

## Dynamics of Educational Regimes and Capability-Oriented Research

*Roland Atzmüller, University of Linz*

### 1 Introduction

The main objective of the WORKABLE project was to analyse the resources and institutional support young people need to develop and expand their capabilities “to function as fully participating citizens in emerging European knowledge societies” (Proposal WORKABLE 2009, 3). For an increasing number of young people, this is a growing problem in the face of increasingly unstable and precarious employment careers. Therefore, young people’s transitions from the educational system to the labour market and their significance for changing structures of inequality (Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009) pose a major problem for European policy makers as well as research on the trajectories of the European social models (Hermann and Mahnkopf 2010).

Most attempts to extend the capability approach (CA) (Sen 2007; 2009) to educational issues employ the concept of capability to widen the remit of education, its goals and contents against narrower concepts, such as human capital or employability. Such debates thus emphasise the significance of education in enabling individuals to develop a range of capabilities that allow them to lead the life they have reason to value. In this way, education impacts on the development of societies at large, the expansion of democracy as well as participation and human flourishing (Walker 2010; Brighouse and Unterhalter 2010). There is no doubt that these are fundamental issues in the debates on reforms of educational systems and educational responses to changing social relations and economic dynamics (Saito 2003: 348; Robeyns 2006; Otto and Ziegler 2006; 2008). However, as many debates on the CA are based on a very general conceptual level, the question remains as to how to enhance this approach for more concrete research on varying national systems and different policy fields such as education and labour-market policy. Thus, even though the CA is firmly grounded in normative debates (Sen 2007; 2009), the WORKABLE project tried to approach its basic concepts from a comparative perspective in order to come to terms with national variations.

As the CA does not allow tracing back national variations in capabilities to alleged natural differences in character and abilities between nations, varieties in the institutionalisation of so-called external capability sets had to come into focus. For WORKABLE, the latter were defined as “economically, culturally and institutionally structured sets of attainable life paths” (Proposal WORKABLE 2009, 5). Thus, external capabilities are fundamentally structured by the socially specific construction and provision of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors. Together, they shape the national differences of people of being able to work and to be educated.

Such an approach allows for an operationalisation of the CA that is sensitive to national variation as it opens capability-oriented research to the comparative debates on educational and/or welfare regimes (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Hega and Hokenmaier 2002; Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Iversen and Stephens 2008; Lauder et al. 2008; Peter et al. 2010; Beblavy

et al. 2011). As an entry point, the debates on educational regimes and welfare-state typologies may be interpreted as attempts to conceptualise – in an albeit very limited way – national variations of external capability sets that emerge from the varied forms and availability of resources and commodities as well as the institutionalisation of conversion factors (Sen 2007). However, this interpretation is only adequate in so far as these analyses conceive of the varied outcomes of educational and/or welfare regimes according to normative concepts such as inequality/equality (Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009), social inclusion/poverty, de/commodification, etc. (e.g. Lauder et al. 2008; De la Porte and Jacobson 2012).

However, due to the limited scope of many such analyses, which often rest on rather narrow operationalisations of the outlined normative concepts, the results of this research cannot simply be taken as an approximation of a capability-oriented research strategy about national variations. Furthermore, a lot of research grounded e.g. in the concept of educational regimes focuses on dimensions that are only significant for an assessment of nationally varied capability sets if they are specified according to criteria that fit to the CA. This is because they mainly focus on the relevance of education for economic competitiveness, thereby reducing education to human capital formation (Sen 1995). Thus, at this stage of capability-oriented research I would rather argue that the analyses of educational regimes have to be seen as attempts to identify variations of education and labour-market institutions that constitute specific regimes of functionings, i.e. things individuals actually do (Sen 2007; 2009). This problem emerges as these analyses typically do not include attempts to assess the range of alternative options individuals could choose from, the freedom they would need to do so and whether the actual outcomes of their actions are really based on choices they have reason to value.

