ‘national character’. The first is the capacity of forgiving almost every of one’s own faults, by cleaning the soul on the Sunday mass (to feel free to be sinful for the next six days). The second is the particularism, the defence of private interests as the common rule for the social and political behaviour, which the author describe as rooted in to XVII century Spanish domination and into the Jesuit’s moral.*

*And Italian young people are depicted as not that nice and sympathetic: they do not react to the conformism of the society and have no doubts on the given models, which often do not come from parents and teachers, but directly from mass media and their systematic “substitution of the essential with superfluous”.*

*Nevertheless, there is at least one redeeming feature in the apparently hopeless picture: the possibility of “solidarity with the neglected for everybody’s freedom”, some evidence of which can be observed in the action of associations and voluntary groups.*

**R. Cartocci, (2002), *Diventare grandi in tempi di cinismo*, Il Mulino, Bologna (Growing up in a cynicism time)**

*Young people are the object of Cartocci’s analysis of Italian recent attitudes and preferences towards their old defects. According to the author, Italian deficit of public spirit cannot be solved by the general practice of recognising the national defects – familism, lack of discipline, cynicism – providing to balance them with the correspondent virtues – extroversion, creativity, love for the beauty. The general question of the book is whether in Italy the idea of institutions that guarantee civil cohabitation only as far as they really regulate social relations has any chance of spreading in Italy. Recent debates and researches tend to underline the connection between people attitude toward parliament, government, parties, voting and the everyday behaviour and ethic that leads the interpersonal relationships. The author underlines the importance of the link between the high and the low level (macro and micro) in young people civic education: the ideology, the constitutional arrangement and the electoral system, for example, and the common respect for other people and public goods together with the trust in institutions. Cartocci’s suggestion is not to neglect the strict texture between symbols-values and rationality. Thinking in terms of an evolution from a more primitive values-symbols level to the more mature rational one is at risk of being defeated by the present challenges that are often rooted in fanaticism of values.*

**M. Canevacci e altri (1993), *Ragazzi senza tempo. Immagini, musica, conflitti delle culture giovanili*, Genova, Costa & Nolan (For-ever-young. Images, music and conflicts in young people cultures)**

*The extension or the persistency of the being young is the issue the different authors confront with, starting from different perspectives. The object young-people is difficult to define due to the absence of boundaries that delimitate the duration and distinguish the specificity of the teenager condition. This book tries to offer a picture of the con-presence of all the different facets, which emerge as a more univocal and steady image of the young people dissolves.*

*“Can young people still exist when everybody wants to be young?”. This is roughly the starting point of the investigation that the six authors conduct following the movements of the metropolitan young - people throughout the recent history and by means of different texts these people confront with and give life to. The sixties to seventies and seventies to eighties passages, as well as the very end of the millennium, are described and interpreted referring to their sounds and images, together with the direct experience of some of the protagonists. Music and movies are seen as privileged*

objects of analysis in order to understand the production (but also the perception) of specific models of being young, the last of which is the current model of the for-ever-young.

**Diamanti I., *La generazione invisibile. Inchiesta sui giovani del nostro tempo, Il Sole 24 Ore.* (The invisible generation. A survey on young people in these days)**

*The red rope linking the different essays this book consists of are the difficulty in grabbing specific and qualifying features of the young – people of the ‘90ties. The end of the youth myth coincides with a vacuum of distinctive characteristics: contemporary young – people are mostly described as a “without generation”: without values, without dreams and strong passions; without a vision of the future. But the thesis proposed in *La generazione invisibile* is that the proliferation of ‘negative’ definitions, that insist on what the absences and the lacks are, might be an effect of the position of the observers and of their incapacity of seeing a ‘way of being young’ which shows to be different from that they were used to.*

*The present historical climate is pointed up as one of the key for interpreting the invisibility. Young - people in the 50ies and 60ies were the generation of the antifascism and of the “constituent phase”, and during the ‘70ies the young –people were the breakers of the traditional way of living the relation between the old and the new and could experiment, at last at some levels, the consistency between the ideals and the reality. This excitement for the building phases, the book suggests, has little to share with the feelings resulting from the disillusion. In this sense the strategy of hiding and protecting oneself into the private, the small, the present (family, friends, associative voluntary groups, the day-by-day work project) as opposite to the search for public, collective and to the projection into the future engagements, might be something young-people of the 80<sup>ies</sup> learnt from their parents and teachers. And from the experience of a country in an enduring crisis. Some central element of the description of this invisible status are the alliance with the parents and the strategy of reversibility, together with a contradiction between the way young people conduct their life and the issues they protest for. This results in avoidance of definitive choices in work and life matters; the double attitude of dealing quite easily with the instable offer coming from the private sector (the search for the stage), on the one hand, and of protesting against the presence of the private in the University, on the other hand. (In this sense, young-people, the authors suggest, often seem to demonstrate against themselves more than against the system or the old generation).*

*Young people got used to the risk, provided the emergency net offered by the family. Ilvo Diamanti describes this tolerance to - or even search for - the risk as the only way to prove their own value to build an identity now that other practicable challenges are precluded. Alessandro Cavalli tends to underline the paradox and yet the actuality of the complicity between children who do not protest against their helping and sensitive parents, and parents who are competing with them on the labour market or in defending their retirement benefits, in order to be able to guarantee safe net to their children. The flexibility goes together with the invisibility and they both are a symptom of a polycentrism and globalisation which involves everybody, young and adults people but that the latest seem more ready to recognize. Finding individual, contingent and adaptive answers for collective problems seems to be the strategy, a conscious one. And at the same time it seems to reflect a generalised way of focusing on the*



*individual specific and contingent problem instead of looking for “solution for everybody”. The suggestion is that often young people are called invisible because that is how we prefer to see them in order not to see into ourselves.*

**C.Leccardi, (1996), *Futuro breve. Le giovani donne e il futuro*, Torino, Rosenberg&Sellier (*Short future. Young women and the future*)**

*Il “futuro breve” is an account of the results of a qualitative research - conducted between 1986 and 1990 - consisting in 100 in – depth interviews to women between the ages of 16-27 () related to the female one. The young women Leccardi’ research talks about are daughters of the modernity, where modernity expresses as composition between diverse and often divergent times: time for the others; time to devote to the public; time for the extra-domestic work; time for participating in associative life. “In other words, the future is experienced by many young women in a very ambivalent way. On the one hand, it is an area for the potential expression of personal autonomy, won through women’s new economic and cultural freedom; on the other, it is a battle ground, full of dilemmas that spring up continuously. As a result, it is the present much more than the future, especially the long term one, which appears in their eyes as the crucial existential area. And not only because the present is the time for study, for work, for relations, all positive expression of the self; but also and above all because it is in this time dimension where there are objective chances for an effective exercising of one’s autonomy. So young women find it difficult to have recourse to a ‘life plan’ in the traditional sense, which they replace with decisions of limited scope, temporary and reversible”.*

## **1.2 The transition to adulthood, leaving the family, finding a job**

The extension of the youngsters’ life inside the parental family has been an object of many studies in Italy, given the fact that Italian youth has an increasingly delayed access to adult life: in 2005, 60,2% of 18-34 Italian people is still living with parents, which rises to 74,8% in the case of flexible workers; the male share is higher share than girls’ (Censis, 2006).

This new kind of family has been called by the researchers a “long family” (Buzzi, Cavalli, De Lillo, 2002). More than one factors are involved in generating this new phenomenon: occupational restrictions, together with housing problems (especially in large cities) seem to be the main factors inducing young people to delay plans for autonomous living. Family compensate for the shortage of jobs and for the lack of public policies addressed to young people, like unemployment allowance. Some Authors underline this role played by families as an integration of welfare state provision and even as a means of controlling social and labour market conflict (Sgritta, 2004). Anyway, besides economic factors, also cultural and psychological factors seem to be significant and, in particular, a new relationship between parents and children. In addition of giving children psychological and emotional support as traditional families used to do, new families show the “reciprocal need of children and parents to protract the stay in the family”: if youngsters are often unwilling to leave the “home nest”, their parents often want to prolong the self-gratification they feel being capable to offer their children more than they have had in their young years (Cigoli, Scabini, 2004).

