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Families and Transitions in Europe

FATE

FINAL REPORT

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Families and Transitions in Europe

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Final report

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Coordinator of project:
School of Policy Studies, University of Ulster
Coleraine, United Kingdom
Anderw Biggart

Partners:
University of Copenhagen, Department of Psychology, DK, Prof. Niels Engelsted
Dresden University of Technology, DE, Alfred Post
Asociación Regional y Europea de Análisis, Betera, ES, Prof. German Gil Rodriguez
University of Plovdiv, Department of Social Sciences, BG, Prof. Nikolay Jilov
Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, IT, Prof. Marcello Fontanesi
Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., Munich, DE, Prof. Ingo Richter
European Society for Regional and International Social Research, Tübingen, DE, Dr
Gebhard Stein

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Preface

Within the Fifth Community RTD Framework Programme of the European Union (1998–2002), the Key Action 'Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base' had broad and ambitious objectives, namely: to improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in European society, to identify ways of managing these changes and to promote the active involvement of European citizens in shaping their own futures. A further important aim was to mobilise the research communities in the social sciences and humanities at the European level and to provide scientific support to policies at various levels, with particular attention to EU policy fields.

This Key Action had a total budget of EUR 155 million and was implemented through three Calls for proposals. As a result, 185 projects involving more than 1 600 research teams from 38 countries have been selected for funding and have started their research between 1999 and 2002.

Most of these projects are now finalised and results are systematically published in the form of a Final Report.

The calls have addressed different but interrelated research themes which have contributed to the objectives outlined above. These themes can be grouped under a certain number of areas of policy relevance, each of which are addressed by a significant number of projects from a variety of perspectives.

These areas are the following:

- ***Societal trends and structural change***

16 projects, total investment of EUR 14.6 million, 164 teams

- ***Quality of life of European citizens***

5 projects, total investment of EUR 6.4 million, 36 teams

- ***European socio-economic models and challenges***

9 projects, total investment of EUR 9.3 million, 91 teams

- ***Social cohesion, migration and welfare***

30 projects, total investment of EUR 28 million, 249 teams

- ***Employment and changes in work***

18 projects, total investment of EUR 17.5 million, 149 teams

- ***Gender, participation and quality of life***

13 projects, total investment of EUR 12.3 million, 97 teams

- ***Dynamics of knowledge, generation and use***

8 projects, total investment of EUR 6.1 million, 77 teams

- ***Education, training and new forms of learning***

14 projects, total investment of EUR 12.9 million, 105 teams

- ***Economic development and dynamics***

22 projects, total investment of EUR 15.3 million, 134 teams

- ***Governance, democracy and citizenship***

28 projects; total investment of EUR 25.5 million, 233 teams

- ***Challenges from European enlargement***

13 projects, total investment of EUR 12.8 million, 116 teams

- ***Infrastructures to build the European research area***

9 projects, total investment of EUR 15.4 million, 74 teams

This publication contains the final report of the project 'Families and Transitions in Europe', whose work has primarily contributed to the area 'Individual and collective strategies in a changing society'.

The report contains information about the main scientific findings of FATE and their policy implications. The research was carried out by eight teams over a period of 39 months, starting in October 2001.

The abstract and executive summary presented in this edition offer the reader an overview of the main scientific and policy conclusions, before the main body of the research provided in the other chapters of this report.

As the results of the projects financed under the Key Action become available to the scientific and policy communities, Priority 7 'Citizens and Governance in a knowledge based society' of the Sixth Framework Programme is building on the progress already made and aims at making a further contribution to the development of a European Research Area in the social sciences and the humanities.

I hope readers find the information in this publication both interesting and useful as well as clear evidence of the importance attached by the European Union to fostering research in the field of social sciences and the humanities.

J.-M. BAER,

Director

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the context of the rapid social change that has occurred over the last three decades in relation to young people's transitions to work and independent adulthood, alongside the changing nature of families the FATE research project aimed to begin to try and make linkages to areas of research and policy which up to now have not been linked in a systematic way. In doing so a number of specific aspects of young people's lives were examined through qualitative research with young people and their parents and a survey of young people in educational institutions in 9 local regions in Europe (Denmark UK, Bulgaria, Germany east, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Netherlands and Germany west); Thematic dimensions to the research included education to work transitions, young people's transitions from the parental home, parental support, family cultures and representations of adulthood and life plans. This summary highlights some of the key aspects of the FATE findings according to each of these dimensions of the study, and attempts to draw these inter-linked but disparate themes into a European comparative perspective on transitions regimes and Integrated Transition Policies. Finally the findings of the project are related to European policy discourses on Lifelong Learning, Employment and Social Inclusion.

1. Education to work Transitions

Although the results of the FATE institutional survey cannot claim to represent a robust representative sample of young people in Europe, they never the less provide an insight into the attitudes and beliefs of a diverse range of young people on the verge of transition across different local and institutional contexts. Respondents in all regions displayed a strong belief in the value of qualifications in the modern labour market and a high level of commitment in and belief in the value of work. Our survey results also highlighted a high level of optimism among the FATE respondents in terms of their assessment of future labour market opportunities. Even among those with limited educational credentials, or from contexts where unemployment among young people is particularly pronounced, few perceived themselves at risk of significant unemployment.

The results of the qualitative follow-up where the majority of young people had already entered, or at least attempted to enter, the labour market demonstrated a more pragmatic or realistic appraisal of labour market opportunities. At this relatively early stage in their labour market careers many had been confronted with the reality of unemployment, temporary and/or poor working conditions. Although unemployment was most common among those with low level qualifications, it was by no means confined to this group and among those with the highest levels of qualification working below one's

educational level was also relatively common. Where initial labour market difficulties were encountered common strategies included returning to education, following dual trajectories of work and education or migration, particularly prevalent among UK (Northern Ireland) and Bulgarian respondents.

The evidence from our respondents supports the view that across all national contexts education to work transitions have become less linear and less predictable. However this does not mean that linear and smooth transitions do not exist, but rather the majority of respondents appear to map out education and labour market trajectories characterised by 'stop go' and 'trial and error' behaviour. A three-fold typology of education to work transitions was developed: The 'Type A' typology represented a group, who follow highly individualised transition routes, have high or middle educational attainment and are typically from the higher socio-economic groups. Their educational trajectories tend to be extended, fragmented and non-linear and many appear driven by the urge for self-development and self-realisation within the fields of education and employment. Type B respondents typically follow relatively smooth and linear transitions to employment along the lines of the systems architecture of the respective education systems. They were represented across all socio-economic groups and signify a functional belief in existing educational systems and a traditional, one off transition to the labour market. Type C respondents were found in all national contexts, were typically from lower socio-economic backgrounds and had either followed short educational routes or have dropped out of education. Most respondents within this group were unemployed and were struggling to gain a permanent foothold in the labour market. These young people appear to lack the 'tools' to handle the changing nature of education and the labour market and feel less able to control and make effective change in their transitions.

2. Housing and Domestic Transitions

Previous European research has highlighted the increasingly protracted stay of young people in the parental home and the wide differences that exist according to welfare regimes. This was reflected within the results of the FATE Institutional survey where although overall around two-thirds (62%) were living within the parental home, this ranged from 98% in Portugal to 36% among the Danish sample. The main reason for leaving home among our Northern European respondents was a desire to become independent, whilst among young people in Southern Europe the reason was more likely to be related to finding a stable job.

The attainment of housing independence tends to be considered a decisive aspect in the transition to independent adulthood. The outcomes of the FATE qualitative research

highlights the fact that housing transitions should be conceived of as a process rather than a clear-cut event. Leaving the parental home can be an extended process, involving one or more returns before making a permanent transition to independent housing. Respondents highlighted a diverse range and complex constellations of reasons for staying within or leaving the parental home and although we have witnessed an increasing extent of individualisation, social and cultural norms were still found to play an important role, manifest in feelings of what is 'normal' or 'right' in given circumstances.

Young people's decisions are also influenced by their fears and desires, alongside broader considerations such as resources, social expectations and structural constraints. The most decisive factor in the decision of whether or not to move to an independent residence however, was related to material factors, particularly structural constraints and uncertain labour market conditions, which have the power to force young people to remain with their parents. Considering subjective factors in the reason to leave home in terms of young people's desires, fears and preferences and the individual's aspiration for autonomy a number of features emerge. The Italian research highlighted how the prolonged permanence in the parental home can undermine the desire to become independent, as home comforts may make young people lose interest, while even short experiences of independent living may serve to enhance the desire to have a place of one's own. Another important subjective dimension that emerged from young people's accounts was represented in the fear of loneliness or not being able to cope with independent living.

The interviews with young people contradict the notion that prolonged educational pathways are the main explanation for prolonged stays within the family home, in so far as higher educated respondents often left home at an earlier stage, when starting university. Whilst some of our younger respondents were too young to be considered as protracted home stayers, in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands young people tend to stay with their parents while they complete vocational training. Protracted home stayers were more evident in Southern Europe and Bulgaria, where prolonged stays are regarded by the young people as being 'obvious' having become the cultural norm. Southern European parents typically feel that staying at home for young people has become advantageous for their children, as they enjoy complete freedom, understanding, affection and help without being confronted with the feeling of being controlled by their parents; parents also feel that young people should not have to compromise their living standards when they do leave home. Elsewhere, such as in the case of the UK, where increasing numbers of young people are remaining with their parents for a longer period of time this is still not perceived as the normal state of affairs.

Within the context of the FATE sample the majority of home-leavers were found among the Danish, Dutch and German respondents, most have a high level of education and the initial place of residence is likely to be functional and non-permanent and associated with leaving home to start university.

3. Support in Transition

In respect of the material support young people receive from their parents among the FATE respondents to the Institutional Survey considerable variation was found across national contexts. Italian and Portuguese parents contributed most to their children's incomes (an average of €146 per month and €102 respectively), and least in Bulgaria (€39) and Denmark (€20). There was variation in young people's sources of incomes according to their educational level, those in the lowest education groups income tended to be derived from employment and state benefits, medium level education training allowances and employment, whilst higher educated respondents received most from their parents, but many also combined this with income from employment and loans or grants.

A typological analysis based on associations between multiple survey indicators and over-representation to key questions identified 5 distinct groups, based on their characteristics, attitudes and support: *Attaining autonomy by social acculturation*, a group over-represented by young people from Netherlands, Spain and UK (typically single, cultured, independent young adults who are employed but still living at home); *Dependency generated by tradition* over-represented among Bulgarian, Portuguese and Spanish respondents (fearful, materialistic, dependent young people); *Early but conditional independence* comprising the bulk of the Danish sample and half of the UK sample (coupled post-modern but vulnerable young people with a high level of economic independence); *Tense anchorage to the family of origin* (dependent, controlled, single, childless and still living with their parents) exclusively found in Italy and *liberating work ethics* (cohabiting, independent, confident young people from Germany, who are relatively economically independent and tend to be living with a partner).

From the qualitative results the forms and extent of family support to young people showed a wide range of diversity, sometimes complete sometimes partial and sometimes absent. In analysing the forms of support young people received five key dimensions or levels of support were identified: material support, network support, advice, emotional support and practical support.

In respect of divergence and convergence across the various FATE contexts there was a clear dichotomy between regions where state support predominates and others where

the family is the main provider. The most abundant levels of state support can be found in Denmark, where the need to support young people's independence is recognised as an explicit goal of social policy. The Southern European and Bulgarian contexts provide a sharp contrast, with only minimal or non-existent state support, young adults' transitions are often heavily dependent upon family resources; hence transitions become very much a family project.

Evidence of the provision of material support from families was most apparent among those who had completed higher education and young people were acutely aware especially in those cases where higher education is not free of the importance of family support for their educational careers. Although this group was over-represented by more affluent families, we also had examples of parents making considerable personal sacrifices to enable their children to realise their full educational potential. Combining employment with studying was often of critical importance in attaining a viable standard of living.

In many European countries the family has also traditionally played a role in securing employment for their offspring through the use of informal networks. In the modern context job allocation processes are assumed to have become more closely tied to cultural and educational capital. In Northern Europe outside exceptional cases there was little evidence of the use of informal networks; however it was prominent elsewhere, especially in Bulgaria and Spain. In the former this is partially a result of the legacy of state socialism, although the prevalence of this practice may also be seen in the context of high levels of competition for limited jobs.

Young people in their accounts also placed a high value on emotional support provided by parents, even more so than material support and where emotional support is not so evident, young adults articulate this loss as a noticeable deficit. This was particularly notable in the Danish case, where parental philosophies of leaving young people to find their own way in the world can translate into a missing form of support. With the increasingly uncertain nature of transitions and the fact that individuals' are increasingly held as responsible for their own decisions access to the provision of sound advice seems particularly salient. Young people were often critical of the advice that was provided through 'official sources' in the form of guidance and counselling, whilst parents although eager to support their children in their decisions were often reticent to guide their children in making educational or occupational decisions, feeling that they lack the knowledge of the modern context to provide sound advice to their children.

From the respondent's accounts of the current support provided by parents this appeared to be provided in largely unconditional ways, although once again a distinction could be drawn between Southern and Northern European contexts. For less affluent families in the Southern contexts distinctions could be made in the provision of material support according to the resources of the family. For less affluent parents, at least in the case of Spain, the attitude could be summed up as, 'If you don't study you will need to work' while among affluent families, the philosophy was more one of, 'If you don't study you can't work'. Although current support was provided in a largely unconditional manner, the deeply enshrined reciprocal expectations embedded within policy and culture, among parents and young people alike, meant there were clear expectations of future reciprocity. This tended to take the form of ongoing support between the generations and particularly in the case of young women expectations of caring for parents in old age. In Northern contexts reciprocal expectations proved more diverse, and many parents did not expect their children to provide for them in old age.

4. Family Cultures

The Institutional Survey highlighted a prevailing perception among young people of positive family relationships, where an image of apparently peaceful co-existence between parents and children would appear to be a clear manifestation of the flexibilisation and individualisation of family relations, forms more compatible with democratic than authoritarian family models. This was evident even in contexts where this trend is very recent. The data showed the highly feminised nature of household management and rules for both generations, in particular in the case of Southern Europe although it was also apparent in Northern European countries albeit less evident. However, there are also cases such as some of those in the Italian context whereby both parents strived to relieve their children, as far as possible from household tasks.

The general feeling of harmony highlighted by the survey results was confirmed within the qualitative analysis, where overall young people do not highlight explicit parental rules they have to comply with. The great majority of young people felt that they had enough material and immaterial room to experience autonomy. The prolonged nature of family dependency in contemporary Europe however creates new demands on intergenerational relationships, whereby parents and young people alike have to reconcile different lifestyles and new types of conflicts. A number of different conflict avoidance strategies were observed: parents may give up their own private space in order to give their children more space and comfort evident in Italy and Bulgaria, or the strategy of forced harmony where young people separate their life into an annoying family life and their own youth life, whom while at home, are more or less forced into a

certain level of harmony, observed in Spain and the UK. Other strategies are more open involving dialogue and negotiation, observed in Denmark and the Netherlands. In Denmark this was attributed to the fact that young people and their parents can more easily develop such open strategies, with a lack of economic constraints the pressure on relationships through expectations and disappointments may be less pronounced.

5. Representations of Adulthood and Life Plans

Surveyed respondents not only expressed a positive attitude in relation to their future job prospects, they expressed a similar level of optimism in respect of their personal prospects: family marriage and children. Young women proved to be slightly more optimistic about their personal projects compared to young men and the higher the educational level the more confident young people felt in this respect. In comparing their anticipated future social and economic situation with that of their parents half of the respondents expected some degree of upward mobility (Much better/A little better), and around a quarter felt their future situation would be similar to their parents. Interestingly comparatively high proportions of the Dutch and German respondents thought that their economic and social situation will decline in relation to their parents, whilst young people in Bulgaria and Spain, in comparison to other contexts, were more likely to have difficulty in anticipating their future prospects highlighting their perception of an uncertain future.

In terms of their own definitions of adulthood young people no longer associate adult status with characteristics that are easily recognised, or distinguished by a series of 'objective' criteria such as the end of the formative phase of life, stable entry into the job market or marriage, instead we witness what we have called the 'subjectivisation' of adulthood, one 'becomes' an adult when one 'feels' like an adult. In this respect there seems to be have been a convergence amongst the young people interviewed that adulthood has no specific age criteria, and rather than adulthood being indicative of certain socio-demographic markers for young people being an adult, like being young, is for the interviewees more of a chosen condition rather than an externally recognisable social condition.

The most frequent association with being an adult, particularly in the cases of those interviewed in Portugal, the Netherlands, UK and Italy is one of 'being responsible', responsible for ones own choices and necessities. In many of the contexts adulthood held different connotations in different aspects of the young people's lives, they feel they are adult in so far as they are capable of making their own decisions and having their own point of view on the world, however domestic dependence on their family or a lack economic dependence impedes them from perceiving themselves as totally adult. This

situation leads them to perceive themselves as both young and adult at the same time and was particularly prevalent among young people in Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and the east and west German regions.

Parental perspectives on adulthood differ, in Southern Europe and in the Bulgarian context, where protracted housing dependency is common; here many parents maintained the traditional markers of adulthood within their definitions in so far as they were associated with independent living and new family formation. In the UK, Netherlands, Denmark and Germany the traditional markers of adulthood seem to be of secondary importance in parents' conceptions of adulthood, here being adult is conceived more in terms of the development of young person's ability to become independent and self-responsible. In their parents' eyes they were already adults or well on their way of becoming so, even when they remained in a situation of semi/dependency. Young people's perspectives on the future in terms of their life plans in their traditional meaning are less and less widespread. For them the future seems to be shaped, more by imagined rather than preset goals, placed in an indefinite temporal horizon or by alternatively by short-term clear-cut plans. This limitation of plans to the temporal frame that borders the immediate present can be viewed as a strategic response to a future perceived as unforeseeable, short-term plans can be easily modified. The respondents view the decisions made, not as reversible, but as potentially re-definable or flexible, for some this flexibility can represent the opening of the possibility of new life experiences, new options, for others especially among those who have already experienced unemployment, it can be transformed into a nightmare period of uncertainty, a time without guarantees.

