

Chapter 10

Critical Aspects of the Transformation of Work and Welfare from a Capability Perspective

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10.1 Introduction

Traditionally, critical analyses of welfare states, which aimed at identifying the nationally and historically variegated functions which arise as specific, albeit temporary, limited, and conflict-prone solutions to the problems of capitalist market societies (Offe 1993b; Lessenich 2012; Gough 1979), raised severe reservations against normative accounts on the content of social policies. As Claus Offe and Gero Lenhardt have put it in a widely published paper on social policy:

Thereby, normative research projects are open to the objection, first, that they are incapable of sustaining the validity and necessity of their normative presuppositions, and, second, that they habitually overestimate their capacity to induce at least some unease among those political actors to whom proof of the discrepancies between ‘ought’ and ‘is’ is presented (...). (Offe 1993b: 90f)

Thus, they assume that little is achieved “in such attempts at normative definition” (Offe 1993b: 90), because many accounts on the question which social policies SHOULD be implemented to tackle certain social problems and reach certain social goals rather highlight the normative criteria of those people who are in the social position to judge them, than identify the political relevance of such considerations (Offe 1993a, b: 90). However, by assuming that it is possible to separate a critical analysis of social policies from normative reasoning, such considerations all too hastily dismiss a crucial dimension of the academic and political debates and conflicts about the welfare state in capitalist societies and its transformations

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and dynamics.¹ Offe and Lenhardt linked their refutation of normative reasoning about social policies mainly to the macro-level of tackling “social problems” and the attainment of “certain social goals”. Viewed from this perspective, their criticism seems well placed, not only because the political relevance of normative considerations might be unclear but also because in case such considerations gain political relevance, they run the risk of prescribing certain social orders, solutions, and activities onto the population from above. At least from the point of view of freedom and emancipation, this creates a range of insurmountable conceptual as well as political problems and contradictions for welfare states, which were widely exploited by neoliberal attacks on the “nanny state”, welfare bureaucracies and the limited conceptions of equality which they embodied, etc.

However, in the article referred to above, Offe (1993b) forcefully remind us that this top-down perspective is inadequate. Furthermore, they also highlight the gap between certain social policy regulations – as codified in laws, organised in certain social policy apparatus, etc. – and their implementation. The latter creates a space of contradictions and social struggles, which highlight the political rather than merely administrative character of the concrete processes of said implementation of social policies. Thus, moving from a highly abstract attempt to identify the main functions of social policy to more dynamic analyses of changes and innovations within welfare reopens the field for normative questions once again. This becomes obvious in regard to what, according to critical approaches, is a central function of welfare states – the production of wage labourers in and through its institutions, such as educational systems (Offe 1993a).

The reconfiguration of this function of welfare systems over the last decades was dominated by the emergence of the so-called workfarist strategies of welfare reform, as more and more countries, but also supranational institutions (European Employment Strategy), began to promote the activation of welfare systems (Peck 2001; Atzmüller 2014a). Even though there are attempts to conceptualise workfare as an encompassing reconfiguration strategy of welfare systems, recent debates have pointed out that these changes do not affect all the institutions of (European) welfare states and, therefore, not all parts of the population in the same way. What’s more, the transformations of the welfare state over the last two or three decades and its effects on different welfare regimes have recently been described as *dualisation* (Emmenegger et al. 2012a; from a critical perspective: Atzmüller 2014b). Dualisation refers to the fact that welfare state retrenchments and reconfigurations of the last two or three decades tended to affect certain groups (migrants, women, low-skilled people, youth, long-term unemployed, etc.) much more than the so-called

¹In his later work, Offe has frequently referred to normative problems and dilemmata occurring in “late capitalist” welfare systems (1984, 1993a). Thus, he repeatedly problematised the fact that the very structures of capitalist labour markets and accumulation processes, together with the commodity character of labour power and the exchange processes between capital and labour as well as the legal and rational-bureaucratic fundaments of (welfare-)state activities, undermine the normative basis of mutual responsibility and solidarity within capitalist societies. This effect of the capitalist mode of production and the state contributes to the crisis proneness of capitalist societies as it undermines social cohesion and the legitimization of social institutions such as the state.

“core groups” of social security systems and welfare regimes. Dualisation approaches even claim that in many countries, in particular in continental Europe, these so-called insiders are hardly affected by transformations of welfare systems.