**C. Facchini (a cura di), (2005), *Diventare adulti. Vincoli economici e strategie familiari*, Milano, Guerini (Growing adult. Economic constraints and family strategies)**

*This work deals with some of the present characteristics of the Italian demographic model: the extended permanence of the young people in the original family, the decrease of the marriage, the general delay in the marriage age. The authors underline the implications of these phenomena on the birth rate. If Italian women have less children this happens, according to the authors, partly because of the “biological boundaries” (in the meanwhile they end their long study paths and start building their careers, women become too old to have children) and partly as an effect of the psychological attitude of been adverse to the risk connected with decisions that are time consuming and that imply a high level of responsibility. The first part of the book focuses on the peculiarity of young people entrance in the adult life, both in Europe and in Italy. Although the extension of the student condition and the delay of the entrance in the labour market are European features, still young people in the North of Europe tend to reach autonomy sooner than in Italy. The southern European or Mediterranean model is still characterised by late economic independence and late exit from the original family.*

*The second part of the book analyses the “family strategies” in big cities such as Milano, Roma, Cagliari, Napoli. The specific object is the parents’ strategy, according with the idea that ‘children’ behave consistently with what that parents allow them to do (and that what happens in big cities will later affect also the smaller areas). All the analysis tend to confirm the presence of a strong relational and family model in Italy, and if the entity and the typology of the family aid can vary consistently with the social and cultural features of the parents, the strong affective involvement linking parents and children remains constant.*

*Families are very active in helping their children to find a job, too. More than two-thirds of employed young people found their job through personal and family network, instead of institutional channels. In more recent years, the problem seems to be not finding a job but keeping it: the turnover rate of young people 15-34 is eight time more than adult people. Besides, income is reckoned not to be satisfactory, and wage differential to be increasing. In general, young people feel society asks them to be more and more flexible, to change jobs and workplace, to redefine their competencies and belongings, ask them “to live in a situation where risk is an everyday dimension and where it is not clear which life paths are likely to be more guaranteed” (IARD 1996).*

**IARD, Periodical report on youth (every 4 years from 1984), the most famous survey on young people in Italy, created and directed by the sociologist Alessandro Cavalli. Latest issue: C. Buzzi, A. Cavalli, A. De Lillo (eds) (2002), *Giovani del nuovo secolo. Quinto rapporto IARD sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna (New century young people)**

*One of the most important source of information about young people in Italy are periodical reports by IARD on “Young people’s living conditions and life perspectives” (the latest is based on a representative sample of 3,000 of Italians aged 15 to 34). Main topics of the Reports are school and education, the value system, work, politics, religion, geographical identification, gender roles and love, culture,*

*leisure, seen through a longitudinal perspective. Two are the most relevant topics we can find in these reports concerning the themes of our project.*

*The first concerns the life course and the transition to adulthood. During last twenty years the IARD Reports have been monitoring the worrying phenomenon of the extension of Italian youngsters' stay in the family: especially young male increasingly tend to postpone leaving their parents' home, forming a stable partnership and taking the responsibility of having a child. The second issue concerns youngster access to work. Confronting different periods, the situation does not seem to be really changed. At present, the most important problem consists in finding a stable job: Italian families still are in the front line in helping children to find a job, moreover they assist them during the jobless periods.*

## **2. Relation to work**

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### **2.1 New labour market, precariousness and the new welfare state**

Work precariousness is reported as the most relevant problem for these days young people, so that some Author defined the young generation a “generation precaire” (Mabrouki, 2004). Labour market is increasingly de-regulated: in many countries – as Italy - atypical jobs are the most frequent or even the one way to access to employment. Free-lance jobs are wide spreading as well, particularly among young professionals, and it is not clear whether they are a free choice or a makeshift solution.

The issue of precariousness and its relationship with autonomy and freedom has been discussed from many points of view. As for young people, the main question is: how many of them are living their instable situation in the labour market as a new opportunity “to plan and have a their own life” (Sen, 1994) and how many just feel disadvantaged because they do not benefit from the same rights and security than older workers?

The answer is not easy, work seems to be today impossible to define. Yet, what remains very clear is the persistent centrality of work in people destiny. Even “after the end of work”, work is “capable of giving freedom and to take it away at the same time, is absorbing, frustrating empty and meaningless” (Caillé, Leclerc, Gorz, Laville, Méda, 2003). It is still inevitable, needed both socially and economically, but often still humiliating and unbearable: work is today at the heart of every contradiction.

Traditionally work, and particularly professional work, used to be a main a source of personal and professional confidence. But, at present, in an environment of flexibility and uncertainty, it often becomes a cause of anxiety.

Many Italian authors have investigated this phenomenon and its specific features in the Italian economic and social context. They see at the issue of job instability from different points of views. A first one, is the different influence of social factors in getting job instability “a bridge or a trap”. A recent survey on freelancers and temporary workers shows that for workers who occupy strong positions (i.e, high qualified people) moving free on the labour market can be a great opportunity, while young people with low qualification, few contacts, low entrepreneurship are likely to be trapped in an enduring risky situation (Fullin, 2004).

Also in another research on atypical workers, family context, social frailty and entrepreneurship resulted among the factors which can enable young people to transform job instability into career opportunities or, on the contrary, into a life of precariousness. Crossing variables like life projects, professional expectations, personal strategies to give continuity to scattered job experiences, support given by families and friends, and position in the job market, the research shows how costs and benefits of this flexibility affect differently atypical workers, according to their social frailty (Catania, Vaccaio, Zucca 2004).

Another point of view is about the new role of Welfare State. If the labour market instability is seen as a long lasting phenomenon, the social protection has to originate from the state regulation. Actually, the state intervention has been thought for occupations and careers today totally out of time, while, in addition, the capability of families to support professional careers of their members cannot be widened anymore (Bertolini, Rizza eds, 2005).

One of the most significant contribution on this topic comes from the labour sociologist Massimo Paci (2005), who starts his analysis on going in-depth to the overall phenomenon of “individualisation, self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-realisation” (Habermas, 1987), especially concerning younger generations in Western countries. According to this author, “the desire of freedom of to-day young women and men” should not be undervalued: it just requires new forms of welfare state and social organisation.

**Massimo Paci (2005) Nuovi lavori, nuovo welfare. Sicurezza e libertà nella società attiva, Franco Angeli, Milano** (*New jobs, renewed welfare. Security and freedom in an active society*)

*Paci's approach to the problem of new labour market is quite interesting. Although he does not undervalue the risks of to-day labour market instability, he prefer to go more in-depth to the present phenomena of individualisation, the rising of the autonomous work and the increasing desire of young generation “to keep their life in their own hands”. He points out how to the old working system – in the hierarchy of a big company, in the centralised and corporatist welfare state - belonged many the elements against freedom that nowadays cannot be accepted by younger generations any longer. The need for freedom and independence characterising many life projects of today's young men and women should not be left aside to the neo-liberistic politics: they simply require new forms of welfare and social organisation. Those could vary from recognising the importance of out of the market activities such as care and formation to a different retirement system, the harmonisation of work and life times, the extension of active life, new balance between security and freedom.*

Other approaches are more radical, claiming for a thorough change of social regulation: work is not going to be a reasonable mean of wealth distribution and social protection any longer, societies need new forms of social security, especially based on “citizenship minimum income”, independent from any working performance.

**Tiddi A. (2002), Precari. Percorsi di vita tra lavoro e non lavoro, Derive e approdi** (*Precarious workers. Life patterns between work and unemployment*)

*This book is the result of an enquiry lead among precarious workers in many Italian cities but Author's aim is to describe the situation existing in most European cities, where young (and not so young) precarious workers are starting to make their voice*

*heard and to ask for more dignity and protection for their present and future life. He seeks to sketch a picture of the precariousness starting from its distance, in time and ways, from the ford-tayloristic model and underlining the position of unstable workers as subjects in constant tension between working and non-working, between time of production and time of life. Tiddi underlines the insufficiency of the traditional redistributive approach focused on the reduction of the working time, what he calls the labour rooted interpretative schemes, and the need for the design of solutions that, consistently with the praxis (the society is already beyond the work), manage to go beyond the work and the formal working time. Two possible scenarios are the unemployment indemnity and the guarantee social income. Both, in the author's words, should be described considering four levels: the existential, the political, the socio-economic and the project level. But the subsidising solution – developed in the neo-liberal area - ended in the social exclusion of subsidised – the poor, the dependent from the state charity, considered as the negative of the employed who have rights since they have work. The true alternative on Tiddi's account is the proposal that was developed in more 'radical and antagonist' – Offe, Gorz, Van Parrijs, and Lipietz, Caille', Latouche - contexts: a social income gained by every citizen and independent from the worker/jobless status.*

## **2.2 The meaning of work**

Which kind of meaning do the younger generations give to their professional experience? The idea of a position to hold and where to make roots is faded away, leaving space for the idea of a path, to be often randomly crossed. The significance given to this path is not unique, and this plurality of meanings is the reflection of the many different prospective and expectations young people have on their jobs: desire of a professional growth, yearn for independence, and need of security (Gosetti, 2005).