6. Young Adults, the Family and Transition Regimes in Comparative Perspective

In the modern European context the role of the family has gained importance across different transition regimes (Iacovou, 2003; Sgritta, 2004). On the one hand, the investments required for access to stable and qualified careers have increased considerably, at the same time state support in the form of benefits and grants have been reduced. On the other hand, it also seems within a general climate of increased uncertainty and insecurity young people prefer to invest their own means into the 'small freedoms' provided by consumer lifestyles rather than in the freedom of gaining an autonomous life. Yet, different contexts provide different conditions for this change with different forms of semi-dependency (Biggart & Walther, 2005).

The findings of the study represent a broad range of particular individual and family constellations related to young men's and women's transitions to work and adulthood which often proved too complex for direct comparison of country patterns. However, the

transition and individualisation process of each young person depends on resources of social integration the distribution of which is embedded in particular relationships between the individual, the family and the state. We have referred to these constellations as 'transition regimes' that result from specific paths of modernisation. Rather than describing national transition systems they refer to clusters of countries sharing a similar 'Gestalt' (Kaufmann, 2003) of socio-economic structures, institutions and cultural patterns of 'normality'. These regimes set the scene of legitimate aspirations and demands between individuals and society in which young adults are confronted with the demands of the labour market but also to develop life plans that are subjectively meaningful. In so far as these demands are becoming more contradictory and basically more resources are required to cope with them, the relationship between state and family is losing its 'natural' self-evidence, differences in regulating integration become of interest.

Due to the absence of direct access to the labour market and a structural deficit of policies addressing young people's transitions in terms of training or welfare in the *sub-protective* transition regime representing the Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal there is no alternative to family dependency. Although corresponding to a majority of comprehensive support constellations and a wide acceptance of this from both young people and parents, this has been referred to as 'forced harmony' due to a lack of alternatives (López Blasco, 1996). In many cases this harmony appears to be authentic and balanced; still, the lack of alternatives means that potential conflicts need to be either dealt with or avoided within the family. In fact, there are cases in which either the price is parental intervention into choices and decisions, or the relationships are characterised by coexistence reduced solely to material support. A resource may be the normality of the 'long family' whereby dependency is not ascribed to individual failure but rather simply due to the conditions of growing up. The family is an acknowledged reality, referred to as 'social amortisator' and therefore the possibility of staying in the parental home is not necessarily perceived as 'support' (*'it's my house'*). In constructing themselves as autonomous however young people either are restricted to the field of leisure and consumption or they have to engage as responsible adults in the common household, especially in the case of young women. However, it needs to be added that they are also more demanded by parents as active adults.

The situation in the *post-socialist* transition regime represented by Bulgaria, and to a certain extent also by Eastern Germany, at first glance looks similar to the South of Europe with a predominance of extended dependency where the majority experienced comprehensive and relevant family support. The difference however consists in the relatively short period over which changes from largely stable but prescribed status

passages have become individualised and risk laden transitions. In Eastern Germany this has been compensated at least superficially by the introduction of Western structures, whilst in Bulgaria the question for state support leads to antagonism ('*What state?*'). As a result either parents make enormous sacrifices in order to secure their children's transitions into stable and secure positions or young people's transitions are part of family strategies in which very often plans of emigration play a central role. The accumulation of both economic and cultural capital becomes dedicated to the objective of realising the promises of transformation, in the West.

Whilst it shares the experience of transformation with Bulgaria, Eastern Germany can also be associated with the *employment-centred* transition regime. The orientation of the welfare state towards a standard biography has for some time been nourished by a large coverage of standard employment. Standardised vocational training routes still are reminiscent of this, although, especially in Eastern Germany, the transition from vocational training to employment no longer provides guarantees. In the Netherlands this has led to a considerable flexibilisation of training and employment. However, the fact that large cohorts of school leavers profit from a secure and even waged status and widely developed system of institutional support contributes to downplaying and even neglecting the role of the family. In fact, most respondents in both parts of Germany and the Netherlands, whether they still lived with their parents or not, in fact enjoyed substantive help from their families due to insufficient state support. Support from the state was either perceived as either lacking transparency or alternatively a distrust of institutional actors was displayed. Due to the fragmentation and prolongation of transitions, many pursued a second training course or further education when their initial choices proved to be unreliable in delivering labour market integration adding to further dependency on their families. Therefore, this results in the reproduction of social inequality being transferred back into the realm of families, which weighs even more in those cases, in contrast to Southern Europe, where support is either non-existent or only provided to a limited extent.

In contrast to the Southern European countries family dependency is not acknowledged as a normal reality but instead has to be negotiated at the individual level. At least with regard to the FATE sample, in the Netherlands young people profit from a flexible mixture of traditional family forms combined with post-modern negotiation patterns. In Germany in only a few cases have families developed a conflict culture, therefore many young adults are very ambiguous about the experience of family support and the moral intricacies of relative autonomy.

In the *liberal* transition regime, for which the UK stands, with its focus on the individual or private provisions and responsibility, the extension and fragmentation of transitions can again be interpreted differently. Here a tradition of advanced autonomy through young people's comparatively early economic independence has been turned into a situation of relative autonomy, or even dependency. Similar to the case of employment-centred regimes a lack of state support is criticised, especially in relation to the introduction of tuition fees for higher education. For most young men and women accepting parental support is not perceived as 'normal' which is reflected in either their economic contributions to the family household or by accepting jobs beneath the level of qualification in order to achieve economic independence. Being contrary to normative assumptions, staying longer within the family home is not accompanied by increased level of conflicts which reflects the utilitarian culture which is woven into the structures of the liberal welfare and transition regime (cf. Walther, 2000). Despite of the profound change towards a higher dependency of young people compared to few decades ago, the UK sample had the highest proportion of respondents who had not received any support.

The only regime type in which a significant share of young men and women's transitions are characterised by advanced autonomy is the *universalistic* transition regime represented by Denmark. The fact that young people are recognised as full citizens, even while still being in transition is reflected through their entitlements to educational allowance until the completion of a first period of training or education; a support which is consciously appreciated by one group of respondents while for others it is so natural that they do not even conceive of it as 'support' but as a right (similar to young people in the South considering the parental home as 'theirs' and their prolonged stay therefore as a given). Interestingly, a majority of respondents still report very close relationships with their parents whom they describe as very supportive. It seems that their partial economic independence, which means that they move out comparatively much earlier, enables them to interact with their parents on a relatively autonomous level as adults; not distorted by any relationships of dependency and control. In their accounts support is framed in terms of being helped to reflect on choices and to learn to be independent, which also meant the intentional parental strategy of restricting support to foster interdependence. Although among the Danish sample the share of those with personally chosen yo-yo-transitions is highest, they still enter the labour market at a younger age than in any country (cf. EC, 2004; Biggart & Walther, 2005).

In this case, delayed labour market entry is a result of supported detours in the transition to work rather than due to forced detours without support, as in the case of Southern and South Eastern Europe. The Danish case highlights the inclusive effects of guaranteed entitlements to individualised support, and the effects of the synergy

between a dynamic economy and universal welfare state. This is even more impressive as it has been a mixture of labour market flexibility, activation and welfare guarantees that have led to a decline of relatively high rates of youth unemployment that were witnessed in the early 1990's. In contrast to this, in the employment-centred as well as in the liberal regime contexts the limited inclusiveness of the respective welfare models becomes particularly visible under condition their respective regulated or flexible labour markets.

7. Towards Integrated Transition Policies

The particular Danish approach of 'flexicurity' meets the underlying characteristics of what has been conceptualised as *Integrated Transition Policies* (Walther, Stauber et al., 2002; López Blasco et al., 2003). Although such a positive appraisal of the universalistic regime should not neglect the stable but minority of young people who fail to profit from the system to the same extent as others, the so-called 'remainder group'.

This concept of Integrated Transition Policies (ITP) suggests that policies concerned with youth transitions need to be coordinated in a holistic way, starting from the individual's *biographical perspective*, and one that tries to link different aspects of youth life with different youth related policies, in particular those that are aimed at education, employment, autonomy and social support. Integrated Transition Policies aim in the first instance to enable young people to take responsibility, with *flexible support* and *active participation* as its main principles by providing young people with real choice and influence in society (cf. Walther et al., 2004). These two principles, as we shall see below, closely correspond to the general aims of the European Commission, the European Parliament and other institutions like the Council of Europe for developing civil society and fighting social exclusion.

Although within the youth policy sector the concept of participation is conceptualised in terms of influence and shared power (citizenship), in other policy fields (as in education, training, employment, autonomy from the family) it tends to continue to have a rather passive meaning, and therefore reflects a trend that separates civil society from the welfare state and undermines its integrative potential (Walther et al, 2002). Integrated Transition Policies, therefore, may also be understood as a strategy that aims to reshape existing transition policies in a youth policy perspective.

The individualisation of youth life and youth transitions requires policies to do more to promote institutional reflexivity. Institutions need to assess their policy interventions in terms of their biographical effects, taking into consideration what might successfully serve one person, can also contribute to the exclusion of another due to the different

subjective perspectives of young people. This institutional reflexivity is also necessary for a meaningful coordination of youth related policies as they are being postulated in the White Paper: A New Impetus for European Youth. The integration of transition policies foresees in the first place a reciprocal opening and integration of policies that up until now only exists in a rather isolated way. In the following we will roughly sketch the most important aspects of Integrated Transition Policies, namely education and training, employment, welfare and youth policy, in form of general policy, before relating the findings of the FATE-project to the specific European policy discourses;

- *Education and training policies* aimed at young people's skills and qualifications should respect the fragility of young people's motivational processes. By giving full recognition to informally acquired skills, whereby the starting point should be the empowerment of young people's strengths rather than highlighting individual deficits;
- *Employment policies* creating jobs for young people or placing them in existing jobs or schemes need not only fit with labour market demands, but take more account of young people's everyday lives and lifestyles;
- *Youth policies*, e.g. youth work activities, in which experiences with more participatory approaches have been developed should be acknowledged as also important for the 'hard' sectors of education, training and employment instead of being regarded and de-valuated as 'soft' areas of cultural and leisure time activities.
- *Welfare policies* addressing young people's material needs through social benefits should be linked with employment, education and training policies in a way which enables individual choice and the possibility to experiment with different options as well as enabling young people to become autonomous. As soon as individuals are forced to accept institutionally pre-defined measures, their motivation is likely to be undermined.

Promoting Integrated Transition Policies does not necessarily mean liberating young people at all cost from the need for family support. Again the Danish case has shown that families are, or can be, the key towards instilling 'ontological security' in young people which is necessary to confront the uncertainties of post-Fordist societies (Giddens, 1990). In this respect, the brief sketch of Integrated Transition Policies may even extend towards a flexible integration with general social policies and in particular family policies. Rather than forcing young people to choose between staying at home supported by their parents or moving out and being activated by increasingly conditional welfare and

education policies, the balance between flexibility and security may also mean to choose whether individualised support is invested into an individualised lifestyle or a family or network. In sum, the findings of FATE strongly support the idea that it may be a hazardous strategy to reduce welfare provision while appraising social capital. It is rather suggested that the need for social security (in a broad sense) has increased to the extent that both the social capital of families and other networks and welfare need to reinforce each other mutually inclusive way.

8. Policy Recommendations

- 1) The *centrality* of young people has been the starting point of the FATE project in analysing their needs and the support they receive in coping with their transitions to the labour market and independent adulthood. While in general transitions have been prolonged and the demands have become more complex our findings support with great clarity that modern transitions in Europe for the majority no longer occur in a smooth and predictable way. A growing number of young people need the assistance of their parents and other significant adults and institutions to manage their transitions. The diversity of transitions and constellations of support highlights how different these demands and needs are; in so far as education and support systems do not provide sufficient *flexibility* for individually *tailored* strategies.
- 2) It is not only young people that need to adapt to the rapid social and economic change in Europe, but also teachers, trainers, counsellors and parents themselves. In particular *intergenerational relationships* must be conceptualised as *mutual learning* relationships. The results of FATE show the stages and turning points in the life course of young people where this mutual learning either occurs or is prevented from occurring. In particular parents from lower social classes are not well informed about the nature of labour market change and the associated problems with modern transitions, although they express a desire for such knowledge in order to understand and have more effective discussions with their children. In so far as parents typically become the main supporters of their children they need specific information and guidance about labour market developments and the risks related to modern youth transitions.
- 3) It is well acknowledged that lifelong learning requires *information, counselling and guidance* to bridge the gap between educational and career institutions on the one hand and the needs of young people in transition on the other. One might expect that educational institutions and employment services provide

sufficient information about labour market developments and counselling to help young people to take decisions during their transitions. Our results show though that this is often not the case. Educational and career professionals are often not aware of the specific and complex needs of their clients. Services need to be arranged in a way that professionals listen more closely to young people and do not only address the transition to work in an isolated way whereby other aspects of biographical construction and everyday life are neglected; especially in the case of those most-at-risk.

Face-to-face counselling needs to be complemented by user-friendly software for young people in transition giving constantly updated information about labour-and housing markets. Labour offers abroad should be included.

- 4) FATE findings confirm the close relationship between education and social background, especially in relation to family resources in the form of economic, cultural and social capital. In a context of declining welfare provision for young people in transition the *reproduction of social inequality* is therefore being reinforced rather than weakened. If access to welfare provision is not universal lifelong learning policies may exacerbate social inequality rather than promote equality of opportunity.
- 5) Further research in relation to lifelong learning is therefore required to assess issues of access and the barriers to lifelong learning, in particular on the destinations of young men's and women's learning biographies over time using longitudinal research in which the relation between status achievement and biographical construction is assessed by research approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative methods.
- 6) Policies aimed at the tackling the problem of an ageing population and a declining labour force should not only focus on active ageing policies, but it is equally important to smooth young people's routes to earlier economic independence. The FATE results suggests the differing extents to which education and labour market transitions have become decoupled from broader transitions to adulthood, with these two personal projects now running on parallel tracks or continuing along linear albeit truncated paths. This decoupling was most apparent in the Danish case whereby with the relative autonomy provided to young people in the form of strong state support, young adults have often formed new families well in advance of completing their education and labour market transitions. In contrast we find more linear patterns, particularly in

Southern Europe, where with the extreme nature of prolonged family dependency with extended educational pathways and unfavourable labour market contexts for young adults delay the onset of new family formation.

- 7) With the significant investment that families make in extended education, with the uncertain nature of modern transitions to labour market young people and their parents need reliable and up-to-date information on the demands of the modern labour market. The FATE results highlight how young people and their parents have bought into the concept of the knowledge economy and strive for increasing levels of investment in education often at considerable personal sacrifice. However in many cases initial choices prove to be the wrong ones, resulting in a significant wastage of resources and time, as new alternative pathways have to be pursued. As young people are increasingly held responsible for their own decisions there is the need to empower them to make informed decisions, aware of the potential opportunities and risks in the modern labour market.
- 8) Although previous research has highlighted the vulnerability of those with low level qualifications (an under-represented group among our respondents) to labour market exclusion, even those who succeed in obtaining high levels of qualification often fail to capitalise on these investments and end up over qualified for the employment opportunities in the labour market, highlights the need for employment growth to match the increasing supply of educated labour.
- 9) The findings show that even if young people are obliged to remain longer in a status of extended or partial dependency, the aim of becoming economically, socially and emotionally independent e.g. to become autonomous persons, is still central for the majority of them. Therefore, measures and programmes supporting the emancipation process of young people should belong to the core of youth policy. This should not happen from a problem-oriented perspective but rather from a holistic approach. In other words, policies should not only *support* the emancipation process of young people but also to guarantee it (such as the case of Denmark). This means, that policies should make autonomy accessible for all young people and be in accordance with young people's different trajectories and biographical choices. Only in this way will autonomy oriented policies be more than rhetorical politics.
- 10) Evidence is provided that housing emancipation is an important marker of transition into adulthood and one that needs to be seen as a process rather than

a clear-cut event. In this respect, leaving the parental home can be considered as an extended process, during which the young person may experience intermediate forms of housing emancipation and/or return one or more times to the parental home before making a permanent transition into an independent household. Our qualitative analysis definitively supports the existence of intermediate housing arrangements where young people are partially independent and partially dependent on the material support of parents or other institutions. Where parents and young people privilege the maintenance of a certain living standard it is difficult for young people to move out. Housing like other subjects related to the autonomy of young people therefore needs to be considered as a normal and important part of youth policy; that is through not only providing appropriate housing but also by enabling and motivating young people to live in housing arrangements of intermediate dependency and autonomy. In fact, it seems that even relatively short experiences of independent living enhance the desire for autonomy and therefore it is important to offer such opportunities, for example through student exchanges, voluntary work, etc..

- 11) The study of young people's perception of the concept of adulthood across Europe shows, that they do not associate the idea of adulthood with a specific age or with access to specific markers of transition. For most interviewed young people adulthood is associated with the capacity to assume *responsibilities* for their own lives and for society and with the *possibility and capacity to make their own decisions*. In this perspective, the FATE findings support directly the White Paper's aims on participation since for obtaining these competencies young persons have to assume different responsibilities in real life. Therefore youth policies should create many different forms and possibilities for young men and women and remove obstacles to participate in significant areas of society. Whereby young people can hold responsible positions and be involved in different decision-making processes in order to obtain such competencies; e.g. in associations, NGO's etc., as citizens at the local, regional or national level, in schools but also in youth work and in the context of measures for the professional and social integration of disadvantaged young people (cf. Walther et al., 2004).
- 12) Findings demonstrate that adulthood is increasingly becoming a subjective and chosen condition, free from external identifying markers. In a certain sense, time has stopped delimiting adulthood in a clear and unequivocal way (Côté, 2000). To this vision of adulthood corresponds an open temporal horizon in

which life plans are difficult to develop. The young people interviewed view decisions made (as much in their studies and work as in the area of relationships) not as irreversible but rather as re-definable ('flexible'). Youth policies should contribute to making the future more predictable for young people. Therefore, access to high quality *information* that is personally relevant for life and career planning needs to be provided. Such services should promote the participation of young people in the production, configuration and dissemination of youth relevant information.