Dualization implies that policies increasingly differentiate rights, entitlements, and services provided to different categories of recipients. Thereby, the position of insiders may remain more or less constant, while only the position of outsiders deteriorates. Alternatively, policies may lead to the creation of new categories of outsiders that were previously treated according to the same rules as insiders. (Emmenegger et al. 2012b: 10)

This is an important point with regard to vulnerable youth who are at risk of social exclusion. It raises questions about the scope and content of emerging policies tackling the problems of the young and about the relations and interactions between the core/standard institutions of welfare regimes and the emerging peripheral activities affecting a range of more and more precarious groups. The dualisation of welfare systems led to the emergence of new welfare instruments, activities, and institutions, as well as to new social rights and obligations, respectively, particularly in the fields of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP), basic social assistance and education. These variegated reconfigurations of different welfare regimes affected those groups who have lost out in the outlined changes of the production regimes and labour markets as they are most affected by unemployment, economic inactivity and precarious forms of employment, poverty and social exclusion. Vulnerable youth as well as low-skilled people, migrants, women, etc. are among the groups targeted by the newly emerging peripheral welfare regimes.

As a policy response to high levels of unemployment and demands for flexible labour markets raised by the business side, workfarist policies of dualisation consist, for example, in strategies of tying social benefits to the willingness of the unemployed to participate in coaching and (re-)training measures, to participate in make-work programmes, and to take up any job available – be it precarious or not (Peck 2001). Hence, the main line of interpretation sees them as strategies to increase control over the unemployed and to reinstall the capitalist work ethic (King 1995; Peck 2001; Handler 2004). From the perspective of the WORKABLE project, this understanding is not sufficient, as it rests on a negative concept of freedom, i.e., freedom from market forces. This reduces the evaluative scope of such analyses to the question whether people can choose not to participate in the labour market at a reasonable cost. Notwithstanding the significance of this exit option (Bonvin 2012), it does not pose an answer to the question what people can actually do or achieve in current societies to live the life they have reason to value, to take up reasonable employment or to be educated.

As workfarist policies proclaim concepts such as activation and employability, and present themselves as a sort of trampoline or springboard back into the labour market, it is necessary to analyse their concrete workings and operations (Ferrera and Hemerijck 2003). This is necessary in order to understand and criticise the opportunities and functionings people are enabled to in dualised welfare systems and to identify fields where emancipation and social change might be possible. The WORKABLE research about educational and vocational policies and in-depth case studies on educational programmes concerning labour market transitions in 11

European countries offer a range of insights about the scope and content as well as the relations and interactions between activities for peripheral groups and core routes of education – VET – employment (WORKABLE 2011, 2012).

In the first part of this paper, I will analyse the significance of the capability approach for a critical understanding of welfare systems and their dynamics. In the second part, I will present some of the most important insights from the WORKABLE research, in particular, from the case studies. The paper will conclude with some considerations on how to evaluate recent changes of welfare systems in the crisis.

10.2 Critical Approaches to Welfare and the Capability Approach

The WORKABLE project tried to overcome some of the outlined problems and contradictions of critical analyses of welfare state developments and the functions of social policy through the application of a firm normative concept as provided by the now widely debated capability approach by Amartya Sen (2007, 2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2009) (for an introduction, see *Christian Chrstrup Kjeldsen and Jean-Michel Bonvin* in this book).

According to Robert Salais,

the upheaval introduced by the capability approach relates to the choice of the yardstick against which collective action (policies, legislation, procedures) should be devised, implemented and assessed. For Sen, the only ethically legitimate reference point for collective action is the person, and specifically his situation as regards the amount of real freedom he possesses to choose and conduct the life he wishes to lead. (Translation taken from: Lambert et al. 2012)

Le grand basculement qu'introduit l'approche par les capacités est relatif au choix de la référence par rapport à laquelle l'action publique (les politiques, la législation, les procédures) doit être conçue, mise en oeuvre et évaluée. Pour Sen, la seule référence éthiquement légitime de l'action publique est la personne, précisément son état quant à l'étendue des libertés réelles dont elle dispose pour choisir et conduire la vie qu'elle entend mener. (Salais 2005: 10)

At first sight, this conceptual starting point seems to be a methodologically individualist attempt to avoid the dilemma highlighted by Offe (1993b) who refer to the problem that normative reasoning often says more about the position of the scientist than about social processes. Analysed more closely, however, it becomes clear that Salais' consideration aims to overcome the false opposition and separation of individual utilities and preferences (or practices) on the one hand and macro-social processes as well as political interventions of different institutions to bring about certain social outcomes on the other by pointing towards their constitutive interdependence.