Being so significant and so difficult to be interpreted the change affecting the labour market in last decade, many surveys have been realised in order to understand to what extent subjective factors – i.e., young people personal attitudes, values and behaviours – rather than structural ones – i.e. labour-cost control strategy - should be considered the major causes of this revolution.

Yet, surveys investigating the new meaning of work of young generation often led to contradictory results. Sometime, work seems to become more instrumental – just a mean to get a salary - while in some case it seems to assume even a more symbolic meaning. In some case, flexibility appears to be tolerable and even an opportunity, while in many case it is seen as a source of anxiety.

The two most important Italian surveys on workers' attitudes and expectations are describe below. The first one specifically refers to a sample of young people 18-36 of age. The second includes workers of all age (though is expressly focussed on change in opinions by younger generations). Both of them produced very ambivalent outputs.

**IREF (2001) Aspirazioni dei giovani italiani nei confronti del lavoro** (EIRO [www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2001/12/feature/it0112151f.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2001/12/feature/it0112151f.html)) *Aspirations of young Italian towards work.*

*A survey conducted in 2001 by the IREF (Institute of Educational and Training Research), linked to the Catholic Association of Italian Workers (Acli) has analysed the expectations of young people in relation to work, in order to examine the impact of flexible forms of work on this group. The survey was conducted among a sample of 1,000 people living in Italy and aged between 18 and 36.*

*First, young people's conception of work was analysed and their answers classified in three main categories: work as a 'professional environment' where individuals can shape and define their working identity; work as an 'instrumental tool' which guarantees economic well-being thanks to the security of having a job; and work as a place and means of socialisation. The most common view of work, taken by 46% of those interviewed, was the instrumental view, seeing work as a means of providing security. Only a small minority of young people surveyed (5%) considered work as a professional environment where they can develop their identity.*

*The company widespread practice to recruit young workers through atypical contracts (though they are in most cases transformed into open-ended contracts, after a while) was supposed to influence considerably the expectations of young people with regard to work and their opinion on flexibility. Nevertheless, the majority of interviewed young people did not seem to fear the flexibility so much, although they would put some conditions. The findings of the survey indicate that young people accept the new forms of flexible work: 68.6% of them said that they were in favour of flexible, independent or semi-dependent work; while only 31.4% would like to have a traditional open-ended employment relationship. Yet, most part of them would like to find an independent and flexible job, which could offer the same guarantees and protection as a normal open-ended employment contract. Those interviewed who had experience of a flexible employment relationship (26% of the total) were asked to assess their experience. Among those who assessed their experience of flexible work negatively, the most common reasons were: the impossibility of making long-term plans (49.7%); the lack of social protection (29.3%); and the difficulty in building up an appropriate professional identity (18.6%). Among those who assess being a 'flexible worker' positively: 36.2% find important the possibility of organising their own time and the incitement to improve their knowledge provided by their precarious employment situation; 14% underlined the possibility of fully expressing their professionalism; and 13.5% stressed the possibility of working with more than one employer.*

*In addition, traditional differences in attitudes towards work between young people living in the North and the South of Italy are confirmed by the survey: breaking down the data by geographical area indicates that young people living in the North of Italy tend more to see work as a form of 'professional identity', while those living in the South are more likely to believe that work has the primary function of supporting the individual financially.*

**M. Carrieri, C. Damiano, B. Ugolini (2005), Il lavoro che cambia. La più vasta ricerca sui lavoratori italiani, Ediesse, Roma** (*The changing work. The most extensive survey on Italian workers*)

*This volume collects the results of a vast survey on work's changes, based on more than 23 thousand on-line questionnaires, that was promoted by the Left Democrats. It was aimed at collecting workers' demand and needs in order to better represent them by social and political institutions.*

*The research has narrowed down behaviours, opinions and expectations of a large sample of Italian workers (not only young). As a result this significant collection of data leads to some further reflections. The first one is that workers are on average satisfied with their job: work seems to be better in quality and contents than it used to be in the past. Quality of work is underlined as the most positive change in work by atypical workers as well. Surprisingly, temporary workers result the most satisfied and the reason may be that most of them are young. Yet, workers also feel much more insecure than in the past: there are many worries and concerns about the future regarding social stability, job security and the place of work in society.*

*Among positive changes in work, an improvement on education and training are mentioned. Among negative changes, new concerns about future but, above all, an enduring and difficult to solve salary issue. As for salary, the survey shows the very hard condition of Italian young workers: some 78% of young people 17-24 of age and 30% of 25-34 of age earn less than 1000 euros/per month!*

### 3. Trade unions and the youth issue

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#### 3.1 Young people resist unionisation

The major European database on union membership and union-related issues – located by the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research – provides an evidence of the continuing decline in union density in most European countries, while showing that the decline in membership of people under the age of 25 or 30 is “without exception”. Researchers consider this phenomenon “whatever the causes are, very troublesome for unions” (Ebbinghaus, Visser, 2000).

Evidence from recent research in Denmark show that much of the continuous drop in union active membership in last decade can be explained by change in the composition of the population and employment and in particular, by a huge fall of union members under 30 of age, due to demographic and social reasons but to cultural ones as well.

#### EIRO – European Industrial Observatory (2005), Young people not joining unions

*According to a paper drawn up by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) in summer 2005, the decline in trade union membership in Denmark continues, with overall union density falling from 83.1% in 1996 to 78.5% in 2005. Much of the drop in LO membership is explained by changes in the composition of the population and employment. The article focuses, in particular, on developments among union members*

*under 30 years of age. In 1993, when the number of young members was recorded for the first time, there were about 471,000 union members in this group. In 2005, this figure has fallen to 284,000, a drop of 40% over 12 years. Part of the explanation for this significant fall can be found in some general development trends, such as the smaller cohorts of young people in recent years and the higher general level of education - both of these factors mean that there are fewer young people on the labour market. However, according to LO calculations there is still a 'deficit' of 79,000 young persons who in a 'perfect world' have been members of a trade union today.*

The same evidence can be highlighted from a qualitative point of view. An Italian survey on “Young people, employment and the trade unions” underlines that the age is the major variable to explain the way workers see their employment condition, consider their future and approach trade unions. As for the latest issue, the research shows that relevant change is occurring in the relationship between last generation’s workers and the unions. First of all, the propensity to join unions is very low especially among 17-24 of age. Besides, union rate decreases while schooling increases and it is especially low among graduated people, most of them being young. Young people are very critical about unions, both regarding to organisational factors and social and bargaining policies. The most negative organisational aspects that are mentioned are: “a too bureaucratic organisation” and “a scarce presence of young unionists in responsibility positions”. As regard to policies they accuse unions to have only “rare contacts with the atypical workers’ reality”. When asked about the reasons of not joining the unions, a 20% of young workers (the whole not being in a stable job) declares to fear “reprisals from employers”, while the great majority of them think that “unions are protecting more old workers than young” (IRES CGIL 2006).

**tab. 1 Factors limiting the union capability to represent young workers**

too bureaucratic organisation	24,0
scarce presence of young unionists	23,3
rare contacts with atypical workers	17,3
strategies aimed at protecting only employed people	16,7
prevailing attention to pensioners	13,6
No, union is representing well young people too	5,0
	100,0

*Source: IRES CGIL 2006*

The young workers’ increasingly widespread perception not to be enough considered by traditional unions has generated an interesting experiment in the Netherlands, where a new independent trade union has been created in 2005 by a group of young workers who decided to self-organize. The issues that founders would like to discuss include age-related questions that cause divisions between younger and older employees. In particular, they are calling for the pension system to be changed. A basic point of this new union is that its strategy is to organise together subordinated workers with free-lancers, especially trying to give an answer to issues preoccupying young people in general and young professional in particular.