From the perspective of the CA, it can nevertheless be argued that these regimes of functionings (i.e. employment status, certain forms of education, family life, etc.) are the result of educational (as well as welfare) regimes that provide a range of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors. However, their stratified outcomes and the conditions of labour-market entry that emerge from them, the relationship between the degree of real freedom of individuals and the necessities and constraints imposed by market processes and public policies would require more research from the perspective of the CA (on the capability to work, see: Bonvin 2012). This issue also emerges from the available body of studies concerning educational (as well as welfare) regimes (e.g. Ryan 2001; Müller 2005). These studies clearly reveal that the regimes of functionings individuals can attain are stratified by gender, ethnic background, class, etc. Hence the question has to be asked why the regimes of commodities and resources as well as conversion factors are unequally distributed. From the perspective of education and labour-market integration the restricted and stratified availability of certain functionings is of crucial importance. This is because the ability to attain certain educational levels and to hold a formal employment contract offering social insurance, certain levels of income, etc. defines the conditionality (e.g. social rights, monetary resources, social services, etc.) of – in particular – the conversion factors people can dispose of to make use of the socially available regimes of resources and commodities.

Notwithstanding the conceptual considerations concerning the usefulness of the debates about educational and welfare regimes, another central question for the WORKABLE project emerges. The research on educational and welfare regimes mainly focuses on general analyses of variations between different regimes by comparing the predominant institutional structures and life chances of individuals. Thus, they only provide scant information on groups that fail

in different countries and on the varying strategies used to tackle the problems of marginalised groups.

Of course, there is good reason to assume that a country's dominant institutional configuration will shape any effort undertaken to tackle social exclusion and to deal with people that fail in the dominant educational route. However, such a conclusion might well be premature as some countries could show striking variations at the "margins" of the dominant institutional configurations, engendering a vast variety of responses to growing problems within the dominant institutional setting.

Thus, after a brief outline of common trends dominating in all European countries – albeit in nationally varied forms – I will try to identify trends that vary between different educational and welfare regimes. Finally, I will show that developments can also vary considerably within one regime type, in particular in relation to policy strategies affecting so-called marginal groups within the dominant regime.

## **2 National variations of functionings: educational regimes and welfare-state typologies**

In the context of debates on employment and welfare systems (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Ferrera and Hemerijck 2003; Iversen and Stephens 2008) or varieties of capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001; Lauder et al. 2008), attempts have been made to identify educational regimes and to group countries accordingly. As a consequence, in recent debates there has been growing awareness of the interrelations and interaction between welfare regimes and educational systems (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Hega and Hokenmaier 2002; Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Peter et al. 2010; Beblavy et al. 2011). The dominant attempts to identify educational systems (Verdier 2007; CEDEFOP 2008; 2011) correspond to the typologies of welfare regimes (e.g. Lessenich and Ostner 1998; Esping-Andersen and Miles 2009). This can, in particular, be said for the importance of strategies to combat social disadvantages and inequalities linked to social origin and status (e.g. Ryan 2001; 2005; Müller 2005; Blossfeld et al. 2007; Grolsch 2008; Kurz et al. 2008), the significance of early selection and status preservation, and the possible trade-offs and interactions between a human-capital orientation of educational processes vs. wider concepts of knowledge and education (e.g. *Bildung*), etc. (Lauder et al. 2008).

Depending on nationally specific institutional settings of education and welfare and their coupling in the phase of transition from education to employment, different outcomes in relation to social inequalities are discerned (Blossfeld 2006; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011). The different worlds of the production of skills and competencies are defined by the different types of skills and the institutionalisation of the transition from education to employment. Concerning the production of skills and competencies and their links to employment systems, at least three regimes (Crouch et al. 1999; Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Iversen and Stephens 2008) and sometimes more (Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; Verdier 2007) are identified. They are defined according to which type of skill and which institutional form to "produce" them dominates the respective regime. The main differentiation is between:

- general skills, which are easily transferable between companies and are predominantly produced in public – and in some countries, in particular for highly qualified employees, also private – education systems (e.g. schools, universities);

- occupational or industry-specific skills, which are provided in a system of alternance combining on-the-job training with education in a public institution and offering employees intermediate skills for mobility between firms but within the same occupation on craft labour markets (Marsden 1999);
- firm-specific skills, which are mainly provided within companies. They can be linked to the creation of internal labour markets to protect companies from staff poaching by competitors and can result in long-term employment relationships.