Furthermore, it shifts the perspective away from a narrow concept of social policy outcomes – which would correspond to functionings in the terminology of the CA (Sen 2007, 2009; Bonvin 2009a) – towards the problem of the real freedom of individuals to live the life he/she has reason to value. Thus, this approach tries to

give substance to the problem that the ability of someone to make free choices about his or her life is fundamentally tied to the social circumstances/conditions in which they take place. Nevertheless, this focus on the individual as the only ethically legitimate reference point demands a shift in the understanding of public policies.

In Amartya Sen's perspective, public action should not focus on functionings but on capabilities, which puts the concern for individual freedom of choice at the very centre of social intervention. As a result, the main objective of public action in the field of welfare should not be to put people back to work at all costs (i.e. a functioning), but to enhance their real freedom of choice with regard to the labour market. (Bonvin and Dif-Pradalier 2010: 95)

This means, while (at least implicitly) accepting that a fundamental task of social policies in a capitalist society lies in "the lasting transformation of non-wage-labourers into wage labourers" (Offe 1993), the debate about the CA highlights the significance of the opportunities people have in choosing the life they have reason to value (other than just obeying the "silent compulsion of economic relations" (Marx)). This explains why the recent adaptations of social policies to the demands of the knowledge-based economy of finance-dominated capitalism (Altvater 2010) pose a vast range of normative problems and conflicts as the socially hegemonic concepts of freedom and justice have become a contested field (again). Critical scholars of welfare states such as Claus Offe but also Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) in his seminal study about the Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism had focused their analyses on the relationship between the (re-)production of wage labourers and their labour power and the institutionalisation of (temporary) exceptions from the obligation to work through social security. While shedding light on the structural reasons why welfare states focus – among other things – on the reproduction of wage labourers, freedom seems to emerge only in a negative way in relation to the so-called de-commodifying aspects of social policies. This means that freedom and emancipation mainly arise from the limitation of the status of labour power as a commodity through social policies.

As these critical approaches to welfare states were analysing the disciplinary societies of Fordist capitalism (Jessop 2002) – which Offe labelled as late capitalism – this focus should hardly come as a surprise. The hegemonic Fordist work routines paradigmatically embodied in the assembly line and controlled by rational-bureaucratic administration demanded the ability of individual subjection to technical work plans and strict time regimes. The production of wage labourers in welfare institutions rested on a specific construction of subjects and their abilities, for which the acceptance of the Fordist production regime resting on the suppression of subjective competencies under Taylorist management concepts was central (Sauer 2005). The expansion of welfare systems, to which the crisis tendencies of the capitalist mode of production were externalised in this period, as well as full employment, mass consumption and growing living standards served to stabilise this model of social development also for the bottom end of the social hierarchies (Hirsch 2005). Hence, the scope of normative conflicts about work and welfare under Fordism was mainly limited to negotiations and conflicts about wage growth and the distribution of monetary resources as well as the reduction of working time to stabilise Fordist ways of living.

However, as, in particular, Offe's work of the 1970s shows, the social dynamics of the Fordist mode of development and the opportunities arising from the new forms of living soon began to transcend their narrow confines as embodied in the dominant mode of regulation which rested on the bureaucratic control of everyday living. Hence, many people, in particular youth and women, tried to use the opportunities opened up by heightened living standards, expanding welfare systems, etc. to develop new capabilities and enlarge their options of choice to lead the lives they have reason to value. Among other things, this contributed to the emergence of the new social movements in 1968 and the years after and their search for alternative lifestyles and gender relations, enlarged democratic procedures and transformed modes of production, etc.