### **EIRO – European Industrial Observatory (2005), New union created from young employees**

*An independent trade union aimed at young workers and freelancers was set up in the Netherlands in October 2005. The new Alternative Trade Union (AVV) is critical of employers and the existing trade unions, claiming they take into account only the needs of older workers while they are losing sight of the interests of younger employees in both the public and private sectors, as well as the interests of freelancers. One clear stimulus for establishing the union is the issue of the current retirement and pensions reform on the basis of an autumn 2004 Tripartite Agreement, which is considered to be disadvantageous for young people in all respects. AVV also criticises what it sees as the undemocratic internal organisation of traditional unions. It hopes to gain a seat in collective bargaining and on consultative bodies.*

### **3.2 The trade unions debate on young people issues**

Unions are trying to understand the reasons of the lowering of membership among young workers and to contrast this situation.

In 1999, faced with declining membership and bargaining leverage, trade unions in United Kingdom, began to map out strategies to re-build union organisation. An important conference was organised by the Unions 21 Network on union renewal. Most significant issues to debate were: a new employment law framework, the launch of a partnership with employers and a new strategy “to counteract the seemingly terminal decline in union membership”, a relevant part of which was considered organising young people...

### **EIRO – European Industrial Observatory (1999), Strategies for union renewal in United Kingdom: organising young people**

*The conference on “Changing, work, changing unions” organised by the Unions 21 Network in February 1999, brought together some 450 unionists, policymakers, academics and others. Participants recognised that the way ahead for rebuilding unions and their role in British workplaces will be an arduous one and that organising and recruiting will be the “essentials” of the so-called “New Unionism”.*

*The renewal strategy implies a particular concern at how to organise among young people, where union membership is especially low. With the future depending on capturing the “lost generation” of youth into the trade union movement, it was reported that the TUC’s Academy had just recruited 36 trainees with an average age of 30, the majority of whom were women. Recognising higher turnover rates among young workers, it was also revealed that the TUC was considering initiatives similar to those undertaken by unions in Norway, where students become members of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge, LO) itself rather than one of the affiliated unions, and in the Netherlands, where one union federation has set up an advice and support service specifically marketed to young people as “the future card”.*

In early 2004, in Spain, Comisiones Obreras launched a campaign to recruit young workers, by dealing with what it identifies as the main work related problem affecting them – unstable and precarious employment and working conditions. The campaign started with the drawing

up of a report on youth condition, since the CC.OO. believes that a better knowledge of these problems can allow unions to adjust their strategies in order to meet young people needs. What Comisiones Obreras worry the most is that the phenomenon of precarious employment may continue through the careers of many young people and thus it may become an employment model applying to people of all ages.

### **EIRO – European Industrial Observatory (2004), CC.OO focuses on young people**

*The campaign “Trabajar por lo justo” (“Work for what is right”) started from drawing up a report which highlighted the main issues involved in youth working and life conditions, as unstable employment, uncertainty about their personal future, irregular income, frustration with education because it is not adapted to employment, dependence on parents for housing and funding, leading to a “prolongation of adolescence”.*

*According to the report: 'the culture of temporary employment introduced in Spain in 1994 with the slackening of the requirements of justification for concluding a temporary contract, has kept temporary employment above 30%, with peaks as high as 34%. At present 32% of Spanish wage earners are on temporary contracts (compared with the EU average of 13.8%). The rate is particularly high among the young, reaching 73.1% in Spain (compared with 36.6% in the European Union).' According to figures from the Economic and Social Council (Consejo Económico y Social), the temporary employment rate is 29% in the 30-34 age group, rising to 44% in the 25-29 age group and 63% in the 20-24 age group. Besides, the CC.OO' report states that workers on temporary contracts earn on average 48% less than those on open-ended contracts.*

*CC.OO claims that a deterioration in employment rights is also leading to a deterioration in working conditions, because long working days, heavy workloads and situations of danger are being imposed and accepted due to the constant threat of unemployment. Though temporary employment is in itself a sign of 'fragility', a situation of instability arises from more basic social factors, in CC.OO's view.*

Another innovation of union organisational structures, consistent with the aim of improving the protection of young workers can be considered the creation in Italy of three associations affiliated to union confederations CGIL- CISL-UIL, which are particularly devoted to organise atypical workers – quasi-subordinated workers and free-lance workers - most of them being young workers. These special structures are: Nidil (Nuove Identità nel Lavoro) for Cgil; Alai (Associazione Lavoratori Atipici ed Interinali) for Cisl; Cpo (Comitati Per l'Occupazione) for Uil.

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### **2.1 Young workers (in general)**

Apparently, at present “young-people work” is not a central issue for Industrial Relations. No mention has been found in recent issues of the major European and international journals of industrial relations: *Transfer* (ETUI), *European Journal of Industrial Relations* (Sage), *Industrial Relations Journal* (Blackwell), *International Labour Review* (ILO). Probably most of the debate can be found under other themes, i.e. atypical workers, job instability, etc

Just one article could be interesting for our research:

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## Chapter 7: View from Portugal

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### **Introduction**

The Portuguese state-of-art' report aims to analyse and synthesize the most relevant theoretical and empirical research in the field of the project, done in a national or cross-national context. The report covers three major topics of research: relation to work, generational and intergenerational issues, and social and organisational environment. Although we present some theoretical framework on each topic, our main goal was to discuss the Portuguese situation. Therefore, we will present mainly recent empirical research conducted in Portugal or with Portuguese samples on these particular topics, as well as some official data on the demographic and employment contexts.

### **1. Relation to work**

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During the last decade, Portugal has shown good performance on the main labour market indicators (like employment and unemployment rates, and professional training), presenting one of the highest employment rates within the European Union. However, this positive performance on objective indicators has no correspondence on individual subjective well-being or on policies concerning quality of work life. The Portuguese labour market is characterized by low educational levels, lack of social dialogue and low productivity, all of which are factors which shape the nature of the relations to work (Miranda & Caetano, 2004).

However, and despite the lack of national strategies to improve the quality of work life in general, the European Values Survey of 1999 shows that Portugal presents one of the highest values on job satisfaction (M=7.63, in a rating scale from 1 to 10). These inconsistent results raise an important question: How do the Portuguese relate to work?

According to Vala (2000) one way of understanding the subjective relationship between individuals and their work is to study the associations between work and social values. This means to analyse, on the one hand, whether or not work is perceived by individuals as a central value (work centrality) and, on the other hand, what kind of other specific values individuals associate with work. In the next sections we explore this proposal.

#### **1.1 Work centrality**

In modern societies people spend a great amount of time both working and preparing for work through education and training. Consequently, work plays a central role in people's lives and in the fulfilment of several important needs. There are two main perspectives, one economic

(or instrumental), and the other social (or intrinsic), that offer reasons for explaining the centrality of work (Harpaz, 2002). The first perspective departs from an instrumental or economic orientation, asserting that people work in order to secure their basic sustenance and satisfy their material needs. The second explanation of the importance of work is socio-psychological or intrinsic in nature. It maintains that not only does work contribute to one's sense of personal identity, but it also lends stability and continuity to that self awareness (e.g., Harpaz, 2002; Vala, 2000).

For the purpose of this report we are primarily interested in exploring the intrinsic perspective (i.e, the non-financial aspects of work). Therefore, we use the term “work centrality” to refer to the individual perceptions and evaluations concerning the importance that work plays in their lives (Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994).

Based on a representative sample of the Portuguese population from the *International Social Survey Programme* of 1997, Ramos (2000) shows that work plays a central role in the life of the Portuguese, since more than 64% of the respondents with professional activity said that they would like to keep a job even if they did not need the money. In the same study, the author concludes that work is more central among individuals between 18 and 34 years (as compared to those over 55 years), with high education and with medium pay level. However, the results of a multiple regression analysis indicate that age is the only significant predictor (with a negative relationship) of work centrality.