These types of skills are linked to the following rough distinction of educational pathways in initial VET (Crouch, Finegold and Sako 1999; Estevez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice 2001; CEDEFOP 2008; Iversen and Stephens 2008; 2011):

1. General skills, provided according to the educational ability of young persons, are mainly obtained through an academic pathway (chiefly) focusing on state-run educational institutions (schools and universities). Very often, there is also a high share of private education (the US is an example with a high share of private provision (Verdier 2007)). Thus, the bureaucratic regulation of educational processes is very important for the production of this type of skills (e.g. France, Italy). However, in countries with a dominant focus on general skills problems emerge for young people who are less inclined to academic education. In particular if the transition from school to work is weakly institutionalised (cf. Iversen and Stephens 2008), an educational regime focusing on general skills is likely to be complemented by a market-based system of VET (e.g. Great Britain). Thus, people who are less successful in the academic route of education are not offered adequate forms of initial VET (Crouch et al. 1999; Blossfeld 2006; CEDEFOP 2008; Iversen and Stephens 2008) that will enable them to integrate into employment. They do not have many incentives for continuous VET either because the provision of training is more or less left to the market. This can lead to a polarised skills structure, the danger of social exclusion and the emergence of secondary labour markets based on flexible and unstable employment (Marsden 1999) for the low skilled who, at best, acquire firm-specific skills. This may lead to under-investment in skill-formation and market failure (Crouch et al. 1999). It is only in countries with a long tradition of internal labour markets (e.g. Japan) that the concentration on firm-specific skills does not necessarily create a low-skills economy for those who fail in the general education system. To prevent staff poaching, employees must be offered high levels of employment protection and a stable career perspective by companies. Educational regimes that are predominantly based on general skills often go hand in hand with flexibilised employment systems as well as residual/liberal and fragmented welfare systems as they dominate in Anglo-Saxon countries and/or in Southern Europe. Thus, young people face low wages, insecure employment contracts and unstable phases of transition into employment (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).
2. In countries where VET is based on a system of alternance (i.e. a combination of training through work experience with education in a public institution) and connected to occupational labour markets a structured transition from

education to employment on the intermediate level is offered to young school leavers (e.g. Marsden 1999; Crouch et al. 1999). The “dual system” in place in Central European countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Switzerland) is paradigmatic for this pathway of education. Curricula as well as forms of certification are linked to corporatist forms of social partnership and the ability of unions, employer organisations and the state to commit their members to investment in VET, to low wages for apprentices and to the inter-company recognition of qualifications (Crouch et al. 1999). With its strong emphasis on the concept of “occupation”/“profession” (*Beruf*), this system is said to combine participation in employment with social identity and integration. This type of educational regime has traditionally been associated with conservative welfare regimes based on the preservation of social status also reproduced through the “dual system” (Lauder et al. 2008). Nonetheless, this regime is increasingly subject to problems regarding the quality of training and the availability of apprenticeships. In so-called conservative welfare regimes, the early selection of pupils forecloses more academic paths of education for a large number of young people at an early stage (notwithstanding recent improvements to switch educational paths at a later stage). However, for those school leavers who succeed in completing an apprenticeship, transition into the labour market is stabilised through the employment-centred conservative welfare regime associated with corporatist employment relations (Bosch 2009). Even though many young people face increasing problems finding stable employment after completing an apprenticeship, this form of transition from education to employment still manages to stabilise life courses for many workers (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011). However, in recent years a growing number of youngsters have been unable to find company-based apprenticeship places (e.g. in Germany) due to social inequalities concerning family origins, social status, migrant background as well as failure at school (early school leavers) (Krekel and Ulrich 2009).

3. A third educational system is based on a (universalist) public system of education which tries to provide general as well as vocational skills according to the abilities of pupils and to guarantee the permeability of different educational routes. Skill formation systems of this type lead to rather low social inequalities and compressed skills structures. This allows countries to adapt to new technologies quickly and to embark on a high value-added economic strategy (Lauder et al. 2008). Furthermore, the transition from education to employment is usually associated with an expanding system of active labour-market policies set up to help young people adapt to changing labour-market requirements by means of retraining and up-skilling (Crouch et al. 1999; Iversen and Stephens 2008). Thus, the risk of permanent social exclusion is reduced for young people even in times of ever more flexible labour markets and increasingly precarious jobs. In this way, this type of educational regime roughly corresponds to the so-called universal welfare regime in place in the Scandinavian countries (Crouch et al. 1999) with its focus on high levels of social security, an expanded public sector providing a considerable number of jobs for e.g. women and solidaristic wage policies to fight inequalities among different groups of employees. Nevertheless, it is

obvious that not all groups of young people benefit from this institutional setting in the same way. Thus, there is a significant share of young people who are failed by the universalist education system. Furthermore, the transition from the (public) education system into the labour market does not seem to be adequately institutionalised for all groups of young people, leading to relatively high levels of unemployment within this age group (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008).