- 13) The "flexibility" of young people and their short range future plans are strongly linked with biographical experiences that many of them have made and with the uncertainties resulting of such experiences. In relation to career planning one important question is, how can youth policies, especially in the field of *counselling*, support young people in taking decisions when it comes to the construction of an individualised (mostly "patch work") life plan which is viable, meaningful and secure. In this perspective, the strategies developed by young people to cope with uncertainty should be considered in the process of policy making, especially in the framework of vocational and occupational orientation. It is well known, that counselling before and after leaving educational institutions needs to be improved. This should especially be done also in non-formal educational settings (e.g. in youth work; educational work with disadvantaged groups, etc.) where young people's own experiences count more. Anyhow, a concept of vocational guidance based on a combination of personal-experience and expert knowledge should receive much more attention than is the case today.
- 14). Young people across Europe and across different educational levels are highly motivated to enter meaningful and sustainable careers. However in many cases our results show that this leads to a significant compromise in occupational aspirations, long waiting periods of dependency and uncertainty, and various attempts to retrain including completely new directions taken in relation to training or study courses. Our findings suggest that it is not so much a lack of activation or employability rather the lack of employment opportunities that needs to be addressed by social inclusion policies.
- 15). In most cases, young people can only follow their own choices if parents are in a position to undertake significant investments in tuition fees and living costs. It has become very obvious how unequally the possibility of meaningful choice is distributed not only according to socio-economic background, education, gender

and ethnicity but also according to different transition regimes. If social inclusion implies the participation of individuals policy objectives have to extend beyond purely labour market integration to the structural and personal possibilities of career choice.

16). Both quantitative and qualitative data show the increasing risks and obstacles that young people encounter in their transitions to work and the extent of competencies, resources and opportunities that are required in order to cope with prolonged and fragmented labour market transitions. However, as long as they have not achieved a stable position in the labour market they are excluded from civil and social rights such as to live an autonomous life. Within our study Denmark was the exception, whereby young people in transition have only restricted access to welfare and housing provision and even these restricted access options have been reduced in recent periods. 'Being in transition' therefore needs to be included in and secured by the status of citizenship.

17). This is reflected in an apparent distrust of young people and their families in state institutions. In Southern and Eastern European countries it is mainly the complete lack of state support that is criticised ('What support?' 'What state?'). In other European countries grant and benefit systems are estimated as insufficient and conditional, while the long-term consequences of utilisation (such as debts in case of study loans) are widely held as not transparent and impossible to calculate. Counselling services are criticised for a lack of sensitivity to individual needs and desires and their perceived ineffectiveness.

Only the Danish young people expressed satisfaction, especially with the system of educational allowance which provides them with a certain degree of economic independence. *Access to support* – be it material or immaterial – therefore needs to be much more direct and automatic; without stigmatising the users.

18). The study provides a rich body of evidence that young people and their families in fact try to compensate for the lack of state support by mobilising their own resources. However, apart from reproducing inequalities – in terms of unequal economic family resources, in terms of sometimes gendered parenting, in terms of support in career and life planning depending on parental education level – this has considerable impacts on young people's lives. Findings reveal different constellations of dimensions of family support and of the conditions under which they are provided due to which family support is not always experienced positively.

These constellations are highly individualised which calls for *flexible support systems* with entitlements and access not being regulated according to fixed thresholds of age, education level, duration of unemployment or family income. To 'preserve family solidarity' implies not to overburden it but to provide complementary support according to individual needs.

In sum, it needs to be said that the reality faced by most of the young men and women interviewed in the study is far from the objectives of autonomous and participatory citizenship as suggested by the notion of a European social model committed to social cohesion. In contrast, the complexity of transitions is rarely addressed by institutions and neglected by the currently even reinforced one-dimensional employment orientation of social policies. The claimed multi-dimensional approach is rarely set into practice but struggles with powerful boundaries of segmented policy sectors. Rather than starting from the aim of full employment Integrated Transition Policies (López Blasco et al., 2003; Walther, Stauber et al., 2002) are more likely to lead to sustainable social inclusion if starting from individuals' biographical perspectives and to flexibly combine different instruments enabling young persons to take responsibility for their own lives.

II. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

1. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The central aim of the Families and Transitions in Europe (FATE) project is to explore young people's transitions from education to work and to independent adulthood, within the context of extended family dependency, across the different European models of state support for young people and their families. The research will therefore aim to explore within the context of a period of rapid social and economic change how young people's decisions over the education to work transition and independent adulthood are facilitated or constrained by the different models of familial/state support across Europe. Highlighting how the strategies and resources that young people and their families adopt in the transition from education to work contributes towards reinforcing patterns of inequality and social reproduction.

In particular it aims to:

- Explain variation in young people's attitudes to education, work, family life and independence across Europe.
- Examine how have families adapted to the increased independence of young people, their attitudes to increased dependence and the strategies they employ.
- Explore how family resources (cultural, social, and economic) impact on young people's transitional decisions.
- Establish the necessity of strong family support in the elimination of risks associated with modern youth transitions, according to the different cultural and institutional features that exist across Europe.
- Examine the extent that young people from different socio-economic backgrounds rely on their parents in different national contexts and the way in which the interaction between state and welfare constrain or facilitate active decision-making.
- Explore the extent across different national contexts of whether strong family support is an essential prerequisite for active individualization.
- Highlight variation in attitudes and support across different educational levels, socio-economic groups and gender

In achieving these specific aims the project hopes to achieve the following broader objectives:

- To bring together two areas of research and policy (transitions and family), which up to now have not been linked in a systematic way, especially in the comparative context. In doing so, initiate a dialogue between experts from both fields.
- Build on existing European models of family, welfare, and the transition from education to work:
- Enhancing our understanding of the subjective dimensions of youth transitions in the context of social change, increased dependency and family support
- Provide a more holistic approach European research to education to work transitions, which will complement the more institutional approaches that have predominated to date.
- Reconceptualize youth transitions in Europe within the concept of the public and private, due to the trend towards increasing family obligations and a redrawing of the boundaries between family and state within social policy.
- Make recommendations for policy in the light of the changing nature of transitions between youth and adulthood.

2. A theoretical understanding of youth

Traditionally, political and theoretical discussion on youth and youth life has pivoted upon the question of whether youth is to be defined as an age group, a transitional phase, with status-passage to adulthood as its main characteristic, or a distinct phase in the life course, with distinct characteristics of its own, incorporating consideration of the overlap between (individual) ageing, the requirements of transitions into adulthood which societies urge their young people to pass, and, historically, cohort and generation effects. From a sociological point of view, there are two main dimensions governing theoretical discussion on youth transition to adulthood: firstly, youth as a socially-organised life phase, e.g. the conditions (activity structures, institutions, etc.) offered to young people, such as education, health, housing and welfare, as well the legal and political framework regulating this phase of life; and secondly, the use young people make of these conditions, both individually and as members of social groups. From this perspective, 'youth' becomes a social category, transcending the individual, and formed equally by policies, structures, institutions, legal regulations and the strategies young people adopt to cope with the challenges implicit within such structures and institutions in each

historical period. From this perspective, education is the motor for the development of other institutionalised youth conditions (Gillis, 1981; Mørch, 1985); young people are not thought of as objects, i.e. determined by 'conditions' and 'socialisation', but as subjects or actors managing their life plans (Galland, 1991; Gillis, 1981; Hurrelmann and Neubauer, 1986; Mørch, 1993). The definition of youth as an age group has historically changed, reflecting different societal and structural interests. Current political definitions of youth (by EU countries and institutions) define youth as the age group 15 to 25 or, in some cases, the broader 14 to 30 group.

The transition from youth to adulthood has become longer and more complicated as a result of the extension of secondary education and the diversification and individualisation of social life. Status passages are no longer linear (education *to* employment), but are synchronous (education *and* employment) or reversible, i.e. yoyo movements (education *to and from* employment) (du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Pais, 1995). Transition and individualisation process take place in fragmented contexts (Mørch, 1999), with individuals determining their adult positions through 'negotiation' rather than simply following paths pre-defined by society. Special youth welfare policies are designed for these passage groups regardless of the age of the young people involved: youth policy is not targeted at education *or* employment *or* welfare but at education *and* employment *and* welfare. Normally, young people do not make use of all youth policy segments at the same time, but one after the other as they become important during youth life (Stalder, 1998).

The transition from childhood to adulthood in late modern society is mediated through educational systems, with many options to choose from. This choice in itself creates a new challenge for young people. Individuals must negotiate between two levels of development: institutional individualisation and individual individualisation. Following this, 'youth' can be seen as 'stage', with a double challenge of meeting the demands of societal integration into society and the necessary construction of the individual biography (Mørch, 2003). By this, youth is understood as the development of individualisation in biography, and is closely connected to the general development of forms of social integration.

2.1. Different transition regimes and contexts in Europe

Youth life is defined both in terms of different welfare systems (Esping-Andersen, 1990) and, especially, as part of different transition regimes in Europe (cf. Sgritta, 2004). The model of transition regimes provides a perspective from which to consider different contexts in which the relation between young people and their families – and, in a more

general sense, the relation between young people's dependency and autonomy – is embedded. As a concept, 'transition regime' covers socio-economic, institutional and cultural structures framing young peoples transitions (Walther, 2002; 2003; McNeish & Loncle, 2003). This model is based on comparative social policy approaches of clustering similar countries according to the extent and the manner in which individuals are protected by the state against the loss of paid employment (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The reference to 'regimes' recognises the fact that existing institutional settings have a history structured by conflicts of interest between social actors according to specific values and interpretations of reproduction, to which they constantly contribute. Inside different transition regimes, and behind different structures of dependency and integration policies, multiple concepts of youth can be found, i.e. society's expectations of what 'youth' is about (Furlong and McNeish, 2001; Walther, 2000 & 2002; Walther et al, 2002; McNeish & Loncle, 2003). It is possible to cluster the European context into five different transition regimes.

The universalistic transition regime in Scandinavian countries (Denmark in the FATE project) is based on a comprehensive school system in which general and vocational education is integrated at post-secondary level. Three out of four school leavers earn post-compulsory qualifications and have access to higher education. Although regulated by national standards, both education and training are increasingly diverse, according to individual personal development; this development may be interpreted as society's primary definition of youth. As young people are expected to be in education, and to have an education, labour market programmes for the young unemployment are structured with educational 'activation' measures, with rights tied to obligations. Social assistance is available to young people from the age of 18 and is linked to their citizenship status, whilst those who are in formal education or training receive an income in form of an educational allowance. In this way, the social transfer system facilitates young people's autonomy in general, and also makes it possible for young people to move out of their parental home and be independent of their families, although such a move is followed by new forms of family support, defined with less reference to family responsibility as opposed to individual support. In short, as long as young adults remain within the universalistic transition regime, they are encouraged and supported to experiment with individualised education and welfare options. This provides young adults with many options, but also represent a new challenge in the form and content of family support.

The liberal transition regime, developed in the Anglo-Saxon countries (within FATE, the UK), values individual rights and responsibilities more than collective provision. Education is now typically organised along comprehensive lines until the age of 16, although a

selective system remains in some regions. Up until the early 1980s, the majority of young people entered the labour market directly after compulsory school. However, in the last few decades, the post-compulsory stage has been developed, becoming more diverse, creating a flexible system of vocational (school and employer-based) and academic options, with a variety of entry and exit points. This change has been marked by the postponement of benefit entitlements to the age of 18. Jobseeker's Allowance is tied to citizenship status, but benefit levels are low and sometimes time-limited, meaning, despite universal access, a high level of emphasis on personal responsibility in compensation for social risks. Family dependency has also been increased considerably, moving towards a model of relative autonomy, with constellations of temporary and precarious emancipation prevailing. Youth is seen as a transition phase, to be completed as quickly as possible, reflected in programmes for youth employment with labour market entrance as the main objective. Education and training options within these programmes tend to be short-term. Individual responsibilities are represented through workfare policies like New Deal, with obligatory participation, since non-participation results in benefit sanctions.

In *the employment-centred transition regime* (Germany and Netherlands in the FATE project), secondary education is typically organised on a selective basis, allocating young people to occupational careers in different segments. Vocational training is relatively standardised and therefore reproduces a highly regulated employment regime. The concept of youth is principally concerned with the allocation and socialisation of young people into social and occupational positions. Youth unemployment is therefore interpreted as a breakdown in the process of socialisation due to deficits in educational attainment or social skills. The aim of unemployment programmes is to reintegrate young people into regular training and employment. The social security system distinguishes between high levels of compensation for those who have paid sufficient social insurance contributions and a residual social assistance as a basic safety net. In Germany, young people are only entitled to benefits if they have made sufficient contributions through employment. Therefore, most young people have relative autonomy from their parents, with lower levels of independent living compared to Scandinavian countries, including constellations of temporary, occasional or precarious emancipation. Yoyo transitions can be seen in terms of young adults navigating between standard trajectories, and the construction of an individual career, and a process of reconciliation pursued against the normative power of institutional assumptions. The Netherlands may be the most hybrid, with traits of both liberal and universal regime flexibility (flexible education and training system, combined with a citizenship-based social assistance model, workfare policies, and a high share of (female) part-time employment).

The model of *sub-protective transition regime* applies primarily to the Southern European countries (Italy, Spain and Portugal in FATE), and is characterised by a low proportion of standard work places, coupled with a high rate of unprotected living conditions, giving rise to a specific 'dualistic' welfare regime in which the family and informal economy play a significant role. Up until the end of compulsory education, school is structured along comprehensive lines. Until recently, rates of early school leaving were high, with the continued existence of child labour, especially in case of Portugal. Vocational training is also underdeveloped. Due to the economic weakness of many of these regions and the orientation of employment law towards (male) breadwinners, youth transitions are particularly prolonged, with young people tending to be employed in unstable jobs in the informal economy (Italy) or through fixed-term contracts (Spain). Segmentation and structural deficits contribute to the highest rates of youth unemployment, particularly among young women. Higher education plays an important role in providing young people with status in this waiting phase, although many drop-out before completing their degree (e.g. in Italy); over-qualification (such as in Spain) is also prevalent. Young people are not entitled to social benefits, and the model of extended (or complete) dependency of the family is most widespread. The cultural normality of the 'long family' is reflected in many young people tending to remain in the family despite sufficient income from paid employment. Policy objectives aim to provide youth with institutionally recognised status, be it education, training or employment. Unlike other regimes, yoyo transitions develop not against the dominant assumptions of youth but through a social vacuum, compensated for by prolonged dependency on the family.

A potential *post-socialist transition regime* (in this project represented by East Germany and Bulgaria) is difficult to outline for two reasons: the lack of pre-existing comparative research and the superficial assumption of there being only one post-socialist regime, given the diversity in Central and Eastern Europe; what these countries share is the heritage of a system in which individual and collective issues were largely organised by the state. This system combined aspects of the employment-centred regime (all spheres of social and individual life being organised around employment) with aspects of the universalistic regimes (individual rights of employment, housing, social security etc.). Education and training were integrated and closely tied to the needs of the planned economy. While individual choice was restricted, careers were predictable and secure. Post-socialist change has induced a process of individualisation, in which the gap between opportunities and risks is much wider than in Western societies. School systems are still organised comprehensively until the end of compulsory education, with a mostly school-based vocational training sector. Formal education and training however have difficulties in keeping pace with accelerated economic change, and the same goes for

structures like career guidance or labour market policies. Many young people accumulate education while waiting for a secure career – or for emigration plans to succeed; or they take the risk of setting-up their own business. Directly after the end of socialism, unemployment benefits and social assistance schemes were introduced for which, large numbers of young people were eligible. These moves were subsequently curtailed and thresholds of eligibility raised. Thereby, extended or complete family dependency has gained in importance and in the meantime is the dominant residence model.

2.2. The European family as the answer to new demands of individualisation

Although the family may be the central background for many young people, family form and influence varies across Europe, as a result of both pre-existing family patterns and new social conditions. As a consequence, family life shows great variety, both inside regions and between regions in Europe. From a historical perspective, it is possible to point to the development and existence of three basic structures of 'family', which can also be seen as models of current family types: firstly, the traditional, kin-orientated family (or *reproductive* family), secondly, the *productive* family (or 'nuclear' or 'traditional' family), and thirdly, *the supportive family*, orientated towards late modern challenges more than traditional family patterns.

All family forms are all under pressure to support the modern individualisation of children and youth, and in doing so, they all in different ways following the logic of becoming a network family. By network family, we point to a development in family life combined with a situation of modern individualisation. Life in general, and especially youth life and individualisations processes, takes place in different fragmented contexts, within different social networks. The family is therefore under pressure to become one network contexts among others, and to function in a broad developmental network as one partner of development – not as a network of relatives, but as a network of individuals. The most important aspect of family is not its form but rather its function: how it engages in the development of children and young people and provides a platform for its members' everyday life; here the concepts of reproductive, productive and supportive families point to its functional aspects.

Families all over Europe are challenged to support the modern demands of individualisation, albeit differently according to welfare and transition context. In general, young people are increasingly less likely to be found growing-up in a 'traditional' two-parent family, although there are clearly regional variations. The differentiation between the distribution of reproductive, productive and supportive families can be conceptualised

as a result of the de-institutionalisation of the 'traditional family' (Gallie and Paugam, 2000), with non-conventional family forms concentrated in northern Europe, and traditional family model remaining prevalent in southern Europe and Ireland, with intermediate arrangements typically associated with continental Europe. It is also possible to identify three broad typologies based on family obligations: an extended dependence model, a model of relative autonomy between generations and a model of advanced inter-generational autonomy (Gallie and Paugam, 2000). The extended dependence model is characterised by different generations living in the same household, with strict norms defining obligations within the family based on reciprocal exchange, reinforced strongly by the institutionalisation of marriage. The relative autonomy model occupies an intermediary position, with adult children living with their parents being under an obligation to look for alternative solutions; extended dependency is a temporary position, related to difficulties in entering the labour market. The model of advanced autonomy represents a means whereby the self-realisation of the young adult is predicated upon the basis of acquiring autonomy from parents. The norm for young adults is to live separately even before they attain full financial independence.