This pattern of results is similar among the five European Union countries that were included in the study (from the *International Social Survey*, 1997), since a significant percentage of the work population in these countries considers work a central activity of their lives (range: from 53% for Spain, to 77% for Sweden). In what concerns the main predictors of work centrality, Ramos (2000) found some interesting results. For the German and the Sweden work population, work centrality is higher among women with high educational background and with flexible working hours. For the Hungarian sample, in turn, only educational background and age are associated with work centrality. However, the relationship between age and work centrality are the opposite of the one found for the Portuguese sample, since work is more central for older workers.

In the same study, Ramos (2000) also assesses the relative importance of work when compared with other daily activities. The author asked participants to indicate the amount of time they would like to spend with each of the following categories: work, family, friends and leisure. Results show that the Portuguese would like to spend significantly more time with family (76.2%), friends (61.2%) and leisure activities (67.1%), while they would prefer to spend less time with work (33.1%). This pattern of results was similar among the other four European countries: Germany, Sweden, Spain and Hungary. However, there are some differences across countries. The Swedish and the German would like to spend significantly less time with work than the Spanish and the Hungarians, and significantly more time with family and friends.

Finally, based on Inglehart's (1997) typology, which distinguishes between pos-materialist values (e.g., intellectual activity, well-being, participation in decision making) and materialist values (e.g. economic development, basic needs achievement, social cohesion), the results of Ramos' (2000) study suggest that individuals from countries with higher socio-economic development (like German and Sweden) have low work centrality than individuals from countries with lower socio-economic development (like Portugal, Spain and Hungary).



## 1.2 Work values

Research on work motivation and work values has developed the hypothesis that pay work has not only an instrumental function (extrinsic value) but that it is also a way to achieve personal and social needs (intrinsic value). This hypothesis has been supported by several empirical studies (e.g., Herzberg, 1966; Jesuino, 1993).

Vala (2000) analysed the relevance of several extrinsic values (e.g., security, promotion opportunities, good salaries) and intrinsic values (e.g. helping others, autonomy) for a representative sample of Portuguese workers. Results suggest that the Portuguese give significantly more importance to extrinsic values, job security being the most important one (95% of the sample considered it important or very important). In the same study, the author suggests that expectations concerning extrinsic values are not being fulfilled. In fact, only 16% are satisfied with their income and 26% are satisfied with their promotion opportunities.

According to another general survey, the *Work Importance Study* (Super, Sverko, Super, 1995), which analysed life roles, values and careers in eleven countries around the world (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Poland, Portugal, South Africa and United States) there are pronounced differences between students and adults in what concerns life role salience. The secondary school students consider Leisure their most important activity. Next in the role importance hierarchy are three kinds of activities with similar average importance scores: Work, Home and family, and Study. Community service ranks last, with little importance. The higher education students attach slightly less importance to leisure and rather more to study, work, and home and family. But their general role salience pattern is essentially similar to that of the secondary students.

Adults, however, show quite a different pattern of role salience. The most important activity in their life is Work, closely followed by the Home and family: the worker and homemaker roles have clear priority. Much less importance is attached to leisure, with study next. Community service is again the lowest-ranked activity. Another finding from this study is the fact that the differences between younger and older workers are similar to those found between students and adults. Younger workers attach relatively greater importance to Leisure, whereas older workers consider Work and homemaking as their most important life activities. This last finding holds also for unemployed adults. Taken together these results suggest the existence of differences between younger and older workers about the importance of work in their life activities.

Based on a European sample of young job applicants to a transnational career, Passos and Taillieu (1995) found that the most important career values (Derr, 1986; Schein, 1984) were: opportunity to manage others, a challenging environment and balanced work-family needs.

During the last two decades, there has been an increasing amount of research concerning the relationship between individuals work lives and their non-work activities. On a literature review on conflict between work and family roles, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest that work-family conflicts exist when these roles compete for a person's time, when the participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfil requirements of another and when specific behaviours required by one role make it difficult to fulfil the requirements of another. Empirical studies on this topic have shown that work-family conflicts have important consequences for individuals, since they reduce individual well-being and quality of work life and enhance stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Addressing this same dimension, Tavares, Caetano and Silva (2006) analysed the impact of organisational identification upon the perception of work-family conflicts. Based on a sample of 128 members of a Portuguese I&D institution, their results show that the higher people identify with the organisation, the more they perceive their job as interfering with an adequate performance of their roles in the family context. Despite the positive effects of organisational identification on the overall organisational performance, there are personal costs involved in this identification, costs that the organisations should be aware of. The negative impact of organisational identification on individual well-being is maybe due to the extra time and energy that individuals dedicate to work (Tavares, Caetano & Silva, 2006). This is particular important if we considered that work constitutes a central activity for the Portuguese.

## 2. Generational and intergenerational issues

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During the last decades, Portugal has suffered an important demographic transition. On the one hand, and accompanying the European tendency, Portugal has moved from high birth and high mortality rates, to low ones. On the other hand, the effective Portuguese population has been slightly growing, essentially due to the migratory flows coming mainly from east European countries and some African ones (European Employment Observatory Review, 2004). This demographic context sets new challenges for organisations and for society in general. For organisations, this means learning how to manage a more diverse work-force, with old and younger people, men and women, native and migrants working in same work environment. For society, this means that the active Portuguese population will be much more dependent on the increase of the participation of individuals over 55 years. In sum, then, and in order to make up for declining birth rates, older workers will play an important role in the labour market. This implies that age diversity will be a relevant issue for the work context.

### 2.1 Age diversity

In the past years research on the effects of diversity on group process and performance has been conducted by researchers in many domains. Some researchers have argued that diversity, when properly used, can be beneficial for organisations and ultimately improve performance (the “value in diversity” hypothesis), while others have shown strong evidence that diversity is negative to group functioning (e.g. Guzzo & Dickson, 1996).

Researchers have also used a number of theories to explain the effects of diversity on organisational process and performance. The most common theoretical bases for investigating diversity are the social identity/ categorisation perspective, the similarity/attraction perspective and the information/decision making perspective.

The social identity/ categorisation perspective (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1985) is probably the most used to explain the negative effects of diversity on group processes and performance. According to these theories, individuals are assumed to have a desire to maintain a high level of self-esteem. They do this through a process of self-categorisation in which they classify themselves and others into social categories using salient characteristics such as age, race, organisational membership, etc. This process permits a person to define himself in terms of a social identity, either as an individual or as a member of a social category or a member of one group compared to members of other groups.

The similarity/attraction perspective (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Berscheid, 1985; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) arrives at the same basic prediction as the social identity/ categorisation perspective in diversity research, which is that people prefer to work with similar others (Jackson, 1996). This means that diversity has a negative impact on group processes and performance.

In contrast to the social categorisation and the similarity/attraction perspectives, the information/decision making perspective (Bantel, & Jackson, 1989; van Knippenberg et al, 2004, Williams, & O'Reilly, 1998) emphasizes the positive effects of diversity. The starting point for this perspective is the notion that diverse groups are likely to possess a broader range of task-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities, and members with different opinions and perspectives on the task. This gives diverse groups a larger pool of resources that may be helpful in dealing with non-routine problems. It may also set the stage for more creative and innovative group performance.

Age is a visible demographic characteristic that, from the social categorisation perspective, may easily affect group process. From both a social categorisation perspective and similarity/ attraction perspective, these similarities should increase the likelihood of interpersonal attraction and shared values. In this regard, homogeneity in age should improve group process. On the other hand, groups characterized by heterogeneity in age may find communication more difficult, conflict more likely, and social integration more difficult to obtain. However, age diversity may also have a positive impact on creativity and performance within the group. Insofar as age diversity provides greater access to a wider set of information and perspectives, it may enhance group decision making.

Team diversity has been used to refer to the demographic composition of the team, i.e., the distribution of individual attributes among interdependent members (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Joshi & Jackson, 2003). In this report we adopt the bi-dimensional typology of team diversity proposed by Jackson, May, & Whitney (1995). According to the authors, the individual attributes that define diversity are those that can be readily detected on a first meeting (e.g., sex, age), as well as the underlying attributes that only become evident as team member become personally acquainted (e.g., expertise, values, gender). The other dimension is concerned with the individual attributes which are relevant to the work. While some attributes are more likely to be task related (e.g., educational background, task experience) others are more likely to be relationship oriented (e.g., attitudes, political membership).