### **3 Common developments**

Notwithstanding the outlined variations, the analyses of the WORKABLE project allowed us to identify a range of developments and trends that can be found in all countries even though it is clear that their concrete configuration cannot be understood without taking into account national and regime-type specificities in an adequate way (see the detailed analyses in: WORKABLE 2011). The attempt however to identify and highlight developments that are common to all countries is important from the perspective of the CA and its significance for debates about the European Social Model.

The results of the WORKABLE project (2011) revealed that most countries face growing problems to ensure the social integration into stable employment careers of a mounting number of young people. Thus, the transitions from (compulsory) school to VET and from VET into the labour market, which constitute crucial steps in an individual's life course, put national educational and welfare regimes (in particular Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) for young people) to the test. Even though the situation of young people differs considerably between countries, a range of macro-social trends responsible for the growing problems of social integration and increasingly instable transition into adult life can be found in (more or less) all countries. However, from the perspective of the WORKABLE project and its European perspective their varied realisation is of crucial importance. Creating knowledge about the dynamics of national variations not only increases the complexity of social research and public policies but can also serve as a source of alternative paths and solutions to the crisis.

Thus, we observe that societies' mounting difficulties to integrate young people into stable employment paths and to avoid social exclusion affects certain categories of young people more often than others (e.g. Ryan 2001; WORKABLE 2011). Thus, it is in particular young people with low educational attainment and with migrant background who increasingly face problems during the transition to employment. For young women, the situation seems to be rather mixed as they generally show a higher propensity for staying in the academic route of education than their male peers. Another social dynamic that strongly affects the labour-market integration of young people after the completion of compulsory schooling is the growing importance of the academic route of education. The availability of an ever larger number of highly educated and skilled people, along with the loss of low-skilled employment opportunities increases the competitive pressures at the lowest end of the skills ladder. Not only is a growing number of people less likely to be able to make use of the opportunities within a certain educational regime, due to, amongst other things, the growing diversity of the population (migration); but, compared to the days of the Fordist Golden Age (e.g. Jessop 2002), a large number of low-skilled jobs which used to provide stable employment paths have disappeared while precarious and unstable forms of employment have increased (Blossfeld 2006; Erzsébet et al. 2008; e.g. Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).

Another general trend that can be seen from the WORKABLE Case Studies (for more details on the case studies, see: WORKABLE 2012) and the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) refers back to the debates about the transformation of (welfare) states in its broadest sense from so-called Keynesian welfare national states to a Schumpeterian workfare post-national regimes (e.g. Jessop 2002). Thus, young people's growing problems to follow the standard routes from the educational system into stable employment have spawned intense search strategies not only to develop and implement new strategies and measures to tackle this problem but also to rescale political responsibilities between national, regional and local institutions, to create and implement new institutions and (sometimes also) to integrate new actors. Very often these processes seem to be driven by decentralisation and regionalisation strategies. The professed goal of these developments is to bring educational processes, and in particular those that aim to tackle processes of social exclusion, closer to local communities and to the needs of the local economy, thereby trying to improve the matching process between young people looking for employment and companies searching for new employees. Even though these outlined trends seem to be common for more or less all regime types they can differ considerably between countries as will be highlighted below in relation to countries where firm-specific skill strategies dominate.

Another remarkable development revealed by the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) is that the educational system, the labour market and the economy are increasingly seen to require specific strategies to bring them closer together. In this context, the symbolic role of the German dual system, which bases VET on a combination of on-the-job training and theoretically oriented education in public (vocational) schools, is worth mentioning. Even if an implementation of German-style reforms of the transitory period between compulsory schooling and employment via a dual system all over Europe is unlikely, the idea of bringing schooling and working closer together has gained a strong foothold in European countries. 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, the downside of these developments is a shift in educational concepts and goals towards employability and human capital.