2.3. Family development and youth support

Assumptions surrounding parental support for young people in Europe are changing. We have argued that families are on their way to become network families, and that parenthood seems to be increasingly defined as a lifelong condition, with unlimited parental obligations attached to it. At the same time, developments in social and educational policies veer towards increased levels of support from parents during the transition from youth to adulthood (Dey and Morris, 1999). Here it is possible to distinguish different models of social regulation, constituted by the interrelationship between responsibilities attributed to the welfare state, and the expected role of the family (Gallie and Paugam, 2000). In the universalistic welfare regimes, the role of the family in supporting young adults (financially at least) is more likely to be a marginal one, with very high proportions of young people receiving social transfers from the government (especially in educational allowances), and good opportunities for young people to make money through part-time jobs. In the southern European countries, there is a strong correspondence between the sub-protective welfare regime and the extended dependence model. The underlying assumption is that the family has to provide the support, which the welfare regime does not. In the mid-European countries, responsibility for providing support for young people is divided between public authorities and the family. The welfare states may provide for the minimum needs of the young person while the family takes responsibility for the broader protection of living standards according to the general family status.

The individual biography is always made possible or formed by societal organisation and existing social trajectories, and in this individualisation perspective, family life occupies a quite important, but also different position, according to integrative or historical situation: a traditional society biography follows a normative traditional organised status model, following the ascribed status of being a child or an adult; the reproductive family is concerned in the maintenance of existing, well-defined and hierarchically roles for each family member according to age and gender; in the industrialisation or modern society, with the productive family, roles and rights are distributed according to developmental stages – with gender and age still as basic parameters; in the late-modern society, the family is supportive, with rules and roles shifting, and neither age nor gender is a clear means of distributing rights and authority. Individuality is presupposed as each single person's own quality, but now at the same time, implying an open-ended result, under conditions continually produced. The late modern family contributes to the production of individuality, but without stable guidelines; adults occupy the roles of counsellors towards children and each other, framed in a 'democratic' setting: each family member has the right to contribute, regardless of age, gender or position.

From a European comparative perspective, these developments seem to exist in different forms and combinations. Youth development as the result of individualisation relates to transition structures and regimes, employability demands and job possibilities, family life and support. The different youth life challenges, which follow modernisation patterns, simultaneously create different biographies and opportunities, and different forms of individualisation and subjectivity. The changing perspectives of individualisation and biography are important if we are to understand the new challenges in relation to children, youth and family. The fragmented contextualisation of individualisation leads to the construction of a network, which includes most forms of family life, and puts families under pressure to become contexts like other contexts. All aspects of life are influenced by the challenge of modern individualisation, and the institutional biography is changing. The role of the family in late modernity is to not only to prepare for individualisation, but also be an active partner in the construction of young people's individualisation. Families all over Europe are now in the middle of comprehensive change: in socialisation goals, personal relations and authority structures, and face the additional challenge of how to combine the need for support in individual development and the process of individualisation.

III. SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND METHODOLOGY

1. Methodology

1.1. Introduction to methods

The methodological design of the FATE project involved two main empirical stages: an Institutional Survey of young people in their final year of education and training courses, which formed the base sample for the qualitative research phase follow-up in-depth interviews with young people and parental interviews. The fieldwork was conducted within nine localities across Europe with coverage over all the main welfare regimes including one New Member State, representing a post-socialist regime.

1.1.1. United Kingdom

The UK Institutional Survey sample was predominantly drawn from the Coleraine district of County (London)Derry in Northern Ireland, approximately 80 kilometres from the regional centre of Belfast. The population of Coleraine District currently stands at 56,315 inhabitants (2001 census): The institutions selected for the survey were, at tertiary level, the University of Ulster's Coleraine campus and a nearby teacher training college (for 'education' students); at upper secondary level, further education colleges and training organisations, and at end of compulsory level, secondary schools.

1.1.2. Germany (West)

The West German sample was taken from Tübingen and Reutlingen, two medium-sized cities in the region of Baden-Württemberg within 12 km of each other, with 80,000 (Tübingen) and 100,000 (Reutlingen) inhabitants respectively. Through drawing upon two districts, it was possible to construct a sample in line with the distribution of school leavers over different education and training labour market entry trajectories.

At tertiary level, university and polytechnic schools were surveyed, while at upper secondary level, professional schools (delivering the educational-theoretical part of 'dual system' apprenticeships) were targeted. End of compulsory respondents were drawn from training schemes and individuals within a one-year 'waiting loop' at professional schools.

1.1.3. Spain

The Spanish sample has been sourced from the Valencian Land, a self-governing region which consists of three provinces: Valencia, Alicante and Castellón, in the east of Spain.

In 2000, the Valencian Land total population stood at 4,120,729 inhabitants (2,020,667 men (49% of the total population) and 2,100,062 women (51% of the total population)). The sample itself is broadly representative of the youth of the Valencian Land: they live with their parents, are studying and working in a sporadic and precarious manner, they spend most of their money on leisure and their salaries complement the money they receive from parents. Youth unemployment, however, is slightly below the Spanish national average (Eurostat 2000).

Questionnaires were administered to students in a variety of educational institutions and public universities in the Valencian Land area.

1.1.4. Portugal

The questionnaire was administered in Almada, a city located south of Lisbon, but within its area of influence. In terms of population, Almada has been in a state of constant growth, attracting migrants from all over the country and also from former Portuguese colonies since the 1960s. Almada currently has 151,783 inhabitants (2001 Census), a 6% increase on 1991. However the youth population under 24 years old is decreasing: 22,662 (14.9%) were under 14 years of age in 2001; 21,655 (14.3%) between the ages of 15 and 24, representing decreases of 16% and 9.5% respectively.

Tertiary respondents were sourced from Almada's private university and at the local campus of the University of Lisbon, upper secondary students from vocational education schools (something of a minority choice in Portugal) and 'regular' secondary schools.

1.1.5. Germany (East)

The East German sample was drawn from Saxony, specifically from Dresden, Meissen, Radebeul, Riesa, Moritzburg and Kreischa. Saxony has a population of 4.6 million; between 1990 and 1998, its population decreased by 6.3% (Quelle: Vereinigung der Sächsischen Wirtschaft e.V. In: Wirtschaft aktuell Juli 2000). Most of the East German sample's tertiary respondents were drawn from the Technical University of Dresden (TUD), with a small number taken from the public 'Educational Academy of Dresden' and a Protestant polytechnic college. The majority of upper secondary respondents were found in professional schools (i.e. studying under the 'Dual System') or private institutions and enterprises offering specially supported vocational training programmes.¹

¹ The majority of these private institutions are run by charitable organisations, such as the German Red Cross.

1.1.6. Netherlands

Most of the contacted educational institutions were located in the city of Leiden, in the Western, most urbanised part of the country; a region also known as the 'Randstad.' According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 1999, Leiden had a population of 117,390, 16% of whom are between 15 and 24 years old.

The Dutch sample consisted, at tertiary level, of university students, coupled with college-based and work-based vocational trainees at upper secondary level and pupils finishing compulsory schooling.

1.1.7. Bulgaria

Bulgaria represents the transition countries of Europe in our survey. The locality chosen for the Institutional Survey was the South-Central region of the country, an area which includes Plovdiv, the second largest city in the country, with a population of 340,638; 19.2% of the population here are under 18 years of age, 67.8% aged between 18 and 64, with 13% over 65.

While tertiary respondents were located at university, upper secondary and end of compulsory respondents were drawn from vocational schools (semi-skilled), vocational technical schools (skilled) and gymnasiums (academic).²

1.1.8. Italy

The Italian sample was sourced from the Milan district, with a total population, in 2001, of 1,304,942 people. Out of this total, approximately 7% were aged between 18 and 25. The 'high school' (secondary and upper secondary) sample in Italy is comprised of vocational school and technical school students, the tertiary sample, from the last year of university, although the number of years in which to finish a degree is not imposed.³

The particular orientation of the Italian education system, has resulted in there being no end of compulsory respondents in this sample' this is for two reasons: until 1999, compulsory schooling in Italy finished at age 14; in 2000, with the new reform of the

² In Bulgaria, the levels of the educational system do not follow the compulsory schooling – post-compulsory – university schemata: primary school ends at the age of 14-15, secondary (high) school at 17-18. If a young person leaves at the age of 16, he or she does not receive a diploma (for finishing secondary education) and is in fact classed as a dropout.

³ The age range of students exiting Italian universities is highly variable, as in Italy there is no set number of years within which to complete a university course. Courses usually last for 4 years, but many students stay longer in the university system. In 2001, new university reform reduced the duration of courses to 3 years. Therefore, students in their third year of study were chosen, as they can potentially finish their studies at the end of this year.

school system (the 'Berlinguer reform'), the compulsory school leaving age was elevated to 15;⁴ secondly, according to ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics), in 1997, 94.2% of students continued their studies after compulsory school, and this percentage is increasing every year. Liceo students have also been excluded, as after high school, almost all progress to university.

1.1.9. Denmark

The respondents in the Danish sample were drawn from three different municipalities, all in Zealand (Kalundborg, with 20,000 inhabitants, approximately 10% between 16 and 25 years old; Holbaek, with 34,000 inhabitants, around 12% between 16-25 and Copenhagen, with 500,000 inhabitants, approximately 15% between 16-25 years old). Danish tertiary level respondents were drawn from a number of institutes within the University of Copenhagen and other third level institutes. The upper secondary sample was taken from technical schools, while end of compulsory respondents were drawn from production schools.⁵

1.2. Background to the Institutional Survey

The Institutional Survey was conducted in each of the nine FATE participating regions during April-June 2002. The sample was sourced from groups of young people in their final year of post-compulsory educational courses and training programmes.

In order to provide a broad range of education and training contexts, the sampled institutions and courses were selected according to a number of dimensions. The intention was to stratify the sample according to broad educational level (non-academic/academic), gender composition of courses (female-dominated, male-dominated and 'mixed') and, in the case of the non-academic route, labour market precariousness (smooth/precarious). This original sample design could have been successfully realised in 7 out of the 9 project regions. However, in two of the FATE regions, such a sample design could not be accommodated. As a result, it was decided that within fixed resources, a form of non-probability quota sampling would have to be employed. Therefore for each of the regions, population estimates were derived from official sources for all the main education and training levels and according to gender. These population

⁴ This means that since 2001, young people who want to leave the school system at age 14 and enter the labour market (after obtaining the 'licenza of middle school') must enrol in the first year of high school.

⁵ The target group for production schools is young people under 25 years old, without post-compulsory education. This includes dropouts, young people with reading and learning disabilities and the unemployed. The educational principles of production schools are based on the concept of integrated practical work and theoretical instruction, or 'learning by doing.'

estimates then formed the basis of quotas covering main exit routes to the labour market in each regional context. In order to increase comparability between regional samples, respondents' subjects of study were also taken into consideration, with samples selected in a manner ensuring broad coverage of ISCED '97 fields of education for both university and vocational courses.⁶

1.3. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to collect biographical information on respondents

(e.g. gender, age, current living arrangements), family background (family composition, parental employment status, socio-economic status, parental education), attitudes to education, work, family life and dependence, and finally, future aspirations and expectations. Measurements where possible were made according to international standardised measures to ensure valid comparisons could be subsequently made, e.g. ISCED, ISCO-88. The questionnaire was also piloted by each of the respective partners in their regional contexts and further refined on the basis of the results of these pilot studies.

The achieved samples cannot claim to allow results to be generalised in terms of the specific national contexts from which they were drawn, nor are they fully representative of the regional contexts from which they were drawn. However the purposive sampling design followed by each of the partners should allow some valid comparisons to be drawn across samples. Following the administration of the questionnaires, data was entered into national databases, which were subsequently merged into a unified database. The data was then subject to weighting, in order to eliminate biases, in particular over samples of certain groups, and inconsistencies within the national datasets. The data was weighted to ensure that each national sample matched exactly population estimates according to educational route and gender. In most cases this involved minor modifications to the samples.

1.4. Sample Size

In line with the original proposal target, sample sizes of between 200 and 300 respondents were aimed for in each region, a goal realised in most countries. A small number of cases were removed during subsequent data cleaning, due to missing variables or instances where end of compulsory respondents indicated that they were

⁶ The five chosen subject areas at tertiary level were: arts and humanities, business, education, medicine and science.

proceeding to a further educational level as opposed to entering the labour market, thus reducing the overall sample size to a figure of 1929. Statistical analysis of the Institutional Survey data has been undertaken by three teams (from the UK, Portugal and Germany (DJI)). Analysis has been based upon a range of statistical procedures from straightforward frequencies and cross-tabulations to multivariate techniques including Regression and Principal Component Analysis. Further innovative statistical analysis using the SPAD statistical package has been undertaken by the Portuguese FATE partners.

Table 1 below illustrates the achieved sample and gender breakdown of the weighted FATE institutional survey data in each participating region.

Table 1. Gender by region

Gender	UK	D-West	E	P	D-East	NL	BU	I	DK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	48	53	51	52	55	53	47	50	49	51
Female	52	47	50	48	46	47	53	50	51	49
(N)	195	195	198	168	288	190	280	234	181	1929

The overall gender breakdown for the complete sample amounts to an almost 50/50 split between males and females. The regional breakdown of the sample indicates that while there are disparities between countries, nowhere is the imbalance particularly pronounced.

1.5. Overview of the qualitative research phase

The comparative analysis of the qualitative material was carried out in accordance with central themes that emerged from the first stage of qualitative analysis and discussed during a workshop, held in Sofia in February 2004. This analysis was based on a thematic approach, and conducted by small research groups comprised of national teams or groupings of several partners according to their own interests and expertise.

The main aim of qualitative research phase was to explore the strategies families (young people and parents) adopt to enable their children’s education-to-work transitions. A sample of young people were to be contacted approximately one year after the completion of their education or training courses via details supplied in the Institutional Survey questionnaire. It was anticipated that at this stage of their careers, young people would be in various states of independence, dependence and semi-dependence, some

having made successful transitions to the labour market and others experiencing difficulties.

In total 42 interviews with young people were to be completed in each locale, stratified according to gender and education level producing six categories (see below); 30 interviews with parents were also scheduled in each region, contact being made via contact details provided by the youth respondents.

The interview selection procedure itself was conducted according to a standardised protocol, agreed upon by all partners. In each region, researchers attempted to source their young people proportionately according to gender and education level. This in effect meant that there were six categories of young people:

- *Female High Education* – young women exiting the education system following the completion of university degree courses.
- *Male High Education* – young men exiting the education system following the completion of university degree courses.
- *Female Medium Education* -young women exiting the education system following the completion of upper secondary education or training courses.
- *Male Medium Education* - young men exiting the education system following the completion of upper secondary education or training courses.
- *Female Low Education* – young women exiting the education system following the completion of compulsory education.
- *Male Low Education* – young men exiting the education system following the completion of compulsory education.

The interviews with young people were conducted largely during January-August 2003; parental interviews were conducted concurrently.

The interview schedules for both young people and parents were semi-structured, including standardised questions relating to young people's/parents' biographies and opportunities to relate in-depth their personal transition experiences.

A total of 376 interviews with young people were conducted across the nine FATE contexts. The following breakdowns respectively illustrate the regional and gender composition of the young people included in the comparative analysis by educational exit

level. A similar breakdown for parental interviews is provided in Table 3, where a total of 219 interviews undertaken.

Table 2.. Young People by Education Level and Region

Education level	UK	D(W)	P	E	D(E)	NL	IT	BU	DK	All
High	20	13	13	14	21	14	25	15	13	148
Medium	20	15	12	14	19	14	6	15	14	129
Low	8	9	5	14	8	15	9	16	15	99
All	48	37	30	42	48	43	40	46	42	376

Table 3. Parents by Gender and Region

Parent	UK	D(W)	P	E	D(E)	NL	IT	BU	DK	All
Mother	13	13	10	14	10	19	13	23	15	130
Father	4	1	2	1	2	6	4	11	11	42
Both	3	7	0	15	11	5	6	0	0	47
All	20	21	12	30	23	30	23	34	26	219

1.6. Project results

The empirical results of the FATE project examined a range of aspects of young people's lives according to 5 main themes; education to work transitions, young people's transitions from the parental home, parental support, family cultures and representations of adulthood and life plans.

2. Education-to-work transitions

2.1. Introduction

The analyses of the education-to-work transitions of the FATE respondents help to provide an insight into the current labour market and educational statuses in the modern European context. Following an appraisal of the results of the Institutional Survey, a typology derived from the qualitative interviews reveals respondents' transition patterns, labour market orientations, transition experiences and coping strategies within a risk/option perspective.

2.2. Outcomes of quantitative research

A number of interesting findings were made concerning education-to-work transitions in this investigation:

- 1) The respondents of all regions believed strongly in the value of qualifications to gain a favourable labour market position.
- 2) In their assessment of their labour market chances in the near future, the respondents in all regions displayed a high level of optimism. Even those who left the educational system with a low level of qualification showed a remarkably high degree of optimism. However, respondents in some regions acknowledge that some difficulties can be experienced in obtaining employment or fitting employment to credentials, in particular, respondents in Bulgaria, Portugal and Italy, although few young people perceive there to be such difficulties in the Netherlands and Denmark.
- 3) Common explanations highlighting a lack of flexibility on the part of Southern European young people, namely, in adjusting labour market aspirations to concrete opportunities, are not confirmed by the surveyed young people's intentions of how they would act when experiencing possible adversity: these young people actually appeared to be significantly more willing than their Northern European counterparts to revise their occupational ideas or to accept any form of alternative employment.
- 4) The respondents displayed a high level of commitment to, and belief in, the value of work, although there are some regional variations relating to local labour market conditions. The lowest levels of commitment were found in contexts in which labour market opportunities were favourable (Northern European countries) and highest levels in contexts where opportunities were unfavourable (Southern and Eastern European countries).
- 5) Despite the persistence of gender inequalities in employment across many European regions, overall, the differences between males and females in terms of general attitudes towards work were found not to be significant. When comparing gender within regions, roughly similar results were found, with the exception of young Spanish women (generally less focused on employment) and East German women (generally highly focused on employment).

2.3. Outcomes of qualitative research

Most of the young people interviewed in the qualitative research, with the exception of Italy (which is partly a consequence of the sampling method used), had left education and entered the labour market. A summary of their present education and labour market statuses of the respondents is presented in table below.