Despite the large amount of empirical research that explores the direct effects of diversity on team processes and performance, results are highly inconsistent, offering support for both theoretical perspectives – the one that asserts that diversity has a negative effect on team performance (that is the social identity and categorisation perspective) and, on the other hand, the information/ decision making perspective that suggests that diversity is beneficial to team performance. Knight et al. (1999) found that in top management teams, age diversity reduces helping behaviours among team members. Ziller & Exline (1958) explored the relationship between age, sex and participation in a team decision making context. Results show a significant interaction between team members' sex and age concerning participation in the decision making. While in masculine teams, older members participate more frequently than the younger in the decision making process, in teams with only women, the younger made significantly more contributions than the older members. Results also show that homogenous age male groups had lower performance than the ones with age diversity. However, concerning women, age diversity had a negative impact on performance. In a more recent

study, Pelled et al. (1999) did not find any relationship between age diversity and performance, although age diversity had a negative impact on relationship conflict. To explain this unexpected result, the authors suggest that in age homogenous teams, members may compete with each other for the leader role within the team.

According to Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt (2003) one of the main limitations of diversity research so far has been that most researchers attempt to identify the independent effects of diversity. The few studies that examined multi-dimension diversity demonstrate the value of this particular approach. Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale (1999) found that education and functional diversity (what the authors termed informational diversity) were negatively related to team efficiency when sex and age diversity were high (social category diversity) but not when were low. Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin (1999) found that the impact of diversity on intragroup conflict was best understood by taking into account interactive effects of different types of diversity.

Passos and Caetano (2005) found that the impact of diversity based on readily detectable attributes (like sex and age) on process conflict and performance was negative during the first weeks, but this effect disappeared with time. The authors suggested team processes and performance are more influenced by a complex confluence of diversity types than by isolated types of diversity. In another study with 512 Portuguese working teams, Passos and Caetano (in press) found that diversity based on readily-detectable attributes, such as sex and age, is not relevant to discriminate between team performance paths. This means that this type of diversity does not differentiate teams with excellent performance from the ones with low performance.

## **2.2 Age-related stereotypes**

In first encounters, age is one of the earliest characteristics we notice about other people (Fiske, 2000; Kite, Deaux, & Miele 1991). Whether we are conscious of it or not, age impacts on our interactions with others. Age seems to ask: How should I address her? What are his political views? What do they know about popular culture? How slowly should I talk? How loudly? From an individual's perceived age, we infer social and cognitive competencies, political and religious beliefs, and physical abilities. These inferences guide how we behave and what information we seek, heed, and remember.

Stereotypes develop over time as people perceive their changing environments, interpret the perceived information, and encode it in memory. Biased by various cognitive processes, these collections of beliefs are later retrieved for use in interpreting social cues, and consequently directing how we behave in social interactions (Stangor & Schaller, 1996). At the root of stereotyping is our impulse to assign objects, events, and people to meaningful classes, about which we have established beliefs and expectations.

To make sense of the world, we group objects and events based on their similar features. Identifying these shared characteristics serves to reduce the amount of redundant data to be processed and provides additional useful information (for a review, see Fiske 1998). Just as we cluster objects and events based on perceived similarities, we cluster people based on perceived similarities. In his classic volume, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport suggests, "The human mind must think with the aid of categories. Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudice. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends on it" (1954, p. 20).

Perceived category membership does not necessarily result from an individual's actual possession of necessary category traits. Instead, it is based on our perceptions of how well a person fits a certain social group, based on characteristics we believe to represent a category. Two models have been used to explain how we determine the degree of fit: the prototype model and the exemplar model.

The prototype model suggests that categories do not have rigid boundaries and compulsory criteria, but that we subjectively categorize people based on how well we perceive them to resemble the average category member, or prototype (Cantor & Mischel, 1979). A prototype need not be an actual person, but instead an imagined individual who embodies the central tendencies of the group's key attributes. The exemplar model, on the other hand, suggests that we have multiple exemplars for each social category and that we assign membership to individuals who resemble many of the category's exemplars (see Fiske & Taylor, 1991, for a review). In sum, whereas prototypes are usually abstractions derived from an individual's collected experiences with the category, exemplars are memories of actual people or events.

According to social cognition literature neither of these two models can account for all social cognitive representations; different situations call for different processes. Nevertheless, their contribution to the understanding of stereotyping is that mental representations of social categories have nebulous boundaries and are the baselines people use to organize and construct their social taxonomies.

Several consequences follow from mental representations of social categories (Mackie et al. 1996). First, we perceive people as more similar to each other when they are presented as members of the same group (within-group assimilation) and less similar when presented as members of different groups (between-group contrast) (Allen & Wilder, 1979). Second, we perceive out-groups as less variable than in-groups, a phenomenon termed the out-group homogeneity effect (Park and Rothbart, 1982). Young people perceive all old people to be alike, varying very little on stereotypic traits such as political affiliation and open-mindedness. Similarly, older people may see teenagers as indistinguishable on dimensions such as discipline and thoughtfulness. Third, the perceived contrast between groups is evaluative, favouring the in-group (Tajfel et al., 1971). Young people make favourable in-group comparisons to older counterparts, evaluating the in-group more positively on relevant trait dimensions, such as attractiveness and intelligence.

People perceive groups at various levels of specificity. Usually when we refer to social groups, such as "elderly people," we are speaking of the superordinate, or global, level of categorisation. But sometimes superordinate categories splinter into meaningful subcategories, which we will refer to as subtypes (Taylor, 1981). It is important to note that relative to individual instances and superordinate-level representations of a category, subtypes occur at an intermediate level of generality (Ryan, Park, & Judd, 1996). Because our cognitive representations of out-groups are less differentiated than our representations of in-groups, we are less likely to use a subordinate level for out-groups (Park, Ryan, & Judd, 1992). However, when superordinate categories impart too little data even for out-groups, people sometimes develop subtypes (Stangor et al., 1992), which provide richer information about how to behave in specific situations, thereby amplifying predictive potential.

Subtypes develop in response to stereotype-incongruent information (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). They allow for characteristics that are inconsistent with beliefs about the global category,

preventing the perceiver from having to integrate new, disconfirming information into an existing stereotype (Hewstone, Johnston, & Aird, 1992).

In an examination of gender and age stereotypes, Kite, Deaux, and Miele (1991) found that older people were believed less likely to possess agentic characteristics (i.e., instrumental), whereas ratings of communal characteristics (i.e., expressive) were unaffected by aging. Erber (1989; Erber, Etheart, & Szuchman, 1992; Erber, Szuchman, & Etheart, 1993) revealed an age-based double standard concerning attributions of memory failure, such that when young people forget, this is attributed to lack of effort or attention, but when older people do the same, it is attributed to incompetence. In other studies, older people were rated as intellectually incompetent (Rubin & Brown, 1975) and less ambitious and responsible than younger people but also as friendlier and warmer than younger people (Andreolletti, Maurice & Whalen, 2001). Furthermore, research on automatic stereotyping shows that people are quicker at associating elderly names with incompetence traits than with competence ones (Zemore & Cuddy, 2000).

A similar pattern of age-stereotype content appears in research on people's beliefs about development throughout adulthood (Heckhausen, Dixon, & Baltes, 1989). In one study, participants rated hundreds of traits on desirability and estimated their average ages of onset (when people first develop these traits) and closing (when people lose these traits). Desirability ratings were negatively correlated with both onset and closing ages, indicating that traits believed common to younger populations are more desirable.

Another area of research on stereotyping and aging comes from industrial-organisational psychology. According to several studies (Avolio & Barrett 1987; Rosen & Jerdee 1976a, 1976b; Singer 1986), while there is a main effect of age, such that younger employees and applicants are generally rated more positively than older employees and applicants, a closer look reveals findings consistent with the existence of a global elderly stereotype reflecting warmth and incompetence. That is, in the workplace, older people are perceived as less competent in job performance-related tasks than in interpersonal ones. However, researchers have failed to demonstrate any actual relationship between age and job performance (for a review, see Salthouse & Maurer, 1996), which means that older people's alleged incompetence lies solely in the eye of the beholder.