10.2.1 The Evolution of Welfare Systems in Post-Fordism

However, the following period of crisis and subsequent social and political struggles, which mainly focused on the contested relations between economic processes and dynamics (welfare) states, gave way to the so-called post-Fordist production regimes which rest on service work and the so-called new production concepts (Sauer 2005). Together with the shift to activation policies in welfare regimes, the stakes of freedom to live the life one has reason to value have been transformed fundamentally. On the one hand, the social, political and economic changes which accompany the shifts to post-Fordist modes of development lead among other things to a narrowing down of functionings for big segments of the population – in particular vulnerable young people. This is due to high and growing levels of unemployment and economic inactivity as well as massive increases of precarious forms of work and employment and rising numbers of working poor (Standing 2012; Pelizzari 2009). Together with welfare cuts and far-reaching reconfigurations of welfare systems, this lead to a narrowing down of opportunities of social integration and inclusion and therefore also a narrowing down of the number of individual opportunities to live the life one has reason to value. On the other hand, shifts to activation in welfare systems and the emergence of the so-called post-Taylorist forms of work pushed the abilities and competences of individuals to the centre ground of educational activities (Atzmüller 2014a). Thus, the outlined processes are aggravated by welfare state retrenchment and reconfiguration, which are presented as without alternative by neoliberal hegemony. Emphasis is put on individual self-responsibility and self-reliance as well as the willingness and ability of individuals to adapt to new demands and to actively seek new opportunities to improve their economic situation. In particular, subjective and immaterial skills – such as communicative and cooperative competencies, affective skills and the processing of information and knowledge – are said to be crucial for post-Fordist employees (Sauer 2005; Hardt and Negri 2000). These dynamics cannot simply be attributed to increasing educational levels among huge parts of the population. Rather, they also reveal “new” demands to employees at the lower end of the labour markets who have to do less qualified, “simple” work in the service sectors (call centres, care, retailing, etc.).

The necessary adaptation of the workforce to the changing demands of the knowledge-based economy has also determined recent conflicts about the future shape of the welfare state. High levels of persistent unemployment, the deregulation of labour markets, growing flexibility of employment relations and the emergence of precarious employment circumscribe the main traits of the unfolding reregulation of employment and the re-commodification of work (Castel and Dörre 2009; Scherschel et al. 2012). These dynamics are closely linked to the restructuring of welfare systems and social protection. Not just since the current crises are the former based on welfare cuts, increasingly tightened eligibility criteria and attempts to privatise social security in the name of individual responsibility.

10.3 Insights into Ambiguities and Modes of Operation of Youth Related Policies - Results of the WORKABLE Case Studies

The WORKABLE research on educational policies and the project's case studies about transitions into VET and employment give interesting insights into the peculiarities and details of the outlined developments of welfare systems. Young people's growing problems in following the standard routes from the educational system into stable employment, which left a considerable and in some countries growing number of young people without adequate qualifications and employment opportunities, have spawned intense search strategies to create and implement adequate institutions and measures to tackle these problems. The research focused on measures and activities which claim to support vulnerable youth who face difficulties in the "standard" educational path and to handle the transition into stable employment and the still mainly employment-based social security systems (Bifulco 2014; WORKABLE 2011, 2012). These developments lie at the core of the outlined processes of dualisation and the creation of a range of new welfare state activities for the so-called peripheral groups.

In particular, the WORKABLE case studies analysed the so-called new and/or innovative programmes for disadvantaged and vulnerable youth such as early school leavers, unemployed, low skilled, etc. which are provided by public, private and voluntary sector organisations and initiatives on a regional and decentralised level.

Apart from the fact that in most European countries similar groups of young people (such as migrants, school leavers with low educational attainment, early school leavers, women, etc.) face growing problems in integrating into the standard path of education and labour market transition, the WORKABLE project revealed the emergence of a range of similar strategies to adapt education, VET and the transition to employment which nevertheless work themselves out in nationally variegated forms in different countries (Atzmüller 2012). While the debates about dualisation mainly try to highlight the growing division within dualised welfare regimes, the WORKABLE research – in particular the qualitative case studies – offers a range of important insights about the ambiguities and modes of operation of the peripheral welfare and social security systems.

Thus, WORKABLE shed some light on the relations and interactions between core and peripheral activities within dualised welfare systems. Furthermore, the results show that the scope of the emerging programmes and activities poses an important problem for their relevance in regard to social cohesion and integration. In particular, the question whether certain programmes and measures (in particular, if of high quality) provide universal access for every member of the target groups or whether a choice is made among possible participants proved to be of crucial significance for an analysis from the perspective of the CA.