Present situation	Male	Female
Full-time education	Majority: IT Minority: DK, NL (some in dual trajectories), P, SP, GER-W), G(E), BU, UK	Majority: IT Minority: DK, NL, P, SP, BU, UK, GER-E (females more often than males); GER-W, NL, BU (some in dual trajectory)
Full employment(stable)	Majority: NL, UK Minority: DK	Majority: NL, UK Minority: DK
Full employment(precarious) Part-time employment (precarious)	Majority: GER-E, SP, P Minority: IT, BU (more males) Minority: SP, DK (substantial number)	Majority: P, SP, GER-E Minority: BU, IT (more females) Minority: SP, IT (especially females); DK (substantial number)
Unemployment	Majority: GER-W Substantial number: UK, BU, P (early school-leavers and more often males than females) Minority: DK, IT, NL, SP (more often males than females), GER-E	Substantial number of unemployed: UK, P (often early school-leavers; BU (also higher education graduates) Minority: DK, IT, SP, GER-W, NL, GER-E (many early school-leavers)
Other	Minority in military service: BU, IT	Substantial number in motherhood: GER-W Some in motherhood: BU, NL

The respondents who were still in education were either students who were delayed or who have stacked-up educational levels and had not as yet finished their studies; more females than males were in education and at higher levels, a result in line with European research, which indicates that females are increasingly catching up with males in participation in higher education and nowadays even surpass them (SCP, 2000). Many respondents, male and female alike, were working alongside their studies and, hence, had acquired work experience before entering the full-time labour market. Those who profited from this were most often young people with at least medium level education. While part-time employment contracts seem to be on the rise throughout Europe (IARD, 2001; OECD, 2000), precarious part-time employment still appears to be relatively uncommon. It was found only among a minority of Spanish, Danish (both sexes) and Italian (especially female) respondents.

Of the young people who have entered the labour market, a significant number held jobs that were temporary and had poor working conditions. Working under one's educational level is especially common among higher educated respondents, a situation which may point to a growing convergence of European systems of school-to-work transitions, for instance, between the UK and USA: higher education is a starting point but not a guaranteed stable starting position.

A significant minority of young people in the sample were unemployed, be that at present or after having had one or more temporary jobs. While most of those in this group were low educated early school-leavers, middle to higher level educated young people were also affected, reflecting overall precarious labour market conditions due to economic downturn (in particular, in Spain, Portugal and Italy) or economic restructuring (Bulgaria and the former East Germany). One important consequence is that young people increasingly regarded -and put into practice -migration as a coping strategy, especially in the two latter countries and the UK (Northern Ireland). To escape from an unreceptive labour market, a significant number of respondents wished to return to education or have already done so, or they follow dual trajectories. Regarding the latter, especially for Bulgarians, it seems that combining education and work provides the best way to deal with structural labour market insecurity (in providing work experience) while raising individual educational capital (Kovacheva, 2000).

In a number of contexts, gender differences with regard to education and labour market careers seemed to persist. In a significant number of cases, females did considerably worse than males on the labour market in terms of possibilities, contracts and working conditions, and were more often unemployed (Spain, Italy, Portugal), or worried about their future labour market prospects (Germany (west)). In other regions, gender differences were relatively small or absent (Denmark and the Netherlands).

The most important outcome when comparing the quantitative data with the qualitative results was that the latter revealed far more realistic and pragmatic attitudes towards work, particularly now considering that these respondents have (largely) exited education and/or training. This does not mean that they have abandoned their positive labour market outlook, but rather that, in the mean time, have encountered the obstacles of current labour market conditions in their respective regions in a direct, confrontational manner, e.g. less favourable contracts than expected, poor working conditions, part-time and temporary employment, unemployment, etc.

There is no change found in the attitude of respondents towards education. In line with the quantitative survey outcomes, the qualitative interviews showed that education

continues to be regarded as extremely important in respect to labour market success. Given the adverse labour market conditions in many regions, relatively large numbers even consider re-entering education, even shortly after 'leaving' school.

Gender differences appear to be persistent when males and females have entered the labour market. This is not always the case and differs according to country, but overall, females appeared to be faring worse compared to males. Apparently, the breakdown in educational differences between the sexes has not together gone yet; this is especially the case in the Southern European countries.

2.4. Transitions from education-to-work from a risk/option perspective

The typology below (Table 4) portrays FATE respondents' education-to-work transition patterns in terms the extent of risk and range of options. It has been constructed following a close reading and analysis of the various national reports, related to the results of other EGRIS European projects on transition patterns and transition behaviours (see Walther & Stauber (in press); du Bois-Reymond & Lopez-Blasco, 2003; see also Plug & du Bois-Reymond, 2004 and Evans et al. 2000).

Table 4. Typology of transition patterns of FATE respondents

Young people with:	Relatively high risk	Relatively little risk
Relatively many options	TYPE A Mostly middle and especially higher social-economic milieus Mostly middle or higher educational levels Extended, fragmented and alternative trajectories, yoyo's, highly differentiated Short-term planning; trial and error labour market behaviour High agency and competence to manage transition Reflexive biography Broad geographical scope of action Transitions and trajectories driven by personal development; expressive learning and work values ⁷ Support: high or low	TYPE B All social-economic backgrounds but more middle and higher milieus Middle and higher educational levels Relatively smooth transitions and trajectories following institutional logic Long-, middle- and short-term planning but emphasis on short to middle Sufficient agency and competence to manage transition Semi-modernised biography Small to broad geographical scopes of action Transitions and trajectories

⁷ *Expressive* values emphasise immaterial orientations as autonomy, self-development, responsibility and other non-material notions (Vinken et al. 2002, p.84).

Relatively little options	<p>TYPE C</p> <p>Mostly lower social-economic milieu</p> <p>Mostly low educational level; early school-leavers</p> <p>Short linear trajectories; some yoyo's</p> <p>Short-term planning</p> <p>Low agency; restricted competence to manage transition</p> <p>Largely gendered normal biography</p> <p>Restricted geographical scope of action</p> <p>Transitions and trajectories driven by instrumental working-class learning and work values; sometimes anti-education</p> <p>Support: low</p>	<p>driven largely by instrumental learning and work values⁸</p> <p>Support: high or sufficient</p>
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Each type is described briefly below according to transition patterns, work orientation, transition experiences, coping strategies and support.

TYPE A

These young people – more often males than females – follow transition routes characterised by a high level of individualisation, have middle or high educational attainment levels and originate mostly from middle or higher socio-economic backgrounds. Overall, their educational trajectories are long, fragmented or follow alternative, non-linear dynamics (combination, switch and yoyo trajectories); stacking-up educational levels is also common. We often find this pattern with education systems which are relatively open and provide extensive possibilities for recurring education, particularly beneficial for respondents who want to postpone permanent transition decisions or who are faced with an unreceptive labour market.

This pattern includes a share of the 'avant-garde' of transition behaviour in postmodern Europe, as well as young people who make their transitions in countries which have recently undergone severe socio-economic and institutional change. The 'avant-garde' group may include young people in all the studied countries, but is over-represented in Denmark and the Netherlands. The position of UK and Italian respondents within this category is 'pulled' towards that of Type C, from relatively many to relatively few options.

Many of the Type A respondents are driven by the urge for self-development and self-realisation within learning and working. Most respondents in this category hold

⁸ *Instrumental* values refer to more or less traditional and material orientations as a good income, a steady job and fixed working hours (Vinken et al, 2002: 84).

expressive labour market values, in accordance with their middle or high socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. Other respondents originate from a context of economic necessity, and portray a combination of instrumental and expressive values.

The majority of respondents in this category experience their transition period as a phase of 'trial and error', and adopt relatively short-term strategies to allow for changes in personal wishes and rapidly changing labour market conditions. Many young people already have part-time side-jobs alongside education to gain work experience, earn extra money and build up networks, which they can use for further job search and social contacts; the geographical scope of their transition is large, and involves national and international orientations and contacts.

Transition support may be high or low, depending on the welfare regime of the country and family background. We would expect that parental financial support would cushion low welfare provision in certain countries but while this is indeed mostly so, our material suggests also that extensive parental support also arises in countries where the welfare arrangements are at a high level.

TYPE B

The transition patterns of these young people – males and females alike – evolve within a context of following standard routes in their respective educational systems. All socio-economic backgrounds are present, but they gravitate to middle and higher social-economic backgrounds and middle and higher educational levels. These transitions are characterised by their relative smoothness and linearity; the respondents who follow them could be labelled 'institutionalists', as they use the educational system as it is meant to be used: efficiently and without major detours. They signify a functional belief in existing educational systems and a traditional, one-off transition to the labour market.

The higher educational capital of the respondents in this category – in contrast to that of young people in Type C – gives them more options to choose from, while risk can be avoided for the time being. When they enter the labour market, they may experience the problems of respondents in Type A: an unreceptive labour market and poor labour market conditions for starters. Risks and options are more or less fairly distributed according to educational level, with the higher educated having more options and fewer risk, and vice versa.

Labour market orientations are generally of an instrumental nature: attaining financial independence and autonomy, but sometimes also strike a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for learning and working. As is the case with Type A respondents,

lifelong learning has entered the life-worlds of young people, although not as wholeheartedly as in the former group: education is, above all, functional. The respondents in this category are often 'semi-modernised' in terms of understanding the increased necessity of accumulating educational capital to respond to a less receptive labour market.

Realism and a short-term strategy of adaptation are common within this category. The scope of transition activity is generally regional (confined to major urban centres). Again, most respondents regard their own chances on the labour market as favourable and sometimes hold a 'wait and see' practical attitude.

In line with their often relatively high levels of family capital, in terms of financial and emotional support, these respondents do not experience many support problems, although this also depends on the context of the specific country.

TYPE C

These young people – most often, males from lower socio-economic backgrounds - may be regarded as being at a high risk of social exclusion. Either they have followed short educational routes or have dropped-out of education altogether. Most respondents in this group are unemployed or are constantly forced to change jobs or training courses. Here we find yoyo's of the more 'stagnant' variety: they are unable to find a permanent foothold in the labour market because of too low a level of education. We find these respondents in every country.

The transitions of these respondents are generally driven by traditional working class labour market orientations, such as making money to gain financial autonomy fast, a short-term extrinsic transition strategy, traditional male and female values (one breadwinner model) and, often, a dislike of formal education. Some have dropped-out of higher levels of education and share an aversion to formal training, but originate from higher socio-economic backgrounds with the accompanying different work attitudes.

In general, the transition experiences of the respondents in this C category have been negative to extremely negative. Of all the respondents, they are most likely to end up in precarious jobs, unqualified work, having the worst working conditions, or becoming - and remaining - unemployed. The range of transitional actions for the respondents in this category is restricted, often limited to the locality in which they grew-up. Disruptive life events, for instance crime, homelessness, etc. may aggravate their situations.

While a number of these respondents find stable jobs, others return to education. As is the case with respondents in the other categories, short-term transition strategies are

the norm. However, in stark contrast to the other groups, these young people often appear to lack the 'tools' to handle the changing European educational and labour market environment and consequently feel far less able to influence or direct their transitions.

As the respondents in this group originate mainly from lower class families, they often miss out on the higher social, cultural and family capital that enables other respondents to maintain or improve their transition situations. These problems are further exacerbated by a lack of welfare arrangements in a number of countries.

2.5. Conclusions

It can be stated that, on the whole, the education-to-work transitions of our respondents have become more fragmented compared to earlier young generations. The evidence from our respondents suggests that – across all countries - education-to-work transitions have become more non-linear and less predictable. This does not mean linear and smooth transitions no longer exist, but rather that the majority of respondents appear to map out education and labour market trajectories characterised by 'stop and go' and 'trial and error' behaviour. This behaviour is most explicit in terms of labour market conditions: working under one's educational level, contracts that are temporary, part-time, insecure and low paid are referred to regularly by respondents in all contexts. In certain countries, this may be regarded as a direct result of severe institutional labour market changes (Bulgaria, Germany (east)). In these regions especially, young people display the most extreme behaviour, that of labour migration to other regions and to other countries. Elsewhere, it seems to be the outcome of a combination of milder institutional restructuring, in particular, the advent of post-Fordist economic regimes in Western Europe, and -possibly - temporary national economic setbacks that infringe on young people's ability to enter the 'regular' labour market.

Gender differences appear to be persistent when males and females have entered the labour market. This is not always the case and differs per country, but overall, females appear to be faring worse compared to males. In many cases, the breakdown in educational differences between the sexes has not gone together, with a similar development on the labour market, in particular, in Southern European countries.

In general, higher educated young people appear to have the least trouble with these changes, while middle level educated respondents continue to follow more or less smooth educational transitions or adapt successfully after finding out that following a linear track from education-into-work has become impossible. The lower educated respondents seem to have the most trouble with adapting to these new circumstances.

Fragmentation – or perhaps better said, individualisation -within educational trajectories seems to be more the consequence of an increased freedom of educational choice among today's young people. This opens up the possibilities of changing educational pathways, mending earlier wrong choices, taking time out, and so forth.

Education is still seen by most, especially middle and higher level educated respondents, as the prime means of obtaining labour market success. Those who are sparsely educated or have left school early continue to be in difficult and frustrating positions of unemployment or low-skilled, temporary jobs, which seem to be increasingly declining in quality. Most often, these young people originate from lower socio-economic backgrounds, still adopting working class values that run contrary to today's demands in education, labour market behaviour and personal development.

These situations – a flexible and unreceptive labour market and fragmented/individualised educational trajectories – when combined, appear to give way to an extended period of education-to-work transitions in which young people increasingly work alongside their studies to gain work experience, have to start on the lower rungs of the labour market ladder, accept temporary contracts, be flexible, etc. They have to adopt short-term strategies and decide along the way which direction they want to or can go. Ongoing or re-entering education is used as an option to influence one's (future) labour market position actively or to avoid an early entrance to an unreceptive labour market. Furthermore, agency is needed to navigate through all these choices and be able to cope with problems that come up unexpectedly, and be flexible to adapt wishes in the face of transitory obstacles. While the majority of respondents seem to have these new competencies, and in that sense know how to make use of options and avoid risks as much as they can, a growing minority run high risks during their transition period, with diminishing options. In their cases, the necessary competences and support systems often appear to be missing and chances of social exclusion during the remainder of their transitional careers are high.

3. Housing and domestic transitions

An important aspect of the FATE research was the investigation of housing and domestic transitions. Of particular importance was consideration of the achievement of domestic emancipation, either wholly or partially, in the transition to adulthood. Attaining housing independence in particular is considered a decisive aspect in the definition and realization of adulthood. However, the outcomes of the research illustrate the fact that housing transitions represent a process rather than a clear-cut event, as leaving the parental home can be an extended process, involving one or more returns before making a

permanent transition to an independent household. Therefore, young people do not automatically become completely emancipated after leaving home. On the contrary, the majority of home-leavers first establish partial forms of housing independence, i.e. semi-dependent or functional living arrangements; according to Esquinas et al (2003), such intermediate forms of independent housing encompass temporary, precarious, economic and occasional forms of emancipation.

3.1. Outcomes from the quantitative research phase

In the European Union, young people increasingly stay for prolonged periods in the parental home. In the FATE institutional survey, 62% of all respondents were living with their parents, while only 23% had already left home. Women also tend to leave home earlier than men, with 26% of young women in the FATE survey being found to have already left home, compared to 21% of young men. Young people also leave home earlier in Northern European countries, e.g. 64% of respondents in Denmark compared to only 8% in Spain, 5% in Italy and 2% in Portugal.

The main reason for leaving home for young people in the UK, German, Dutch and Danish regions surveyed is the desire to become independent, while in the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian regions surveyed, the main reason is finding a stable job. As these latter countries have sub-protective welfare regimes, where state support for young people is rather limited or non-existent, this may indicate that these young people feel compelled to stay at home. There also seems to be no gender difference regarding the motivation to move out from the parental home. Age seems to play a more important role. Leaving home because one wants to is not important for young people aged 16 years and under. Yet, from 17 years old onwards, the proportions of young people considering moving out as an individual choice incrementally increases. Conversely, finding a stable job loses its significance with increasing age.

3.2. Outcomes from the qualitative research phase

The outcomes from the interviews with young people show that the decision to stay at home or leave involves a complex constellation of factors. Young people make the decision through taking into account their interests, fears and wishes, alongside consideration of their resources, social expectations and structural constraints to their possibility of becoming independent, balancing the pros and cons of an independent life.

Among factors regarded as significant during this decision-making process are social norms and expectations, material, educational and subjective factors, the degree of freedom and the presence of conflicts within the parental home. Despite processes of

individualisation, social norms and expectations still play an important role in mediating the transition into adulthood. Young people have to balance social expectations with their own aspirations - and resources - in order to be able to make a satisfactory transition. Social and cultural norms may be linked to feelings of what is considered to be 'normal' or 'right'. Hence, expressions like 'right moment to leave' or 'it is normal to stay with my parents' are linked to context-specific independence norms, which can either promote or hinder young people in leaving the parental home. In this sense, one social expectation we have found which might be considered a hindrance to residential emancipation concerns the idea that young people should move into stable housing arrangements e.g. their own house or flat. Other important cultural norms regarding housing transitions relate to certain age limits and marriage expectations, although marriage continues to lose its importance as the right event to prompt a move out of the parental home.

The most decisive factor in the decision to move to an independent residence is related to material aspects, particularly structural constraints and uncertain labour market conditions, which have the power to force young people to remain living with their parents; in this sense, most young people who stay on with their parents indicate that they lack the material means to leave. On this question, welfare regime plays a significant role, with young people in the Danish context leaving home earlier than, say, those living in southern European contexts or Bulgaria. The explanation for this behaviour is evident in the previously discussed differential in welfare provisions between these contexts.

It should also be noted that some young people choose to stay with their parents to maintain their standard of living. These respondents have high demands on their future residence, preventing them from accepting conditions of a presumably lower standard to what they are accustomed to in their parental home. The interviews with young people also contradict the notion that prolonged educational pathways are the main explanation for the extended cohabitation with the family of origin. On the contrary, young people with higher educational attainment levels are more likely to be living independently, with the exception of higher educated respondents in the UK, a situation attributable at least in part to the recent collapse in state support to young people attending university. Elsewhere, the tendency was one of higher educated young people leaving their parents when starting university.