Overall, international studies on the content of age stereotypes, like the ones described above, have shown that old age is systematically associated with more negative characteristics than young age and that these negative representations are often associated with prejudice and discrimination against old people (ageism) in the workplace. For example, managers often assume that older workers are less energetic, less efficient, less flexible and unwilling or unable to adapt to change (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1998) and for this reason, in cases of restructuring, older workers are the first ones to be made redundant and offered early retirement.

In Portugal, it does not seem to be a concern for enterprises to keep older workers in the labour market. Indeed, since the 1980s the trend has been towards early retirement, although the retirement age has recently increased to 65 years old (Miranda & Caetano, 2003).

Research regarding this issue in the Portuguese scientific literature is still sparse (see however Neto, 1992; Paúl, 2002; Simões, 1985). Particularly relevant is a recent study conducted by Marques, Lima and Novo (2006) about stereotypic traits the Portuguese associate with

younger and older people. Using two groups of adults (young and olds) they are able to reveal that the stereotype of younger people is more positive than the stereotype of older people and that older participants have a more positive vision of older people than younger participants. Overall, this results are consistent with the results of other national (Neto, 1992) and international studies (Featherstone & Wernick, 1995).

### 3. Social and organisational environment

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Current European work regimes, the Portuguese included, are characterized, on the one hand, by a richer variety of lifestyles and by economically and socially beneficial developments; but on the other hand, there is growing insecurity, inconsistency and the risk of increased social marginalisation. Economically active individuals experience adverse pressures and uncertain incomes. This is being accompanied by many changes in private life and gender relations. Along with these changes, population aging has led to a growing interest in the differences and similarities between older and younger workers. Although psychologists' research in this area has mainly examined cognitive abilities, interest has recently expanded to explore additional, non-cognitive variables, like personal initiative at work (Warr & Fay, 2001) and work involvement (Lorence, 1987). Nevertheless, little is known about the variables affecting the employment and employability of older people, particularly in a context, as in Portugal, affected by rapid change in the age-composition of the population, a crisis in the social security system, and increase in unemployment.

#### 3.1 Evolution of Portuguese Employment

In Portugal, according to the 2001 census, the employment rates among the three sectors of economic activity have changed significantly since 1960 until today: the population employed in the primary sector fell from 43.6 per cent (in 1960) to 10.9 per cent (in 1991) and nowadays to 7 per cent. The number employed in the secondary sector rose, in the same period, from 28.9 per cent to 37.9 per cent, and is today between 34 and 36 per cent. The number employed in the tertiary sector increased from 27.5 to 51.3 per cent and represent today more than 55 per cent. Thus, since the secondary sector has never been the most important employer of the active population, contrary to other western European countries, in Portugal the tertiary sector passed directly from last to first place in hiring manpower, which makes ours a unique case in Europe.

Nowadays, the active population totals around 5 million, which is equivalent to approximately half of the resident population. The increases were mainly in the tertiary sector (781,000 more women and 397,000 men), followed by the secondary (304,000 more men and 50,000 women). Meanwhile, the primary sector has lost at least 650,000 workers.

Consistent with this scenario is the *Portuguese Survey on Working Conditions* conducted between 1999 and 2000 by the Ministry of Labour, which revealed a predominance of the service sector in the Portuguese economy. Although there was a significant proportion of workers carrying out skilled manual work (33,2%) or manual work with machines (26,9%), a high proportion of workers carried out tasks generally associated with service sector occupations, namely, work involving contact with the public (43,6%), working with computerized equipment (38,9%) and administrative work (31,6%). Another finding of this study was that the proportion of manual work is greater among men, while a greater

proportion of women carry out forms of work associated with the service sector (e.g., contact with the public, computerized equipment and administrative work).

Analysing employment by gender, women constitute the majority of the active population in the primary and tertiary sectors, though they are still in a minority in the secondary sector. Overall, women comprise half of the active employed population.

Along with ‘tertiarisation’ of the economy, ‘coastalisation’ and urbanisation have emerged. Population movements within the country lead to the concentration of population along the coast and in urban centers, especially in the two large metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Oporto, but also around some foci of urban growth which have resisted the pull of Lisbon and Oporto, such as Braga, Aveiro, Coimbra, Viseu, Évora and Faro.

Regarding the social and professional composition of the working population, during this period of time, the proportion of employers more than doubled (from 2.6 to 5.8 per cent) whereas that of self-employed/independent workers (from 16 to 19 per cent) and of employees (from 65 to 70 per cent) increased less drastically. More important were the changes within the active female population. The proportion of female employers (in each category of the active population including both sexes) rose from 10 to 26 per cent; that of the female self-employed from 22 to 46 per cent; and that of female employees from 35 to 45 per cent. On the other hand, in the case of household workers (domestic staff), there was a considerable fall from 80 per cent to 58 per cent.

In terms of employment contracts, the majority of employees have a permanent contract or a contract with no time limit. Only around 12 to 20 per cent of the total workforce work under short-term contracts. But this situation fluctuates considerably according to the state of the economy. There is a trend, despite some fluctuation, towards more negotiated regulation of working conditions, affecting a growing number of workers. In the last years, a trend is noticeable towards an increase in work conflicts, as measured by the number of strikes, number of workers involved and number of days of strike action (Barreto, 2002).

In Portugal, the weekly working time is 40 hours. According to the Working Conditions Survey (2000) this is true to the majority of workers (69,2%). However, more than one in five works over 40 hours per week. Long working hours are particularly evident in the hotel and restaurant sector, where 55,5% of workers reported a weekly working time of 41 hours or more and 33% 50 hours or more of work in a week.

Relatively to unemployment, over the last three decades it has never exceeded 10 per cent of the active Portuguese population (contrary to what happened in most of the European Union countries) (Barreto, 2002). It is worth emphasizing that there is a tendency for the rate of women unemployment to be consistently higher than men’s (normally, 15 to 20% higher) and that, in periods of economic crisis (and greater unemployment), the difference can reach 50 per cent more women unemployed. Also, the rate of unemployment tends to affect more the following groups: the youngest; workers in industry and transport; women employed in domestic service; workers on short-term contracts; and workers who possess no qualifications or have only a basic level of education.



### **Job mobility and job security**

According to the Portuguese survey on working conditions, regarding job mobility, 24% of the workers surveyed had changed job and 7% had tried to change job in the previous five years. Among those, 38,9% were motivated by the possibility of better remuneration, 27,2% by professional fulfillment, 23,8% by job stability, while 15,8% had reached the end of their work contract.

Job mobility was more frequent among younger workers less than 25 years old (41,4%), and among workers with a secondary (30,9%) and third-level (30,3%) education. In terms of occupational category, it was higher among service workers and those in retail and trade (34%), workers in elementary occupations (30,5%), and technicians and associate professionals (26,8%).

In international studies, men and women have been found to differ in their willingness to move geographically for occupational advancement: men were more willing to move than women (Markham & Peck, 1986). Hartog, Mekkelholt, and Van Ophem (1987) also found that women had a lower propensity to change jobs than did men. These findings may be explained by the fact that women are more bound by family life than men.

Cordey et al. (1993) showed that younger employees display more positive attitude towards functional flexibility than older employees do.

Relatively to job security 3,8% of workers stated that they felt at risk of unemployment. Among these, 79,4% felt that this was due to the precarious situation of their companies or to the ending of their job contracts. Risk of unemployment was mainly reported by workers aged under 25 years old (9,7%) and over 55 years old (7,7%). An analysis by sector reveals that this risk is mostly felt in commerce (16,5%), textiles, clothing and footwear (16,1%) and construction (11,7%).

### **3.2 Portugal historical and political background**

Since this study involves individuals with exposure to different time periods, it is important to examine the major historical and political events that occurred in Portugal in the last five decades, which may have had influence on the way in which each generation relates to work. As we will see, several aspects have changed, such as the demographic structure of the population and the mentalities and practices..