This problem cannot be separated from the contents and orientation of measures and programmes to reintegrate vulnerable and socially excluded people such as youth. Here, a tension emerged between activities, which focused on employability, human capital formation and work first on the one hand, and measures, which took a wider perspective including social pedagogical and social work activities. Hence, it became obvious that the welfare state function of (re-)producing of wage labourers is increasingly organised as a learning process. This literally means that most of the programmes and measures analysed were geared towards activities to train young people how to work and to develop those attitudes and virtues (such as punctuality, endurance, subordination to hierarchies). Social pedagogical and social work-related support activities are therefore mainly geared to reconcile problems young people might be confronted with regarding the demands of a working environment. Even though complementing employability-oriented activities with social pedagogy and social work seems indispensable from the perspective of capability formation, the case studies showed that more often than not the latter was not the outcome. These activities might as well be geared towards the normalisation of certain forms of an orderly life as a precondition for somebody's ability to subordinate to the demands of flexibilised labour markets and human capital formation. Hence, it became clear that the contents and orientations of programmes for vulnerable youth form a contested field as a range of social interests beyond the goal of social cohesion are vested within the construction of dualised activation measures for certain target groups.

10.3.1 Relations and Interactions in Dualised Welfare Systems

Taking up the first point, the case studies showed that the most important source of variation relates to the question whether activities developed for certain target groups such as youth aim at reintegration into the standard/core route of education–VET–employment and social security or whether these activities rather aim at stabilising precarious existences/life courses in the context of low wage employment and flexible segments of post-Fordist labour markets. From the point of view of the target population of these activities, the former can be expected to allow for some form of capability formation and the expansion of individual freedoms to live the life one has reason to value, whereas the latter can be expected to focus on employability formation and an active re-commodification of labour power, while (temporary) exit options are more and more reduced. However, as highlighted

above, a wider approach to integration into the standard route of education and employment is not necessarily linked to capability formation as can be shown through an in-depth analysis of the relations of power and dominance which run through, for example, the dual system of VET (see below). A third alternative, which transcends the outlined reintegration strategies to a certain degree, was found, in the Italian case study about a community project in Naples (Bifulco et al. 2012) – albeit on a very decentralised level and only in a very limited way. It revealed options to escape the outlined polarity in the context of deep crisis and growing dysfunctions of the welfare state as well as in the economy.

- (a) Generally, it is interesting to note that the **WORKABLE** case studies analysed two forms of interactions within dualised welfare system that aim at reintegration into a standard route of education–VET–employment. These examples begin as attempts to supplement the standard routes at the point of education or VET. In these cases, educational or VET activities are not only seen as a means of (quick) reintegration into employment and the labour market, which dominates many activities of workfarist labour market policies, but rather they become a goal of their own. They are not only seen as an indispensable precondition for integration into a stable employment career. Rather, they are also understood as the best way of social integration. These strategies of reorganisation are either organised through an alternative and additional pillar of the standard route of VET, which is mainly financed and organised through public institutions. Or they are based on the more or less experimental development of activities that try to keep people within the standard path of education and schooling.

A crucial dimension that has become visible in these activities in contrast to other examples, which primarily focus on reintegration into the labour market (work first) is time – i.e., time which young people are given to develop the skills and competencies they need to stay within the standard routes from education to VET and employment or to re-enter them and to possibly reverse the stratified outcomes of the traditional educational system and modes of transition into VET.

Thus, the Austrian case study about supra-company apprenticeships (Haidinger and Kasper 2012) can be seen as an example for the creation of an additional public pillar within the dual system of VET to reintegrate young people into the core system of VET. This programme offers young people who cannot find a regular apprenticeship on the labour market the opportunity to reach the standard certificate for labour market entry and also further progression in employment. These activities are part of the so-called training guarantee in Austria, which is offered to every school leaver below 19, financed mainly through the collectively funded PES and organised through third sector activities. In contrast to measures as analysed, for example, in Germany around the so-called transition regime or in the Scottish/UK case study which mainly offers shorter training courses often for less than 1 year, supranational apprenticeships are not shorter than traditional apprenticeships with an employer (which may be in the private sector or in a public institution) which last between 3 and 4 years.

A second example can be found in the French case study (Berthet and Simon 2012) which focused on strategies developed in schools to prevent and tackle

early school leaving.² Here, the aim is to develop a variety of activities to keep people in the educational system and to make sure that they leave with a secondary school qualification. The rather muted success of activities to prevent early school leaving as highlighted in the case French study clearly showed the demand for a systematic public approach to this problem that would be able to work with local experiences and networks as they are closest to young people.