The decision to leave home is also likely to be influenced by subjective desires, fears and preferences. In this sense, moving out is also the result of an individual's aspiration for autonomy. The lack of such aspirations can also be a hindrance to young people moving out, e.g. in the Italian research context prolonged permanence at the parental home can

undermine the desire to become independent, as home comforts make young people lose interest. Yet short experiences of independent living may serve to enhance the desire to have a place of one's own. Therefore, one possible form of promoting housing independence seems to be furthering youth activities providing such short experiences of independent living, e.g. student exchanges, voluntary work, etc. Another important subjective factor in need of consideration concerns the fear of loneliness and/or not being able to live independently. The influence of these aspects on housing decision making should not be underestimated.

Living with parents was the most common housing arrangement among FATE respondents, with 60% living with one or both parents, albeit with regional variations. The highest numbers of young people living at home was found in Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria and Spain, followed closely by the UK, while Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark had the lowest numbers of young people living at home.

Late home-leavers seem to develop certain emancipation activities at a later point in time to those who leave their parental home comparatively earlier; as observed above, they may lack self-confidence in their ability to live alone, fearing loneliness. Such feelings may explain why protracted permanence at the parental home is widely considered as a problem. Staying at home for longer also restrains the autonomy of young people, as they must still live under the rules of their parents. Even if these rules are the result of negotiation, parents are still likely to be the main protagonists in the establishment of these rules, which their 'children' more or less have to follow. Therefore, while generally, the young people interviewed, across all contexts, enjoyed ample scope for freedom at home, their autonomy is restricted, psychological if not physically. It is not surprising to find that while most young people and their parents describe their cohabitation as very harmonious and based on mutual understanding and trust, they are still interested in achieving different things: while young people look for increasing levels of independence, their parents' interest lies in continuing their counselling role as parents. If divergent, such interests can be a potential source of conflict, although instances of intergenerational conflict were rare.

Regarding home-stayers, it is important to point out that not all cases of young people living at home can be considered as instances of extended permanence at the parental home, as some interviewees were still too young to be considered as having delayed their departure from the family home. This seems to be mostly the case amongst respondents at lower and medium education levels in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, as they tend to stay with their parents while they complete vocational training. Protracted home-stayers can however be said to be found particularly in Italy, Spain,

Portugal and Bulgaria, even at higher educational levels. If we look closely at the situations facing these respondents, we notice that they do not generally contribute to the parental household, with money or other kinds of support. Staying at home is also regarded as 'obvious', having become a cultural norm in these regions. The young people interviewed in the United Kingdom seem to occupy a distinct position regarding staying at home. Although there are increasing numbers of young people living with their parents, they do not follow the same pattern as Mediterranean countries, in regarding this situation as irregular situation, i.e. it is *not* a cultural norm.

Home-leavers within the context of the FATE study are most prominently found in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany. Most have a high level of educational attainment or originate from higher social backgrounds; many in fact left home when they began their studies at university. Initial place of residence for the majority of these home-leavers is likely to be non-permanent and functional. Furthermore, as most are semi-dependent on the economic resources of their parents or state institutions, their independence is partial or intermediate.

Returning to the parental home after having lived in an independent household underpins yoyo housing transitions. While among the FATE young people, there are only sporadic cases of young people returning home after having lived on their own, where such scenarios arise, it is amid the high education level group, who return home after finishing their studies. But generally, returning home is not seen as the norm, although most young people take for granted that they are able to return to their parents if they need to. It also seems to be the case that experiences of independent living enhance the desire of autonomy, while not having such an experience reduces motivation to becoming emancipated.

In Spain, Portugal and Italy, we also find parental accounts wherein significant changes in values and the process of social modernisation is observed between both generations. Such parents consider their own housing transitions as the traditional or 'normal' pattern of leaving home, i.e. leaving home earlier than young people do so today, mainly due to economic reasons and a lack of autonomy within their families. This is clearly no longer the case for their children. Southern European parents tend to think that staying at home is become advantageous for their children, as they enjoy complete freedom, understanding, affection and help without being confronted with the feeling of being controlled by their families; they also support the idea that their children should leave home without having to lower their standard of living.

Living together with grown-up children is not necessarily easy for parents as they have to leave aside their role as parents and consider their children as adults. Parents do however appreciate the need for mutual adaptation to enable their children to become adults, as young people are only as adults as their parents make it possible for them to be. This reinforces the idea that autonomy in the parental home is a situated and thus a limited kind of independence. It becomes crucial for parents to learn to let their children go, ironically, ensure that both generations remain attached. But the process of finding the right balance between control and freedom or between being a parent and being a friend is a difficult task for parents.

Relationships between parents and young people after the latter have left home, mainly those in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, usually remains more or less the same, although in some cases, there is an improvement of relations between generations. Some parents also feel relieved after their children have left home, happy being no longer responsible for their children.

3.3. Conclusions

Housing emancipation is an important marker of adulthood, but has to be regarded as a process rather than a clear-cut event. In this respect, leaving the parental home can be considered an extended process, during which the young person may experience intermediate forms of housing emancipation and/or return one or more times to the parental home before making a permanent transition to an independent household. The qualitative analysis highlights the significance of intermediate housing arrangements, wherein young people are partially independent and partially dependent on the material support of parents or other institutions. However, the acceptance of such intermediate forms of housing emancipation, and more functional kinds of living arrangements, varies among our respondents. There are also cases of parents and young people privileging the maintenance of a certain living standard, at the expense of young people moving out; this may lead to a delayed departure from home. One way of preventing protracted intergenerational cohabitation would thus be to enable and motivate young people to live in partially independent housing. There are only sporadic instances of young people returning home after having lived independently. It seems that experiences of independent living enhance the desire for autonomy in young people, while not having these experiences reduces the motivation to become emancipated.

The most decisive factor in influencing housing independence relates to material aspects, specifically structural constraints and uncertain labour market conditions (which compel young people to stay with their parents). Welfare regimes play a significant role in

defining local housing transition patterns, with respondents living under sub-protective or post-communist welfare regimes feeling unable to leave home until they find a stable job, while elsewhere, the desire to become autonomous is main motivation to move into an independent household. Hence, there seems to be a strong correlation between perceptions of material opportunities to become independent and the desire for autonomy. Although delayed departure from home cannot be solely explained by difficult material conditions and insecure labour situations, prolonged intergenerational cohabitation still correlates highly with labour market flexibilisation, particularly where young people are in low paid and insecure jobs. It would not be surprising to find that protracted permanence at home will continue where such conditions prevail.

4. Support

4.1. Introduction

In respect to the crucial issue of support, the FATE research provides insight into the current situations of young people and their families, highlighting diversity and commonality between different regions and the significance of factors such as gender, age and socio-economic background. Light is also shed on the impact of wider social change on young people's biographies, in particular, the shifting balance between state and family provision within the research contexts surveyed.

4.2. Quantitative Research

The results of the Institutional Survey provide insight into current youth situations across Europe. In respect to material support to young people, in particular economic support, parents contribute most to their children's incomes in Italy (an average of €146 per month) and Portugal (€102), and least in Denmark (€20) and Bulgaria (€39). The reasons for this pattern of distribution are varied: a lack of state support obliges parents in Portugal (and Italy) to contribute more, while parents in Denmark can rely upon public money being spent on their children; elsewhere, in Bulgaria, while the amount of money spent by parents on their children is little in comparison with the other contexts, an average expenditure of €39 per month still represents the main income source for young people in this region.

We can also observe a close relationship between income sources and educational exit levels: those leaving full-time education at end of compulsory level rely on earnings from employment and state benefits, while those exiting full-time education after upper secondary education are more dependent upon training allowances and money earned from jobs; for those exiting at university level, a combination of employment-related

earnings and parental contributions constitute their main income streams. In attempting to account for these differences, we should bear in mind that university level young people, being generally older and better qualified than their end of compulsory and upper secondary counterparts, are more likely to have access to better jobs and, hence, higher incomes; they may also be receiving more money from their parents to cover their educational and living costs.

In meeting the costs of education, e.g. course fees, parents are the main source of support, followed by the state and money earned by young people themselves. Parents are also mainly responsible for meeting expenditure on books other educational materials, along with the young people themselves. On indicators of (economic) independence, for accommodation costs, parental support is both strong and prolonged, even for the 'older' young people surveyed, albeit with lesser intensity compared to those still in their teens. In respect to young people paying for their own meals, dependency is also present, although to a somewhat lesser extent.

Further typological analysis, via identifying over-representations in responses to key questions, has provided an opportunity to gain greater understanding of young people's support situations, particularly in relation to dependency and autonomy. Five distinct youth situations emerged from this analysis: attaining autonomy by social acculturation (typically, single, cultured, independent young adults from the Netherlands, Spain and the UK who are employed but still living at home); dependency generated by tradition (fearful, materialistic, dependent young people mostly from Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain defined by economic reliance upon parents and the absence of a job); early but conditional independence (coupled, postmodern but vulnerable young people, with a high level of economic independence, comprising the bulk of Danish young people and half the UK sample); tense anchorage to family of origin (dependent, controlled young people who are single, childless and still living with their parents found exclusively in Italy); and liberating work ethics (cohabiting, independent, confident young people from Germany, who are relatively economic independent and tend to be living with a partner).

4.3. Qualitative Research

When speaking about family resources and parental support with respect to youth transitions, we tend to think in terms of economic capital, usually in the form of direct inter-generational transfers of financial resources. Supporting dependent young adults also involves continued provision of board and lodgings within the family home and financial handouts to young people to cover their expenses while they undertake their education and training courses. Evidence of material support from families is most

apparent amongst those who have completed tertiary level education; while this group of young people contains an over-representation of the more affluent families surveyed, there is also evidence of considerable material support provision within less affluent households; some of these latter families make considerable sacrifices, working long hours or taking additional jobs, to enable their children to realise their full educational potential, e.g. the father of Milena, a 22 year old Agricultural student in Bulgaria, who although over sixty years of age and already retired, works as a security guard in a private company to support his daughter.

The young people interviewed are especially aware of the importance of material support where higher education is not free of charge. These young people realise that without material assistance, they would have to no recourse but to take out (more) student loans or consider a different career. Furthermore, combining employment with studying was often of critical importance to attaining a viable standard of living. Where family resources are limited, we also find young people working prior to embarking upon a career as a means of financing their studies. Another recourse is commuting to save money, e.g. the case of Tracy, a 22 year old Arts graduate in the UK, who returned to live at home in her final year at university.

In many European societies, the family has also traditionally played a role in securing employment for its offspring through the use of informal networks. While this practice has been weakened in the modern context of job allocation becoming more closely tied to cultural and educational capital – and by economic restructuring transforming labour markets - there is still a suggestion that utilising (family) networks still persists in some contexts. In northern Europe, there is little evidence of networks at work, outside of exceptional cases. The use of extended family contacts is more prominent elsewhere, e.g. Bulgaria and Spain. In the former, family networks can be seen, partially, as a legacy of state socialism, although the prevalence of this practice may also be due to the high level of competition for jobs. In the latter, networking has been utilised in pragmatic fashion, to enable young people to gain an entrée to the labour market, particularly those entering manual occupations. Parents may also provide advice on their children's educational and occupational choices, recommending or discouraging particular educational institutions, courses, training options or jobs. As young adults today have an extended range of potential opportunities to choose from, but with increasingly uncertain outcomes, the provision of sound advice seems particularly salient. Given the pitfalls implicit in providing advice in what may be an unstable labour market situation, many parents appear reticent to guide their children in making educational or occupational decisions, feeling they lack the knowledge they need to provide sound advice to their children. Furthermore, parents may not necessarily be the first person a young person

will turn to for such advice; other family members, teachers and peers all feature in the biographical accounts of the young people, often more prominently than parents.

In respect to state sponsored advice, practically all those surveyed had undergone some form of careers counselling. While good guidance is largely rendered invisible in young people's accounts by being taken for granted, absent or misleading advice is noticeable within certain young people's biographies. There is also considerable antipathy expressed towards 'official' advice in the Netherlands, Germany (west) and in the UK low education group. There are also exceptional cases in the UK among Teaching and Medicine graduates, where young people have enjoyed extremely effective state guidance, in the form of introductions to potential employers facilitated by their former educational institutions.

With increasing mutual tolerance and understanding between generations, young people's relationships with their parents often go deeper than mutual respect, with a particularly high value placed upon emotional support, even eclipsing the importance of material support; this may include the maintenance of affectional relationships through which young people feel valued, encouraged and have a sense of belonging, e.g. Oscar, a 28 year old Psychologist in Denmark, regarded the 'social safety net' of emotional support offered to him by his parents as extremely important. Where emotional support is not so evident, young adults articulate this loss as a noticeable deficit, particularly within the Danish context, where parental philosophies of leaving young people to find their own way in the world and perhaps translates into feelings of missing some essential form of support.

Outside of direct material support, parents are often the providers of various forms of practical assistance in relation to education, employment and, particularly, independent living. Where young people had made the decision to leave the parental home, the family was often able to assist in all manner of tasks to ensure the transition out of the family home goes as smooth as possible. Such support is evidently highly appreciated by young people as they set up their own households. For young people still living at home, practical support comes in different forms, e.g. cooking, cleaning or washing, typically from their mothers. While there may be a suggestion of laziness or mollycoddling in some families, the lifting of the domestic burden is significant for young professionals embarking upon a career, who may be required to work long hours, leaving little time for domestic chores. As a counterbalance, it should also be noted that young people themselves often perform, or are prepared to perform, practical tasks around the home to assist their parents.

In respect to divergence and convergence across the various FATE research contexts, at a broad level, there is a dichotomy between regions where state support predominates and others in which the family is the main provider, in particular, of material sustenance; in some regions, however, there is a - perhaps uneasy or unequal - balance between state and family support provision. The most abundant levels of state support can be found in the Danish context, where the need to support young people's independence is recognised as an explicit goal of social policy. The southern European contexts and Bulgaria provide a sharp contrast. With only minimal or non-existent state support, young adults' education-to-work transitions are often consequentially highly dependent upon family resources; transitions hence become very much a family, as opposed to an individual, project. With high levels of youth unemployment and labour markets favouring and protecting adult males, there are few opportunities for young adults to enter the formal labour market in these regions. Extended education therefore becomes a crucial resource in accessing employment, or to be more precise, finding a well-paid, secure job. In between these two extremes, we find the remaining research contexts, i.e. the UK, the Netherlands and both German regions.

A further issue concerns reciprocity, in particular, young people with conditional family support. An immediate distinction can be drawn between southern European contexts, with deeply enshrined reciprocal expectations embedded within policy and culture, and the northern European contexts, in which reciprocal expectations appear more diverse. Although support in the present was often provided with few strings attached, among young people and parents alike there were clear expectations of future reciprocity in the form of ongoing support between generations throughout the life course, according to different generational needs. In particular, Italian respondents attested to the strength and extent of the family solidarity network, operating according to the 'gift logic' of giving, receiving, and reciprocating. Gendered expectations of support within the context of extended dependency also emerged in Italy, with females more often charged with assisting with caring and household tasks within the family home or being expected to care for parents in their old age, such as in the case of 22 year old Cecilia; since she is the only daughter, she will be 'the one who will take greater care of them.' In return, she will receive a greater inheritance than her brothers.

In Spain and Portugal, similar expectations of support are found. However, a distinction can be made according to family resources. For less affluent parents, at least in Spain, the attitude could be summed up as unconditional support as, 'If you don't study you will have to work,' while in more affluent families, the family philosophy was more one of, 'If you don't study you can't work.' This valuation of educational investments is based on the assumption that a higher level of education will result in finding a 'good job,' even if

this effort means a delay in starting to earn money. This philosophy may be accompanied by an obligation to fulfil parental expectations, e.g. in the case of Paulo (25, Male, High Education; Portugal), who repeatedly stated how privileged he felt by his continued receipt of support, which his parents will maintain but only for as long as he makes good use of it.

By way of contrast, in Denmark, unconditional material support is provided up to the age of 18, beyond which, expectations of mutual reciprocation in support giving are minimal. Where young adults remain dependent on their parents, contributions are often made towards the household budget in the form of rent money or paying for food, however this tends to be related to a parental philosophy of fostering financial responsibility and promoting a sense of autonomy, rather than representing an obligation to reciprocate. In a minority of cases, where affluent parents had assisted autonomy through the purchase of a flat for their son or daughter, the overriding emphasis on promoting independence frequently prompted parents to charge their children rent. Elsewhere, further regional differences can be observed, e.g. in the former GDR, beyond a hope that children will remain interested in their lives, east German parents, who grew up with strong state support for the elderly in the communist era, expect little in the future in respect to support.

4.4. Conclusions

Socio-economic change has radically altered the nature of young adults' transitions in Europe in the space of several decades, not only in terms of education-to-work trajectories, but also in the broader paths to adulthood, resulting in periods of protracted dependence or semi-dependence upon families, albeit to varying degrees. Within the research contexts, with the exception of Denmark, the policy response has tended to be minimal and centred upon traditional assumptions. The outcome has been families increasingly taking up the strain of supporting young people making transitions. It would appear to be the case that families, in contrast to most policy makers, have - perhaps out of necessity - adapted to the new conditions facing youth, with young people and parents working together to enable labour market entry.

In assessing the support families provide, a highly variegated picture emerges, with support arriving in different forms and differing degrees. Overall, it can be said that where state support is absent, families have at least attempted to fill the gap and meet their new obligations. In terms of reciprocal obligations, while partially embedded in national and local traditions of custom and practice, young adults generally show considerable appreciation for the support they have received.

Considering the nature of state support to young adults across our contexts, perhaps not surprisingly, the situations encountered tend to be a reflection of broader models of welfare regime; as a corollary to state support, material support from parents appears to be tempered accordingly. From our material, we can hence characterise family support in the following way: in Denmark, parental support can be withheld as a means of fostering and promoting independence among young adults, due in no small part to the relatively generous level of state provision; in employment-centred regimes and in the case of the UK (liberal/minimal regime) parental support is balanced according to need, while in the case of sub-protective and post-communist regimes, such support is provided in largely unconditional ways.