#### **4 Variations between educational regimes**

As outlined, the Institutional Mapping of the WORKABLE project (WORKABLE 2011) has shown that all countries face growing problems maintaining stable paths of integration into employment for young people. However, at this stage of capability-oriented research about the ways in which educational regimes try to cope with marginalised youth, only stylised hypotheses can be developed about regime-specific differences. It should be of no surprise that these problems seem most pronounced – at least if youth unemployment or the participation in full-time education are taken as the main indicators for these developments – in countries where the phase of transition after completion of compulsory schooling is least well (if at all) organised. Especially countries whose VET systems have traditionally been based on a high degree of voluntarism and predominately firm-specific training are faced with record youth unemployment and unstable employment in extremely flexible labour markets. For this reason, they have embarked on comprehensive search strategies to create effective (and efficient) sets of institutions designed to stabilise young people's transition into the labour market. Notwithstanding the role of central provisions and frameworks, a crucial tenet of these processes is the decentralised implementation of new institutions and programmes aimed at stimulating local innovation in social policies concerning VET and the labour-market integration of young people. Even though it is hard draw general conclusions on these

trends from the Institutional Mapping (WORKABLE 2011) and the Case Studies (WORKABLE 2012) of the WORKABLE project – due not only to the necessarily limited scope of the project but also to the experimental and innovative character of many of the analysed developments – some key problem areas could be identified. One is a growing fragmentation of educational systems, which become unable to provide all citizens – independently of where they live – with adequate educational opportunities and labour-market possibilities. One of the effects of this fragmentation is that educational institutions can no longer guarantee the same quality of educational services everywhere. This raises the question of whether growing inequalities, reproduced not least through the educational regimes and conditions of labour-market entry, are not further aggravated by these tendencies. Therefore, due to the highly flexibilised and segmented character of labour markets and the high share of contingent labour in these countries, this casts doubt on the ability of emerging institutions to create equal opportunities for young people in all regions. Possibly positive effects of decentralised place-sensitive strategies could be marred by the growing fragmentation of the system. Even more so, viewed from the perspective of the emerging disparity of activation regimes, there seems to be a strong reliance on strategies of discipline and the social control of young people, which runs counter to fundamental prerequisites of a capability-oriented strategy based on adequate possibilities for voice and exit (for more detailed considerations: Pascual 2007; Revilla and Pascual 2007; Bonvin 2012).

Countries with a more universal educational regime that organise VET through the public education system still seem to have the institutional resources to keep a high share of young people in full-time education until they are 19, thereby diminishing education-based social inequalities. On top of that, they have the advantage of being able to rely on an expanded system of ALMP for young people, which – at least in theory – should be able to support those who fail in the universalist educational system. Even though it remains open how the education systems and dominant activation regimes in countries of this type interact when it comes to new problems, it seems that the institutional density permits well organised processes of experimentation with new strategies and programmes (WORKABLE 2011, 2012). However, given the strong role of the public vocational path, it remains unclear whether new strategies and programmes are successful in reintegrating young people who were failed by the standard route – hence the high level of youth unemployment in countries such as Sweden. Should the problem of integration into employment of a substantial group of young people persist in these countries, severe social problems for these countries' welfare models might loom in the future.

## **5 Emerging variations within educational regimes – the case of the dual system**

The Institutional Mapping of countries relying on the dual system of VET has shown – well in line with the international debates – that these countries can still rely on a dense and well organised institutional system for the transitory phase from compulsory education to VET and into stable employment (e.g. Kurz et al. 2008). Furthermore, these countries also dispose of a differentiated set of activation strategies to cope with young people who fail in the standard path. Thus, youngsters who cannot find an apprenticeship place are offered a set of activation measures, with youth unemployment kept at a comparably low level (Ryan 2001; Erzsébet et al. 2008; Kurz et al. 2008; Hofäcker and Blossfeld 2011).

However, recent developments, including a persistent lack of apprenticeship places, a general educational expansion, the growth of precarious and flexibilised segments of the labour market and a complementary loss of low qualified jobs, raise doubts about the future viability

of this system of human capital formation and its significance for identity formation and social stability.

As the number of young people who cannot enter an apprenticeship each year is now quite significant in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, the available set of institutions and programmes aimed at tackling these problems are moving to the foreground. The most important question is whether and how participation in training-oriented measures within the activation system can be coupled with the standard path of VET in the dual system, i.e. whether these measures are credited for training in the dual system or whether ALMPs for young people are little more than a “waiting room” for entry into the labour market or an apprenticeship, thereby helping to provide an increasingly flexible labour market with a docile workforce. In this context, also questions of control, discipline and employability in the growing low-wage segments of the labour market emerge, casting doubt on the capability friendliness of these developments. Given the common trends and problems in countries with a dual system, the WORKABLE project (2011, 2012) found quite remarkable differences between Germany, Switzerland and Austria in their attempts to tackle the crisis.