However, the outlined examples cannot be taken as representative for certain educational regimes and types of welfare systems. Thus, it would be inadequate to ignore the scope of variation within different regimes the case studies made visible. To take an example, countries where the system of alternation/dual system of VET is still dominant (i.e. Austria, Switzerland, Germany) revealed considerably varied strategies to tackle the crisis of the apprenticeship system (Atzmüller 2012). A systematic attempt to offer every young school leaver a bridge back into the standard path of VET and employment is but one possibility to tackle the lack of apprenticeship positions.

In Germany, even though there is the goal to make sure that every young person is “cared for”, people are rather parked in the so-called transition regime, which is not adequately connected to the standard VET system. There are still strong vested interests from trade unions as well as the business side to prevent a state-organised public pillar within the traditional dual system. Thus, within one type of VET regimes, different strategies emerge which might either fit a path of reintegration into standard routes or create an alternative system of transition for peripheral youth on the labour market.

- (b) As outlined above, an alternative to these forms of interactions and relations within dualised welfare systems could be found in the Italian case study (Bifulco et al. 2012). Two aspects proved central for the emergence of such activities. First, the Italian case study showed that in situations of deep crisis and increasing withdrawal (sometimes dysfunctionality) of the welfare state, space for bottom-up approaches to youth disadvantage and social exclusion might be emerging. Thus, such developments can be seen as a response of communities to a range of crisis processes within the state and the economy. These do not only serve to reorganise and direct educational investments but also to rescale political decision making between national, regional and local institutions and (sometimes also) to integrate new actors as well as to implement and create new institutions for the provision of policies.

The professed goal of these developments is to bring educational activities related to work, and in particular those that aim to tackle processes of social exclusion, closer to local communities and to the needs of the local economy. Rather than one-sidedly fostering employability and adaption to globalised labour markets, these activities try to secure social cohesion on the local level by offering social integration measures to young people. Apart from activities through which participants contribute to the reconstruction and maintenance of

²Similar activities can be found in other countries but were not covered in the case studies of the WORKABLE project.

public infrastructures (albeit on a very limited scale), there seems to be strong reliance on cooperation with local businesses. By at least temporarily employing participants of this project, they show their willingness to contribute to the reintegration of excluded youth.

Thus, the Italian case study revealed that in a situation of crisis, bottom-up processes might develop activities in which social cohesion does not only constitute a goal of activities but might become the very content of initiatives for young people on the local, decentralised level. This of course raises questions about the values and understandings linked to social cohesion and integration on the local level, which would demand an in-depth analysis of community structures. Notwithstanding the emerging potentials of a project like this, the scarcity of public funds and the lack of support from other levels of the state clearly reduce its outcomes.

10.3.2 The Scope and Depth of Programmes

Other dimensions of variations that emerged from the WORKABLE research refer to the scope and depth of the programmes, measures and activities young target groups are confronted with. Here, the case studies show that a range of distinctions can be identified which affect the mode of operations in the peripheral welfare institutions.

- (a) The first distinction I want to highlight is the question whether activation programmes for certain target groups really do cover everyone who is at risk of social exclusion or whether the emerging programmes and the related governance mechanisms (performance and output-related funding) rely on creaming effects by focussing activities on those people who are closest to the labour market. Thus, the first question concerns the availability of places and activities of high quality for every vulnerable young person – in particular in programmes of high quality – and whether they are offered possibilities of choice. The analyses show that in a context of (austerity related) scarcity of public funds, a choice is rather made by the institutions and their representatives (case managers) who have to fulfil targets and reach certain goals. From the perspective of the CA, this raises the questions about the justice and objectivity of the decisions of the personnel of educational institutions and the PES who might well be influenced by certain assumptions about their target groups or by interests of other actors such as businesses.

If these effects prevail, more vulnerable groups might be excluded from high-quality programmes and constantly pushed between institutions and short-term activities, thus deepening the dualisation of welfare. Tackling the problems and needs of the latter might be too costly for many providers of integration programmes, which are under control of ever tightening budget criteria.

Even though the case studies did not focus on these divisions within the countries of the WORKALBE consortium, some of the case studies clearly referred to this point. Thus, the Polish case study (Sztander-Sztanderska and

Zielenska 2012) about a privately run VET programme with an international electronic company in Warsaw clearly shows that the dominance of narrowly defined company-specific training interests support creaming effects in the choice of participants. While this initiative by an international company has become necessary not least because of a general disbanding of the VET system in Poland over the last two decades, it clearly shows that such strategies cannot pose an answer to the problem of social cohesion and social integration for societies and communities as a whole. Those young people who cannot enter such privately organised VET programmes loose out and become the object of activation measures and poverty-related policies.