5. Family cultures

5.1. Introduction

Starting from the theoretical notion of different family types which coexist side by side in European countries, we can discern the productive family, the reproductive family and the supportive network family. The reproductive family was dominant in traditional societies in which kin relations were of most importance and the relationship between the generations governed by strict rules and behavioural norms, rooted in local cultural traditions. The productive family is the dominant model of modernity, with universal behavioural norms and growing importance of education, while the network family is characterized by openness, situated-ness of behavioural norms and informal exchange between the generations and other significant individuals connected to the family. We found all three family types represented in the FATE research, albeit with regionally specific differences: more network families in Northern Europe; more reproductive families in the South, but with many variants in between, like the 'long family' in Italy.

But however diverse, all European families have to cope with the problem of the prolonged transitions of youth towards independent life. We were interested as much in divergence as convergence in the material in the choices they make during their transition period, and how those choices are mediated within the family. Therefore we looked, firstly, at daily communication as expressed in family rules – what kind of rules, how many or few, gendered or not – and how they were applied or modified by parents and young persons; it tells us something about the climate in a family, e.g. mutual acceptance or rejection of expectations and decisions. Secondly, we looked closely into the conflict potential and manifest conflicts in the various families in order to learn more about the issues at stake in young people's prolonged work and housing transitions.

We found that all contemporary families, regardless of their nature and local context, are governed more by principles of negotiation than parental demand, and less by hierarchy between the generations or genders. We were especially interested in the possible persistence of gender inequality, i.e. are young women differently treated by their parents than young men and do they have different ways of dealing with conflicts: in other words, are there gendered communication and conflict strategies?

5.2. References to quantitative survey

The main issues of the quantitative survey concerning 'family relations and dynamics' were, to a considerable degree, convergent to those of the qualitative analysis: firstly, in the way young people perceive and evaluate their family relationships; secondly, in significant dimensions of family life; and thirdly, to family dynamics (conflicts).

- 1) The prevailing perception and evaluation of family relationships by young people is very positive: in all research areas, they say they have 'very good' or 'good' relations with their parents, mothers even more so than fathers; the image of apparently peaceful co-existence between parents and children seems to be a clear manifestation of the flexibilisation and individualisation of family relations, more compatible with democratic than authoritarian family models, even in contexts where this trend is still very recent.
- 2) As significant dimensions of family life, the data reveals the highly feminized nature of household management and rules for both generations surveyed. There are less, but still evident, gender differences in Northern European countries (with more network families); there are also regions – e.g. Italy - where both parents seem to relieve their children, as far as possible, from household tasks;
- 3) Three family types were established for the analysis, which correspond with the above types of reproductive, productive and network family: traditional, intermediate and non-conventional families. They can not simply be equated with conflict levels, but more conflict does tend to exist between low educated fathers and children – which, with some caution, can be equated with a more traditional family climate in which survival and instrumentalism prevails.
- 4) Conflict concerning rules at parental home is at a low level; there are more conflicts for younger age groups, which is confirmed by the qualitative analysis, with young people and their parents achieving a higher level of mutual understanding over the time spent living together.

The survey found some important variations relating to region, gender and, in some cases, age (with educational system as an intermediate variable), taking into account the need for caution in making generalizations, due to the possible multiple effects of differences in sample composition, i.e. sometimes regional differences can be mistaken for age effects and vice versa.

Although the qualitative analysis adds more depth to family relations and dynamics, as we will show, especially in the detailed analysis of the conflict potential in families, both data sets converge in supporting the general finding that intergenerational relationships in all research areas are, overall, harmonious and governed more by negotiation than demand and that the young people think they get enough space for being autonomous, even if not economically independent.

5.3. Findings from the comparative analysis of qualitative data

5.3.1. Family rules and family climate

From the qualitative data, we found a number of general findings, as well as regional and cultural specific trends, which can be summarized as follows:

The general finding of the survey, concerning the harmony and well-being of young people within their families, is confirmed by the qualitative study. There are, overall, not many (very explicit) parental rules they have to comply with; those there are met with agreement, as they are regarded as sensible by the young people: 'My parents are not the type of parents that set rules. They have always left us free (...) I can almost do everything I want to. It ought not to become too crazy but I think that I am not that kind of person anyway', says Wesley, a 23 year old Dutch male. The great majority of the young people felt they had enough material and immaterial room to experience autonomy. We did find gender specific rules – girls are somewhat more controlled by their parents and given less autonomy than boys -but this was not an exaggerated trend and pertained more to traditional parental educational styles and philosophies than to more modern inclined relationships.

Mothers are in all families more, or at least more overtly, emotionally engaged than fathers and regarded by their female children, as friends rather than educators, as is demonstrated by this young German woman: 'I talk with my mother about everything, about love, about separations, about what I have experienced in the discotheque, about the profession, everything.'

The picture of familial contentment is all the more impressive when we know that in the qualitative study, unlike the institutional survey, not only where young persons but also

their parents interviewed: we did not find many discrepancies in their mutual accounts of family life. That means that contemporary parents are very conscious about social change and how it affects the transitions of their children, as opposed to their own lives and expectations.

We did find in each of our country contexts problem families: those suffering from financial and health problems, disruption through divorce and other stress. There is no direct relation between type of family and problem level, although the likelihood that families will be burdened with problems is obviously greater in regions with low or non-existent welfare provision and high levels of (youth) unemployment, as is the case, for example, in Bulgaria but also Germany (east). A 20 year old male from Bulgaria points out that he might be forced to emigrate: 'I have plans (to emigrate) and not only myself but my two brothers as well. Our father recommends emigration so that we can have a better life.'

There are country/region specific features to be discerned, e.g. while Germany (west), the Netherlands and Denmark are similar in many respects (high welfare provision levels) and share a relaxed family climate, Danish families are the most relaxed and least bound to traditions (religion, among others). In comparison, west German families show more stress because of higher unemployment rates and uncertainty for their children (and parents) in managing the transition to the labour market and because of the aftermath of reunification. Another example is the comparison between Italy, Spain and Portugal, which are similar in many respects (sub-protective welfare systems; unresponsive youth labour markets; housing shortage). Here, the Italian family which seems to have more resources to comply with disadvantageous living conditions, and it is conspicuous that the young people not only have to stay for a long period of their adult life at the parental home, but actually want to. Neither children nor parents suffer from this as much – or at all – as the Spanish, with Portugal somewhere in between.

We are hesitant to assign certain types of family communication and climates to certain countries/regions. Families are a much too complex social reality to be easily put into boxes of geographical areas, demarcated by rigid typologies or subjected to other criteria of systematizing. What we can state with confidence is that all families are sensitive to the tasks and problems connected with youth transitions. The family proves to be an emotional stronghold for the younger generation, coping with their various transition trajectories which have become so much more complex and complicated in contemporary European societies.

5.3.2. Conflict climate in families

To start, we have to clarify what we mean by conflict as a concept:

Conflict in this study is regarded as something which cannot be avoided in relationships, and which represents something productive, as long as it is not hidden or ignored. 'Conflict management' is a necessary consequence of this understanding of conflict: as conflicts cannot really be avoided, they have to be managed, and the conditions as well as the result of conflict management can be described as 'open conflict climate' or 'closed conflict climate', and which of course refer to the macro-climate of social norms concerning 'family'

The family constellation on which we focus with conflict, is the one which derives from prolonged economic dependency of young people, and which is challenging the general demand to deal with semi-dependency (as a characteristics of being a young adult); hence we focus on those young people who still live with their parents, but who – under other conditions - would probably live independently.

Regarding this conflict constellation, our research revealed that (semi-) dependency is a source of intergenerational conflict, but in this respect, the role of the state has to be considered. We asked where is prolonged dependency dealt with as a problem to be solved by the family alone, and in where is it an issue of public responsibility (assuming prolonged dependency of young people, and especially the impossibility to plan their transitions, also affects the possibility and scope of parents to plan their adult lives). We found with these questions well-known answers: universalistic regimes where dependency is dealt with as a public phenomenon, for instance, the Southern European regime type, where at a very early stage, it influences individual life plans. With this example, we can see how this happens in a gendered way.

The first question of our analysis has been to ask which conflict strategies families invent in order to cope with the prolonged dependency of young people. Obviously, there are different ways to deal with conflict under different conditions. We found, in our comparative analysis, that, firstly, there are strategies of conflict avoidance in different modes; we discerned:

- 1) The mode of conflict prevention by parents. This mode is practised by parents such as those who give up their own private space in order to give their children more comfort. There are examples of this mode in Italy and Bulgaria:

Laura, 19 years old, unemployed, lives with her father, her stepmother and her stepsister. Her father and his partner decided to give their bedroom to the two girls in order to let them have their own space where they could study, listen to music and watch television. The couple moved to the living room and slept on a couch (Italy).

But we also can subsume under this mode (female) conflict avoiding strategies (permissive educational styles, diplomatizing etc..).

- 2) The mode of performing consensus. By this we mean strategies by which all family members, parents and young people, protect their family against criticism from outside (and also from the critical questions of researchers), thus performing a perfect 'consensus family', and defending harmony as long as possible. Examples for this mode are to be found in Germany (east) and Portugal:

'Maybe you look for a family with problems. But in this case we can't offer any.'

Interviewer: 'I don't look for a family with problems (everyone is laughing) I – we only find it interesting to see how family works.'

'It works.' (Germany (east), Mother (employee) of Cynthia, 25, female, higher education.

- 3) The mode of forced harmony, such as young people who separate their life into an (annoying) family life and their own youth life, whom, while at home, are more or less forced into a certain level of harmony. Examples are to be found in Spain and the UK:

'I sleep and, apart from these hours in the afternoon, I use to stay from four o'clock to six o'clock, but those two or three hours in the evening and then I go to bed, I spend very little time at home, so I don't quarrel.' (Spain, male, 27, higher education, medium SES, 373-375).

Secondly, there are strategies to deal with conflict in a more active manner. Under this title, we can subsume, the mode of arguing, but not going into extremes, which concerns both sides of the relationship, or the mode of leaving home as an active strategy of young people in order to come back more mature and more apt to handle conflicts actively:

Elena left home because she felt to be too much involved in the conflict between her parents. All three children (Elena, her sister and her brother) were involved by both parents in problems of their pair relationship. When Elena came back, she felt to be able to keep a healthy distance from this situation and felt able to concentrate on her own life. (Italy)

A third mode would be *staging conflict*, performed mostly by young people, in order to have a reason to leave;

Nicole, although benefiting from a rather good and conflict-open climate, used a theatrical element and produced a silly conflict in order to have a reason to go. Both she and her mother afterwards identified this as a kind of artificial conflict, but which had its good reason and proved to have a productive function in their relationship.

Thirdly, there are strategies of dialogue and negotiation. Here we have examples from the Netherlands and from Denmark, where the most explicit dialogue strategies have been reported. We have attributed this finding to the fact that, in Denmark, young people and their parents can more easily afford to develop such open strategies, as there is no major economic constraint putting their relationship under the pressure of expectations and disappointments.

The second question of our analysis has been the interrelation of conflict strategies and doing gender. Again, we have to start with some clarifying of the concept 'doing gender':

'Doing gender' means to regard gender as a social product, which is constantly constructed and re-constructed by the daily interactions of all kinds of actors, also by young people and their parents (West/Fenstermaker 1995). There are in each society structures to reproduce gender role models (institutional settings which produce gender regimes), but these structures are not too independent from the agency of the subjects involved.

The hypothesis is that it is, above all, in conflict situations where doing gender takes place, meaning, where gender roles are challenged, reproduced or changed. Often, the conflict itself has a gendered character regarding its topics or protagonists. So the question is one of how are the above distinguished conflict strategies/conflict management doing (varying, modernizing) gender?

Our finding is, that there are different ways of doing gender related to different conflict strategies. Roughly speaking, conflict avoidance strategies seem to restore the gender division of family work (i.e. as communication work), and therefore tend to do gender in

a rather traditional way, whereas more active strategies are done differently. Examples are to be found in Germany (west): one young female is becoming a nursery school teacher, who strongly feels the expectations of her divorced mother towards her as the oldest daughter and constantly negotiates between her own demands and her mother's expectations? She comes to a kind of 'silent' solution of negotiating her own demands and her mother's expectations, which means not openly going into conflict with her mother but giving her private life more space while staying in the common flat.

Another typical case is Ulla, who has just finished her studies in social work. Since her adolescence, she has been burdened with family responsibility by her mother and became a kind of mother substitute for her younger siblings. She has internalised this responsibility, but at the same time, struggles for a new kind of (adult) relationship with both her siblings and her mother, despite ongoing disappointing experiences with her. While Ulla is alone in finding a different female role, a more open conflict culture allows for more accompaniment: the conflict culture Cora has developed with her mother enables her to work out a reflexive mode of 'doing femininity'. She can rely on her mother, develop a mature relationship with her, benefit from her expertise as a professionally experienced woman, and negotiate all kinds of support and all important life topics with her, with a big space of individual freedom.

'Doing femininity' is always accompanied by 'doing masculinity'; the latter can be found in more traditional more reflexive variants, again, related to conflict avoidance strategies and active conflict management. We also find the traditional variant as well as a more reflexive counterpart. An example of the most obvious stereotype in doing masculinity is in the case of Carl, who avoids direct conflict while distancing himself from his parents, with growing feelings of annoyance. In the 'classical' male way, he refuses any deep communication with his parents, while still enjoying the comfort of getting his laundry done and meals prepared by his mother, and also delegating potentially conflict-laden topics (e.g. care of parents when they are older) to his sister. The more reflexive type is represented by Patrick, who is very keen to find work which gives him enough time for his two small children, even if these jobs do not correspond to his qualification; he retains a good relationship with his parents, even though they tried to influence his transitions. Today, he feels acknowledged by them in his 'different' male lifestyle and can come back to them for child-care.

There is one final important aspect in doing gender: the relevance of mothers in conflict management. Mothers seem to feel especially responsible for actively dealing with conflicts, a behaviour which tends to reproduce this responsibility as a female task – with some refusal from daughters (see examples from Germany (east)), but also as a

communication structure in families of doing femininity and doing masculinity at the same time.

This analysis tends to underline the findings of regime-related gender research (Pfau-Effinger 2000) which suggests a close connection between gender regimes and

– in the case of our research – transition regimes, which impact on one another. The absence of public support for young people and the absence of public support for the elderly often go hand-in-hand, as can be shown in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Bulgaria. Regimes without or with decreasing state support for young people, as well as decreasing public responsibility for child and elderly care, rely on family resources which, in more than one dimension, are related to gender: care for small children is expected more from mothers than fathers; care for the elderly is expected more from daughters than sons. Such expectations are often built into female (and male) life plans. Regimes with better support for young people to become independent also have better public care systems, which give more space to young women in developing their life plans independently from (gendered) care expectations and obligations.

It is thus under very different conditions, that conflict management is revealed to be one important aspect of maintaining intergenerational relationships. Successful conflict management would be coping without too much personal sacrifice. The latter is often a gendered issue of public care systems, as this important prerequisite for well-functioning families is often hindered by economic constraints, which set cycles of external and internal pressure into being, and are very likely to produce false conflict avoidance. This underlines the (gender) relevance of better spaces for active conflict management.

5.4. Conclusions

Prolonged transitions change positions within intergenerational relationships: parents all over Europe increasingly have to deal with young adults in a common household who develop autonomous lifestyles. For both sides, this creates new demands with regard to a reconciliation of different lifestyles and new types of (internal) conflicts. As the analysis of this section suggests, the most appropriate way to deal with this new demand would be to actively negotiate difference, in order to stay in contact, maintain the relationship, as an important resource but also without too much personal sacrifice. As much relational work is still done by daughters and mothers, this issue is of high gender relevance.

In most countries however, such an ideal relationship is very unlikely to work because of economic constraints, which set cycles of (external and internal) pressure and trials of conflict avoidance into being. Astonishingly, this does not always lead to an internal

erosion of the relationship but seems to work. From our material, we could not really identify the point at which such constructions start to become dysfunctional. What we can say is that they most often function on the basis of silent gender agreements, where women take over the more active part and men (willingly or unwillingly) stay aside. Different kinds of conflict strategies thus represent, most often, different ways of doing gender, which underline the relevance of better spaces for active conflict management.

As an inter-generational resolution to a social and historical period characterized by multifarious changes with continuities and discontinuities intermingling, young people and their parents invent strategies which fit the general situation of insecurity and the paradox of planning. Also, the conflict strategies can be interpreted as various responses to paradoxical demands which derive from the (semi-) dependency of young people. The different ways of doing this adaptation process to late-modern transitions in different countries confirms our focus on differences. Conflict strategies are thus revealed to be a key in the analysis of the tasks and pressures late modern families with gendered relationships have to fulfil and endure.

6. Representations of adulthood and life plans

6.1. Introduction

Analyzing the imagining of adult lives of young people interviewed, the significance that they attribute to being adults today and the role life plans play in their biographical constructions, has been useful in respect to moving towards an appreciation of experience typical of the 'second modernity', characterized by a widespread feeling of living in a time of uncontrollable risks and great uncertainties (Bauman, 2000).

For young people, this implies a redefinition of the relationship between the present and the future, between being young and becoming an adult. While the transition to adulthood grows longer and loses linearity – and becomes fragmented – the representation of adulthood fails to constitute a real, true existential 'goal'. This does not mean that adult life in and of itself is considered negatively; as this research shows (in the qualitative analysis), adult life may even maintain a mostly positive image. What is generally missing, nevertheless, is adulthood being characterized, on the part of young people, as a period with characteristics that are easily recognizable, distinguished by a series of 'objective' indicators, e.g. end of the formative phase of life, stable entry into the job market or marriage. The 'subjectivization' of adulthood – one 'becomes' an adult when one 'feels' like an adult – is maybe one of the most interesting aspects to emerge from the research. Consequently, even the idea of working on a 'life project', with the goal of transforming a projection of oneself into a future self – a real adult figure – tends

to evaporate. Even if the majority of young people continue to consider themselves optimistic about the future (although a rather large minority fear it), nonetheless, the future increasingly tends to be thought of more as an imaginary space than a dimension to be conquered. From this, there feeling also emanates the tendency to plan more for the short rather than the medium or long term. Plans are not absent or lacking, but their temporal horizon is restricted; in practice, 'life plans' as traditionally understood, have been substituted by plans of more modest importance and weight.