In Germany, where in recent years between 40-50% of school leavers – in particular those with low educational attainment and migrant background – could not find an apprenticeship place, marginalised young people are placed in a so-called “transitory system” (*Übergangssystem*) consisting of a range of activation, job coaching and training measures (Greinert 2007; Atzmüller 2011; Ley and Lohr 2012). Critics argue that these measures can at best be a “waiting room” for apprenticeship positions in the standard VET path, at worst the start of a career in the activation regime and/or low-skilled employment. As these measures are not designed to provide entry into the standard VET system closely protected by the responsible actors such as unions and employer organisations, they rather serve to play down youth unemployment figures. Thus, despite the professed “transitory” nature of such a support system for those who fail in the standard route, its residual and precarious character and its inadequate coupling with the dual system raises the question of whether we are not witnessing the emergence of a new institutional mix. Given the sheer amount of young people affected by these measures every year, the question is whether the emerging, albeit fluid and constantly shifting system of institutions does not much rather serve to stabilise and regulate an increasingly precarious and flexibilised labour market in Germany, in which growing segments are forced to rely on low-wage jobs (Atzmüller 2011). In connection with attempts to modularise VET and to implement apprenticeships of a shorter duration, this could further weaken the dual system in Germany. Even though in Switzerland the dual system of VET is facing similar problems as in Germany, the Institutional Mapping showed some remarkable Swiss peculiarities (Gonon 2005; Salder and Nägele 2009; Bonvin et al. 2011; Seitz et al. 2012; Meyer 2012). Thus, the dual system is still the most important educational path after the end of compulsory schooling. A much higher share of young people try to enter the dual system after completing school in Switzerland than in Germany and Austria (where the number of pupils who try to stay in the public path of education is higher). In the German-speaking regions of Switzerland, up to 80% of young people (in particular males) start an apprenticeship after school. Nevertheless, in recent years a lack of apprenticeship places and the diminishing willingness of companies to train apprentices have created problems. Similar to Germany, a system of transitory programmes and measures has emerged to try and support young people throughout an extended placement search phase. In contrast to Germany, the temporary character of this search phase seems predominant, as most youngsters succeed in

entering an apprenticeship sooner or later (Salder and Nägele 2009; Seitz et al. 2012; Meyer 2012).

However, in some regions of Switzerland a growing number of young people cannot be reintegrated into VET as the social assistance system they were referred to provided some disincentives (e.g. loss of benefits) to take up an apprenticeship (Bonvin et al. 2011). Dissatisfied with the perspective of permanent social exclusion among certain groups of young people, regional policies have been set up in the attempt to implement measures that create paths of reintegration into the standard route of VET via the dual system or professional schools (see the case study about the FORJAD-programme in the Canton of Vaud (Bonvin et al. 2011)). These programmes focus on supply-side measures of professional rehabilitation, focussing first of all on marketability and employability and, at a later stage, on professional training. Thus, the Swiss case studies revealed an interesting strategy to reinforce the standard path of VET by creating a training institution for marginalised groups aimed at paving the way into the standard route for their clients. However, given the strong reliance on creaming of participants (Bonvin et al. 2011), the question remains open of what the perspectives of youngsters deemed unfit for an apprenticeship in the dual system really are.

While the crisis of the dual system in Germany has led to the emergence of a “transitory system” whose emerging function seems to stabilise young people’s “integration” into a flexibilised labour market based on precarious and low-wage employment and while in Switzerland we find examples of strategies to build institutions and implement programmes which create paths to reintegrate marginalised youth into the standard route of VET, the Austrian case provides a further variant of how to tackle the particular crisis of the dual system. Here, an additional, publicly funded and organised arm of the dual system has been implemented under the label of a “training guarantee” for all young people under the age of 18 (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011). In general, the dual system in Austria faces similar problems as in Germany and Switzerland. Thus, about 40% of young people still start an apprenticeship at the age of 15 (about 40% continue in the public school system, including schools with a high degree of vocational preparation). The overall number of apprenticeship places has declined by about one third over the last two decades. Similarly, the number of companies offering apprenticeships has gone down considerably (Haidinger and Atzmüller 2011; Dornmayr and Nowak 2012). In recent years, there has been an average gap of about 2,000 apprenticeship places per year.