Historically speaking, the period between the late 1959s and early 1960s was crucial. In 1959, Portugal was one of the founders of EFTA (European Free Trade Association), which was the response of a group of countries to the creation of the European Common Market. The creation of this association had important repercussions in the country: it not only diminished the relative isolation of Salazar's authoritarian regime in terms of international relations, but, principally, it initiated an opening process of the national economy to the world. In just a few years, external investment in Portugal grew as never before. Foreign assembly and manufacturing plants were set up to export to developed economies. Trade exchanges with European countries mainly of industrial products were moderately liberalized. In some years, industrial production grew by more than 20 per cent.

For the first time, there appeared to be an industrial alternative to agricultural employment, offering Portuguese workers new working environments, higher wages and employment for most of the year. Between 1960 and 1973, the national income per capita grew on average by more than 6.5 per cent each year and even some times over more than 10 per cent (Barreto, 2002).

Emigrants leaving Portugal had traditionally tended to travel towards Brazil, other Latin American countries, USA, Canada, South Africa and the Portuguese colonies in Africa, mainly Angola and Mozambique. In the early 1960s, due to the beginning of the colonial war, emigrants began to move to European destinations, especially France. The total number of emigrants leaving Portugal each year increased to previously unknown heights. From the mid 1960s, the annual net migration cancelled out the natural increase of population, which means, in absolute terms, that the population decreased (Barreto, 2002).

This migratory flow coincided with the beginning of mass tourism in Portugal. Tourists, mostly from Europe, (e.g., United Kingdom, Germany and Spain) headed towards the sunny beaches of Algarve. In just a few years, the annual number of tourists visiting Portugal reached several millions. Tourism was important not just for economic balance, but also for the development of several professional activities like, for example, hotels, construction and real estate. Indeed, in coastal regions where no industry existed, tourism activities offered an alternative to agriculture employments.

Politically, the year of 1961 was crucial in Portugal's recent history. In the first three months, independence movements started an armed struggle in Angola. The Portuguese government sent in the armed forces. Thus began the colonial war, which later spread to Guinea Bissau and Mozambique. The war lasted for almost thirteen years. It consumed close to fifty per cent of public spending, and occupied on average around 200,000 soldiers each year (Barreto, 2002). Also, in December 1961, the armed forces of the Indian Union invaded the Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Damão and Diu, in India. This event marks the first colonial lost and the beginning of the end of the Portuguese Empire. For more than ten years, the colonial war played a central role in every aspect of national life. It conditioned political life, took up a considerable part of budget resources and strengthened the severity of a dictatorship based on one party, the use of a repressive political police, censorship of the press and the unrecognizing of trade unions. Even when Salazar died and Marcelo Caetano took place as Prime Minister, the colonial war continued until the 1974 Revolution. The revolution radically altered political life and had enormous social, cultural and economic repercussions. Rapid decolonisation caused around 650,000 people to return from Africa, mainly from Angola and Mozambique (Barreto, 2002). Economic links with the new independent African states were drastically reduced, while prospects of emigration from Portugal to Africa disappeared.

An immediate consequence of the revolution was the nationalisation of some sectors of the economy, and the nationalisation and occupation of some farm land, mostly in the south, in a process of 'agrarian reform'. For a period of one or two years, leftists and members of the revolutionary military dominated successive governments. But then, after a political process that was rapid and peaceful (as the revolution) a democratic and parliamentary regime was founded until today, based on elections, the approval of a Constitution and the restoration of constitutional administrative and legal authority. This political process meant that legal guarantees and fundamental rights were given, and it was also in this period that the independence of the judiciary was guaranteed and that most of the media became entirely

independent of the State and free of any political censorship. Perhaps for the first time in two centuries, a kind of “constitutional consensus” became evident: most voters and most elected members of parliament agree with the general idea of the Constitution. Contrary to what went on in most of the 19th and 20th centuries, the nature of the regime is not in question and its democratic foundations are accepted by almost the entire electorate. There is no ‘religious question’, as distinct from other periods in the last two centuries. There are neither political exiles nor prisoners of conscience, nor even the concept of ‘political crime’. These things may not seem much, but in Portugal’s modern history they are novelties with less than 30 years.

Almost immediately after the political revolution, Portugal put forward a candidature to the European Economic Community (today, the European Union, EU). It was first accepted in 1977, but full membership only came into effect in 1986. That was when the “second European push” of the economy and of the Portuguese society began, following the first, that of EFTA and the emigration of the 1960s. Nowadays, the EU accounts for three quarters of the Portuguese balance of trade. Portuguese companies are very closely linked to multinational and European companies. Economic protectionism has practically disappeared. Portugal is now one of the most open economies in Europe, as measured by the proportion of his external trade relative to his national product. Another mark of Portuguese full integration in EU was the adoption of Euro as official currency.

### **3.3 Migration Background**

Traditionally, Portugal had a high rate of emigration, but now the flow has reversed and the country has become a host for migrants.

As mentioned above, between 1960 and 1973, more than a million and a half Portuguese left the country to work abroad. Breaking with a centuries old tradition, these emigrants abandoned Brazil and other Latin American countries as their favorite destination, preferring instead Europe, specifically France, closely followed by Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland (and later, United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Spain). The urge to migrate was so great that the number of ‘illegal’ emigrants began overtaking that of legal emigrants. In the first half of the 1970s, emigration slowed down, partly due to the international economic and social climate, especially recession and oil crisis. Decolonisation prompted the return of several thousand people (around 650,000) who had previously been resident in the colonies. It’s worth noticing that for many it was their first time in Portugal, since they had been born in the colonies and had never even visited the country. Nevertheless, their social and economic integration was quite fast.

Then, within a short time, a complete inversion of population movement took place. Effectively, during the 1980s, a flow of immigrants originating in Brazil and the old colonies was gradually consolidating. A growing number of Europeans were also choosing Portugal for their home or as a base for work (those connected with foreign business and new investments, farmers, retired people, etc.) By the mid 1990s, the legal resident foreign population was close to 2 per cent of the total population (Barreto, 2002). Although, some emigrants continued to leave Portugal, on average there were no more than ten thousand permanent emigrants and fifteen thousand temporary emigrants per year. Gradually, starting in 1995/97, the migration balance became positive, that is, the number of immigrants overtook that of emigrants. Since then, a new wave of immigration has sprung up, and with surprising speed: workers are arriving from Eastern and Central Europe, specifically

Ukrainians, Russians, Romanians, former Yugoslavians and Moldavians. And now, less than ten years later, the resident foreign population has reached 4 per cent of the total resident population in Portugal (Barreto, 2002).

Although Portugal was an already fairly homogeneous country in terms of currency, language, the law and the armed forces, and although administrative power had long been enforced over the whole territory, a large part of the country did live to a different rhythm than of the capital (i.e., Lisbon) and than other main urban areas. Several factors contributed to national integration, including the mobilisation of conscripts to the colonial wars, the expansion and broadening of television coverage, the expansion of health services and social security and the establishment of school, postal and bank networks that would eventually cover the country. But the most important factor in the homogenisation of the country was certainly the expansion of the economically active population, especially with the inclusion of women.

According to Barreto (2002) women can now be found in all jobs and professions, and at schools and universities. There has been a profound change in the presence of women in society and in the public arena. At the start of the 1970s, women represented around 20 per cent of the economically active population; three or four decades later, this rose to practically 50 per cent. In many sectors, such as public administration and public services (especially in health and education), women are the majority. The university student population consists of more women than men (around 56 per cent) and, every year, women are the ones who receive the majority of the university diplomas (65 per cent). This change, linked to the cultural evolution of the last five decades, has been responsible for an important alteration in the distribution of the power of the sexes: a patriarchal and masculine society has given way to one with a more visible balance between the sexes, although many inequalities persist.

The young have also been further included in society. With the development of a ‘youth culture’ and of ‘youth’ as an age group and social category, a new, active generation group of voters, consumers and producers has been born. The evolution of the economy and the education sector helped the younger generation to delay their entry into professional life by some years, which in turn helped to increase the size and number of universities. Today military service is voluntary. Only those who wish to follow a military career join the army. With the right to vote at 18, since 1976, young people are subject to special attention from the political parties and the authorities. The youth branches of the political parties try to attract them to take part in political campaigns and they are targeted by advertising and business. Making an indelible mark on the towns and cities, the ‘young’ have their own meeting places, leisure spaces, and cultural venues and animate the nightlife of bars and discotheques.

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