- (b) Another remarkable development revealed by WORKABLE is the search for strategies to bring the educational system, the labour market and the economy closer together in a systematic way. In this context, the role of the so-called system of alternation/dual system of VET for the debates about necessary reforms of VET systems all over Europe and systematic approaches to the transition from education to the labour market comes to the fore again (Atzmüller 2011b, 2012). The dual system bases VET on a combination of on-the-job training and theoretically oriented education in public (vocational) schools. It is jointly organised by the state and social partners creating the so-called occupational labour markets, which rest on transparent, transferable and widely accepted skills and qualification. Even if an implementation of a German system of alternation for educational investments all over Europe is unlikely, the idea of bringing schooling and working closer together has gained a strong foothold in European countries in the current crisis. This is especially true for the group of youth who lose out in the academic-oriented paths of the different educational regimes.

From the perspective of the CA, there are however a number of downsides to these developments. First, this VET system is confronted with many problems concerning the quality and availability of a sufficient number of apprenticeship places provided by the private sector. Second, it supports a shift in educational concepts and goals towards employability and human capital, whereas wider concepts of education – as embodied in the concept of “Bildung” (Düker and Ley 2012) – or capability formation are rather pushed to the back. Third, a one-sided emphasis on the merits of the dual system neglects its role for the socialisation of employees to the capitalist work ethic and exchange value orientation as well as their subordination to occupation-related cultures and values which, for example, might be linked to specific constructions of male and female work, hierarchy, etc.

10.3.3 Social Interests Defining Youth Policies

Apart from a normative understanding of social cohesion and social integration for which the debates of the CA could offer important insights, the WORKABLE case studies clearly showed that, apart from the buzzwords and jargon manifest in official programme documents, a range of interests come to the fore within this policy field.

The example of the Polish case study (Sztander-Sztanderska and Zielenska 2012), even though it represents a certain “outlier”, points towards this problem quite clearly as do the analysis about the varied responses to the crisis of the dual system. The channelling of vulnerable and disadvantaged youth into a set of newly created activation measure programmes in the context of a dualised welfare system is not simply driven by the goal of social cohesion and social inclusion. Rather, the creation and implementation of policies vis-à-vis groups that are at risk of social exclusion such as vulnerable and disadvantaged youth constitute a highly contested political field. Different social, political and economic interests try to influence and steer the emerging strategies and activities concerning vulnerable and disadvantaged youth.

Thus, even the Austrian research, which analysed a programme which clearly aims at social integration of its target groups, also highlighted the relevance of the state interest in social control and regulation of, for example, (urban) excluded and unemployed youth as a new dangerous class which might pose a problem to public order, as could be seen in other European countries where riots took place (France, UK) (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011). Concerns about public order and safety also popped up at the back of other case studies such as the Scottish/UK one. In the UK context riots and other form of social unrest, which are linked to the social situation of the poor and in particular the young and their relation to public authorities, have for a long time been at the back of developments in youth policies as has been highlighted in relation to the emergence of labour market policies and workfare (Peck 1996) over the last three decades. Furthermore, there are also economic interests, which lie behind the goals of the emerging set of activities and programmes tackling youth unemployment and social exclusion. It is very often rather precarious and low-paid employment that the programmes and measures within the emerging peripheral welfare regime prepare young people for, or even force them to accept. Thus, it cannot be denied that there is also an interest to stabilise and regulate a flexible, precarious and low-waged segment of the labour market by the state as well as the business side.

Concluding Remarks: Perspectives in the Crisis

The outlined changes raise a range of questions from the perspective of the CA as they clearly pertain to the problem whether individuals can have (or even enlarge their) real freedom to make informed choices about their lives, work and position in society more general or whether they have to adapt to the new demands of a globalised economy and an activating welfare system (Bonvin 2009b).

- (a) First, the WORKABLE research analysed and problematised the concrete relations and interactions between the peripheral and core welfare institutions, through which vulnerable and disadvantaged youth become socially excluded and therefore the object of activation regimes. Measures and programmes can either try to secure social inclusion of vulnerable

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and disadvantaged groups through activities that support them in integrating into the standard path of education and employment, allowing them to project a stable biography or can instead focus on the expansion of strategies of social control and discipline of the poor and unemployed who are increasingly seen as a threat to mainstream society. In particular, the fears of the middle classes regarding the “new” dangerous classes of poor and unemployed youth, migrants, unskilled, etc. feed social segregation which increasingly dualised welfare state institutions might reproduce.