Confronted with a growing crisis in VET, the Austrian government, in collaboration with the social partners, passed a so-called “training guarantee” for all young people under the age of 18. The aim of the guarantee is to provide every school leaver, who cannot not continue school-based education, with an apprenticeship place. The main instrument for this is to replace existing ALMP measures that mainly served to prepare young people for an apprenticeship in the regular labour market with so-called supra-company apprenticeship training funded by the PES and mainly run by non-profit organisations. These supra-company training companies now offer apprenticeships for about 30 to 40 occupations (out of about 300 occupations for which formal apprenticeships are available in Austria) to about 10% of all Austrian apprentices. However, whether completion of an apprenticeship in a supra-company training programme will offer the same opportunities for stable employment as the standard route of VET remains to be seen as stigmatising is still an open question. Nevertheless, there are hopes that the reputation of supra-company training programmes will be quick to improve as, unlike company-based apprenticeships, these schemes are not subject to market pressures and can thus provide higher quality training.

Notwithstanding the outlined problems, this development is quite remarkable as an additional, public column of the dual system has been created that offers young people an alternative route to apprenticeship-level, thereby breaking the monopoly of the private sector in the dual system. Strengthening the public role can not only contribute to guaranteeing high-quality apprenticeship programmes but also, at least in theory, allow for an expansion of the (general) educational contents of apprenticeship programmes to support young people in the transition to adulthood. The inclusion of social-pedagogical measures in supra-company training programmes already points in this direction. However, as the outlined system is rather costly it may well be a temporary phenomenon to be scrapped or at least scaled down as soon as demographic changes and economic recovery create a lack of applicants for apprenticeships. On the other hand, given the sceptical views of many businesses concerning the educational and behavioural deficiencies of school leavers and their abilities to take up an apprenticeship and thus their declining willingness to offer training places, the supra-company training system might well be here to stay.

## 6 Conclusions

The WORKABLE project has tried to create a comparative research strategy for the CA, thereby trying to bring it closer to debates about educational and welfare regimes as approximations of regimes of resources and commodities and nationally varied institutionalisations of conversion factors. In the more micro-oriented case studies, WORKABLE (2012) tried to discern the significance of a range of measures for young people at risk of social exclusion to create capabilities which enable them to lead the live they have reason to value. From the perspective of national variations and different regime types, a more modest conclusion has to be drawn. Thus, the outlined changes in educational regimes and their efforts to create and implement new institutions and strategies to tackle the problems of marginalised youth are mainly focused on a range of rather narrow functionings (e.g. participation in VET programmes, entry into employment) among which young people have to choose. Thus, the reconfiguration and adaptation of educational and welfare regimes, consisting of nationally varied sets of resources and commodities as well as conversion factors, to the problems of young people seems mainly geared towards narrowly defined outcomes in which the goal of labour-market participation prevails. Having said this, significant differences between different systems emerge. Generally, measures to tackle the problems of youth who fail in the standard path from education into (stable) employment oscillate between two poles. Either the emerging strategies try to reintegrate young people into the standard path of education and entry into employment through special support programmes that not only tackle the (alleged) deficiencies of young people but also provide qualifications and certificates that allow participants to move on to the standard paths. Or they try to implement or stabilise an additional, complementary route from compulsory schooling into the labour market that is less geared towards reintegration into the standard path of progression but rather aims to secure the availability of young people for a flexibilised labour market. Such measures certainly lean more towards workfarist labour-market policies (Revilla and Pascual 2007). Which strategies predominate depends very much on when in the educational path failure happens and how the problems of certain groups of young people are framed by the educational system and labour-market institutions. Thus, the notion of reintegration into a standard route of progression might predominate in the implementation of specific programmes for marginalised youth when ideas of a social right to a certain level of education is violated, i.e. if people are, for instance, failed by the system of compulsory public education. Strategies to expand a workfarist labour-market system to stabilise an increasingly precarious transition into flexibilised labour markets might prevail where progression to the

next step is not defined by compulsion and social rights but rather by competition and market processes, which means that the focus is put on the employability of young people.

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**Author's Address:**

Dr. Roland Atzmüller  
University of Linz  
Institute of Sociology  
Department for theoretical Sociology and Social Structure Analysis  
Altenbergerstraße 69  
A-4040 Linz  
Austria  
Tel: ++ 43 732 2468 8361  
Email: [roland.atzmueller@jku.at](mailto:roland.atzmueller@jku.at)