Against this background, a normative evaluation of the (changing) functions of welfare systems and educational regimes as proposed by the debates about the CA supports critical analysis to look behind the smoke-screen of certain buzzwords and jargon of activation policies. Confronted with the weakness of social movements in many countries which would not only offer an alternative interpretation of the realities of welfare systems but would rather change them, the CA offers an alternative entry point for an in-depth debate of recent changes as it focuses on the person and his/her situation as regard the amount of real freedom he/she possesses to choose and conduct the life he/she wishes to lead (see above).

However, notwithstanding the significance of democracy for the CA, the lack of social movements in many countries leaves the position of democratic processes in a rather awkward situation. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in the WORKABLE case studies, there is hardly any debate about the creation of individual and collective capabilities to change the social circumstances in increasingly flexibilised and precarious labour markets. To my mind, the individualised understanding of an internalisation of “realist life plans” explains why the analyses of WORKABLE reported rather limited scope for participation of young people in the policies and programmes that affect them.

Their integration as fully participating citizens is therefore hardly a topic of the outlined measures and programmes apart from the goal to integrate them into the labour market. This corresponds well with the worrying result of some case studies which reveal a lack of a sense of entitlement among young target groups. This poses a range of interesting questions for further research. Do people who are the target of activation regimes due to their individual deficits give up the idea of having social rights to social integration and a good life? What would this mean for future development of welfare systems as well as democracy? How do democratic processes and structures have to change to make capability formation a field of participation?

- (b) Second, the case studies offer insights into the dominant modes of operation and functional principles embodied in the emerging peripheral welfare regimes of dualized welfare states. Thus, the problems of young

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people are defined as deficiencies and needs, ranging from insufficient educational abilities, the lack of an adequate work ethic and adequate secondary virtues (discipline, responsibility, punctuality etc.), to non-conformist lifestyles, family background, migrant status, etc. Less focus is put on the abilities and aspirations young people might have. This is neglected as many policies want young people to become more “realistic” and attuned with labour market demands, the former being of relevance only if they support individual employability.

Linked to this is the attempt by most of the analysed measures and strategies to implement programmes, which are said to be tailor-made to the problems of the specific groups of young people. However, as these problems are defined as failure of young people in the standard path of education and the transition to the labour market, it is companies, educational and labour market institutions, youth experts, etc. who define these problems and what constitutes a socially desirable way out of social exclusion and a socially integrative lifestyle.

Furthermore, there are no adequate attempts in many countries to accompany youth-related measures with macroeconomic employment policies, which try to create sufficient employment opportunities and to improve employment conditions through attempts to fight precarisation and instability. This is particularly pressing in the current period of crisis. Rather, the aim is to spread the risk of unemployment but also precarious and flexible employment among a higher share of the workforce so as to overcome the segmentation of the labour market in this way.

Taken together, transcending a narrow conceptualisation of workfare and activation, the CA can help us to identify the historically and nationally concrete normative issues that lie behind the question what it means to be able to work and to be educated in the knowledge-based economy and to identify and interpret the social aspirations and demands which emerge in the everyday practices and struggles of (young) individuals and groups who try to cope with changing circumstances. Thus, the articulation of the CA with critical analysis of the changes of work and welfare states can help us to identify their political and contested character. This is important because the strong emphasis which is currently put on human capital formation and education can be interpreted as the result of a fundamental shift in power relations – if power is understood according to Karl W. Deutsch as the ability to afford NOT to learn. Thus, the imperative to permanently learn and adapt is the result of a fundamental loss of power for employees and their organisations.

In the on-going shift towards a knowledge-based economy, this has a range of significant effects, as it means that the onus of adaptation to a constantly changing economic environment is put on the employees and their ability to learn and change as quickly as possibility. If adaptation through learning is

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the most important precondition to secure one's competitiveness, the very activities of employees themselves contribute to the general trend towards 'precarisation' as the skills and competences workers acquire are made obsolete through their very actions. This in turn not only contributes to destabilising their employment careers and life course but also contributes to the crisis of solidarity which accompanies the outlined changes of the welfare state (Atzmüller 2011a).

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