6.2. Findings from the quantitative research

The Institutional Survey was designed with the purpose to collect pertinent information from young people making the initial transition from education to the labour market, regarding their current situation about education, family life, work and also, their future aspirations and expectations (Biggart et al., 2003). Regarding labour market prospects, respondents showed, on the whole, a high level of optimism, despite the relatively high risk of unemployment across much of Europe for young people. The interviewees were asked how problematic they considered finding a job once their education or training course was finished. In contexts characterized by relatively low unemployment rates and by highly structured labour markets (wherein most occupations are prescribed for those with the appropriate qualifications), such as Germany (west), the Netherlands and Denmark, a relatively low proportion of young people anticipated experiencing difficulties in finding a job. On the contrary, in Bulgaria and Portugal, nearly two-thirds of young people expected to encounter difficulties in finding a job on completing their education or training, reflecting the youth unemployment rates in these regions. In this sense, the data in Italy should be underlined, since 43% of the interviewees felt that it was 'quite difficult' to find a job once their training had concluded.

An overall positive attitude regarding the job market also emerged when the young interviewees were asked to express an opinion on their job prospects. Forty-one percent of them estimated their prospects were 'good', while 49% felt they were 'reasonable'. Very few believed that their job prospects were 'bad': 8% of the total sample (especially young Bulgarians and Spaniards). Another interesting finding is related to the link between perceptions of future job possibilities and educational level: young people at the end of their compulsory studies showed themselves to be more pessimistic about their job prospects than the rest of the sample.

The young people surveyed were more optimistic in respect to their personal prospects, e.g. family, marriage and children, compared to how they felt about their job prospects. The majority of respondents (53%) regarded their personal prospects as 'good', 38% at

least 'reasonable'. Young women proved to be slightly more optimistic about their personal prospects than young men; as was the case with job prospects, the higher their educational level, the more confident young people felt.

Young people were asked to compare their anticipated future social and economic situation with the present situation of their parents. In this respect, most young people expected to improve (a little) upon their elders' position (36%), although 23% of respondents believed their situation will stay the same, while 11% thought they will be 'a little bit worse' off. Of special interest are the relatively high proportions of young people in the Dutch and German contexts who thought that their economic and social condition will worsen a little compared with their parents'. It is also important to highlight the 14% who found it difficult to anticipate their future living condition: in particular young people in Bulgaria and Spain (respectively 34 and 22%).

In conclusion, the results of the Institutional Survey show general optimism in regard to young people's future prospects. This notwithstanding, in a few countries (especially Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain), a certain degree of worry crept in on the part of young people with respect to their job prospects and the difficulty in anticipating their future living conditions, showing the perception of an uncertain future.

6.3. Findings from the qualitative research

6.3.1. Meanings associated with adulthood

Today, the steps of the transition to adulthood happen over an extended arc of time and no are longer, or not always, taking place in succession; they have also become reversible. In fact, it can be argued that the definition of being an adult has changed. There seems to have been a convergence of ideas amongst the young people interviewed regarding 'being an adult' not being tied to a specific age: not only is there no age specifically defining an individual as an adult, but for some interviewees, it is even possible to never completely realise adulthood. Sometimes, the transition to adult status is described as a process that can even remain open forever:

At what age does one become an adult?

There is no age. If you ask me, there are those who become adults early and those who never become one (Elena, 27, female, university student and full-time worker, Italy).

The overwhelming majority of European young people interviewed do however have a positive image of what it is to be an adult. The most frequent association with 'being

adult', particularly for the young people interviewed in Portugal, the Netherlands, UK and Italy, is one of 'being responsible'. The concept of 'responsibility' expressed by the young people interviewed is sometimes not specified in a detailed way, while, in other cases, it is tied to the ability to make decisions:

[To be adult means to] bear responsibilities, above all. It has nothing to do with age, but with responsibilities and maturity to make decisions. And when you make some decisions that don't turn out right, don't blame this one or that one, we have to blame ourselves (Marta, 20, female, medium education, employed, Portugal)

We can thus see that 'responsibility' is tied to other aspects of life, such as the ability to manage one's own life autonomously (being able to depend on yourself both financially and psychologically) and to take responsibility for others.

The adult, in the concept of young people, is not identifiable as an individual who has reached and surpassed milestones such as stable entrance into the job market, marriage, maternity/paternity, leaving the parental home (in other words, socio-demographic markers), but is seen rather as one who takes responsibility for him or herself, for their own choices and necessities, own work or family (i.e. individualistic criteria). What should be highlighted, therefore, is that from the point of view of young people, socio-demographic markers may be indicative of the status of adulthood only when the individual recognizes them as significant for him or herself (in taking that responsibility). For many young people, indeed, these events have no weight, given that becoming an adult is considered exclusively as a maturation and growth process that may not even have an end.

Taking all these findings into consideration creates the impression that the shared signs, which enabled looking at oneself and recognizing oneself as belonging to the category of 'young person' or 'adult', are being dissolved, leaving space for an intimate and individual perception: this, in our opinion, constitutes a confirmation of the process of individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003).

6.3.2. Perception of self as an adult

The condition that is most widespread among the young people interviewed in the large part of the countries involved in this research (especially Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and the two German regions) concerns considering oneself 'adults' in one area of life and 'young' in another; generally, they feel they are adult in that they are capable of making decisions and having their own point of view of the world, however, economic and/or

domestic dependence on their family of origin, or the lack of a job, impedes them from considering themselves totally adult. This brings them to perceive themselves as young and adult at the same time:

I am not adult because of my financial dependency, which hinders me from living my own life. But of course, as regards my development I am adult! (Rena, 31, high education, Germany (West)).

In some cases, young people demonstrate being young, in part, positively, e.g. in deliberately maintaining part of oneself as 'open' for a long period, not tied to characteristics that considered 'adult'. Among the minority of interviewees who consider themselves as totally young, in Portugal, Spain, Germany (west) and Italy, there are some who openly reject the idea of becoming adult. For some, this refusal is tied to the need to not close oneself into finished, static roles even in reference to work; for others, the risk is one of losing material and symbolic privileges, help and commodities they enjoy because they are young.

The achievement of adulthood appears to be more affected by interior conditions than to an external identifying mark: concrete facts like having a job, a home of one's own or children are important in considering oneself as an adult only cases where the individual perceives these events as important for his other own maturation process and the development of their individuality. Being an adult – like being young – is, for the subjects interviewed, more of a chosen condition than an externally recognizable social condition. The growing complexity of the times and ways in which the various social milestones are achieved, touched (and, not rarely, subsequently abandoned), accentuate characteristics of the 'subjectivization' of adulthood.

6.3.3. 'Adulthood' from parents' perspectives

Where young people live in their parents' homes for a protracted period, particularly in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria, reaching autonomy in a living situation and/or forming one's own family is often mentioned in definitions of what it means to be an adult by the mothers and fathers interviewed. As the large majority of young people interviewed in these countries still live at home with their parents, the latter tend to consider their children, consequently, as not completely grown-up (despite the fact that they often judge them as mature and responsible regarding their work or study commitments). Comparing their own transition to adulthood with that of their children, the majority of parents interviewed in these countries bring to light the greater speed and linearity of their own paths in relation to those of their children in a social context with profoundly different characteristics. There is also conviction on the part of the

parents that many young people experience the protracted transition in a way that is not problematic since they are content living at home with their parents and willingly put off taking on adult responsibilities.

In the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, getting married or forming a family seems to be of secondary importance in reaching adulthood from parents' points of view. Being an adult is prevalently conceived of as the development of the young person's ability to become independent and responsible for oneself: in their own words, 'being able to look after oneself', 'to make one's own decisions', 'to act responsibly' or 'to be independent.' In this sense, their children appear to be, in the parents' eyes, already adults, or at least on the way to becoming so.

The majority of parents in these countries agreed on the fact that they became adults in conditions that were more favourable especially with respect to the labour market. The widespread conviction is that they became adults in better conditions (in particular, with respect to working conditions): this reverberates in their children's representations of the transition toward adulthood. The parents transmit to their children, in fact, the vision of a time that was profoundly socially 'different': both more 'closed' on the level of existential possibilities but also much less 'uncertain'. The ambivalence that many young people express about adulthood ends up being fed also by these representations.

6.3.4. Life plans (vision of future; ability to plan; reversibility of choices)

The vision of adulthood reverberates inevitably in the concepts of life plans that young people express. To the absence of a clear-cut, non-ambivalent representation of adulthood there corresponds a temporal horizon, not structured by the idea of a foreseeable biographical trajectory. At the same time, the idea of a life plan is no longer constructed around reaching predetermined 'stops along the way' and tends to lose the links between goals and time.

In reference to the future, what emerges from the research are, above all, dreams and desires – a future that is more than anything else imagined, placed in an indefinite temporal horizon – or short, or very short-term, plans that are very concrete. Reasoning on future prospects, amongst young people interviewed in the UK (specifically Northern Ireland) and Bulgaria, the theme of emigration frequently arose, with the project or the eventuality of emigration seen as a way to seek work opportunities in scarce supply (if not completely absent) in their own countries.

If for many young people, the uncertainty typical of our times does not inhibit their capacity to imagine a desirable future (a satisfying job, a family), for others, usually

those who have experienced unemployment and do not have valid professional prospects, it is mostly fear of the future and distrust that prevails:

With these stories of unemployment rising, it's very difficult for someone to have a good perspective on the future and to be hopeful. (Luisa, 25, female, university student, Portugal).

The ability to make plans, i.e. to be active and make choices so that they can be achieved, tends to limit itself to the extended present (Nowotny, 1994), the temporal area that surrounds and borders on the immediate present. It is in fact within this area that plans can be, if necessary, revised without too much effort.

The successful cultural model becomes that of flexibility, understood as both the capacity to deal with the unforeseen in opportune moments as well as the aptitude to deal with study plans, work commitments and private relationships with the conviction that these are not irreversible (Walther and Stauber, 2002).

The cultural model of 'flexibility' turns out to be valid for both males and females, as the interviews show. The latter, in fact, increasingly tend to construct their biographies on the basis of a profile that can be defined as 'androgynous' (du Bois-Reymond, 1998), i.e., not differentiated substantially from that of their peers of the opposite sex. Nonetheless, the co-existence of professional work and time for taking care of the family within the biographies of women solicits in young women the anticipated need to construct strategies for linking these two social universes. Their relationship with the future, differently from that of their peers, openly carries the stamp of this prefiguring.

6.3.5. Life plans from parents' points of view

Parents seem to be able to imagine only a short-term future for their children. Even them, in almost all such cases, they share their children's attitude of not making long term plans and being flexible, given the conditions of uncertainty that characterizes our time. Some parents think that planning today is absolutely counterproductive given the high risk that the plans will not be achieved:

It is very difficult to make long-term plans. Unfortunately, this country and the world's state of affairs only allow people to plan short and medium term ... and even so with 500 question marks! (Mother of Paulo – 25, male, high education, employed, Portugal)

In general, if parents trust in their children's ability to make decisions, there is no analogous commonality of feeling with respect to the outcome of such choices. In some

countries, especially Portugal, Italy and also the UK, parents showed anxiety and worry with respect to the future of their children, especially regarding the working sphere. Often, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria and the UK, parents, along with the conviction that their children enjoy greater economic and cultural resources, recognized the limits, difficulties and uncertainties, especially with respect to the labour market, that their children must deal with. Parents in Germany, the Netherlands and, above all, Denmark, while aware of the difficulties encountered by their children, tended to show a more positive attitude, with greater confidence towards the future (the greater confidence displayed by these parents could be related to the fact that the countries in which they reside still enjoy good welfare provisions).

6.4. Conclusions

According to traditional analysis of the life course, the arrival point in the social and existential trajectory for young people is adulthood. But the adulthood that emerges from the narratives of the young men and women interviewed may be identified only in part with the achievement of the series of interconnected roles (entrance into the world of work, marriage, procreation) to which it is usually linked.

Nor does there exist a precise age with which the adult being may be associated. In fact, even adulthood today tends to be connoted as a strongly individualized dimension, at whose centre is found – in the eyes of young people – above all the ability to make decisions, to take responsibility for one's own actions and deal with the unforeseeable. This reality can be read within the framework of a larger social concept in which the individual is the one to be blamed or praised for his or her failures and successes. In the European context, not only for the younger subjects but also for children, the right and the capabilities to make their own choices, expressing their individuality is increasingly recognized.

Adulthood also increasingly seems to be a subjective, interior and chosen condition, free from external identifying marks. In a certain sense, time has stopped delimiting adulthood in a clear and unequivocal way (Côté, 2000): from more than one point of view, this appears open, and potentially, without end. As a consequence, even the identities that young people construct tend to delineate themselves as always potentially re-definable.

To this vision of adulthood corresponds an open temporal horizon. As the interviews show, life plans in their traditional meaning (projection of oneself into the medium-to-long term future; selection of priorities and strong containment of ambivalence thanks to choices made; management of daily life synchronized with the pre-chosen goals) are less

and less widespread. The future seems to be shaped, above all, by imaginations, placed in an indefinite temporal horizon or by short-term plans, very concrete.

The limitation of plans to the temporal frame that borders on the immediate present can be viewed as a strategic response to a future perceived as unforeseeable: short-term plans in fact have the characteristic of being rather easily modified. The young people interviewed view the decisions made (as much in studies and in work as in the area of relationships) not as irreversible but rather, potentially, always re-definable ('flexible'). If for some young people, this flexibility can represent the opening of the possibility for new life experiences, embodying new stimuli and new options, for others, especially those who have already experienced unemployment, it can be transformed into the nightmare of a time of precariousness: a time without guarantees, without the certainty of an income earned with a minimum of continuity.

In synthesis, it is necessary to take note that we have undergone profound transformations in the experience of time, that involve both young people and adults.

Today, although reference to the future can still be routine, for social systems and individuals, 'in point of fact, it is the present that is associated with the idea of potential governability and controllability that the "first modernity" connected with the future' (Leccardi, 2003: 36). The loss of the far away future as a field of intentional action seems to cast doubt both on youth as the preparatory phase of life for the assumption of adult roles, as well as the validity of life plans with a capital P.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Synthesis of findings

In the context of the rapid social change that has occurred over the last three decades in relation to young people's transitions to work and independent adulthood, alongside the changing nature of families the FATE research project aimed to begin to try and make linkages to areas of policy and research which up to now have not been linked in a systematic way. In doing so a number of specific aspects of young people's lives were examined through the research with young people and their parents; these included education to work transitions, young people's transitions from the parental home, parental support, family cultures and representations of adulthood and life plans. By way of conclusion this section highlights some of the key aspects of the FATE findings according to each of these dimensions of the study, and attempts to draw these inter-linked but disparate themes into a European comparative perspective on transitions regimes and Integrated Transition Policies. Finally the findings of the project are related to European policy discourses on Lifelong Learning, Employment and Social Inclusion.

1.1. Education to work Transitions

Although the results of the FATE institutional survey cannot claim to represent a robust representative sample of young people in Europe, they never the less provide an insight into the attitudes and beliefs of a diverse range of young people on the verge of transition across different local and institutional contexts. Respondents in all regions displayed a strong belief in the value of qualifications in the modern labour market and a high level of commitment in and belief in the value of work. Our survey results also highlighted a high level of optimism among the FATE respondents in terms of their assessment of future labour market opportunities. Even among those with limited educational credentials, or from contexts where unemployment among young people is particularly pronounced, few perceived themselves at risk of significant unemployment.

The results of the qualitative follow-up where the majority of young people had already entered, or at least attempted to enter, the labour market demonstrated a more pragmatic or realistic appraisal of labour market opportunities. At this relatively early stage in their labour market careers many had been confronted with the reality of unemployment, temporary and/or poor working conditions. Although unemployment was most common among those with low level qualifications, it was by no means confined to this group and among those with the highest levels of qualification working below one's educational level was also relatively common. Where initial labour market difficulties

were encountered common strategies included returning to education, following dual trajectories of work and education or migration, particularly prevalent among UK (Northern Ireland) and Bulgarian respondents.

The evidence from our respondents supports the view that across all national contexts education to work transitions have become less linear and less predictable. However this does not mean that linear and smooth transitions do not exist, but rather the majority of respondents appear to map out education and labour market trajectories characterised by 'stop go' and 'trial and error' behaviour. A three-fold typology of education to work transitions was developed: The 'Type A' typology represented a group, who follow highly individualised transition routes, have high or middle educational attainment and are typically from the higher socio-economic groups. Their educational trajectories tend to be extended, fragmented and non-linear and many appear driven by the urge for self-development and self-realisation within the fields of education and employment. Type B respondents typically follow relatively smooth and linear transitions to employment along the lines of the systems architecture of the respective education systems. They were represented across all socio-economic groups and signify a functional belief in existing educational systems and a traditional, one off transition to the labour market. Type C respondents were found in all national contexts, were typically from lower socio-economic backgrounds and had either followed short educational routes or have dropped out of education. Most respondents within this group were unemployed and were struggling to gain a permanent foothold in the labour market. These young people appear to lack the 'tools' to handle the changing nature of education and the labour market and feel less able to control and make effective change in their transitions.

1.2. Housing and Domestic Transitions

Previous European research has highlighted the increasingly protracted stay of young people in the parental home and the wide differences that exist according to welfare regimes. This was reflected within the results of the FATE Institutional survey where although overall around two-thirds (62%) were living within the parental home, this ranged from 98% in Portugal to 36% among the Danish sample. The main reason for leaving home among our Northern European respondents was a desire to become independent, whilst among young people in Southern Europe the reason was more likely to be related to finding a stable job.

The attainment of housing independence tends to be considered a decisive aspect in the transition to independent adulthood. The outcomes of the FATE qualitative research highlights the fact that housing transitions should be conceived of as a process rather

than a clear-cut event. Leaving the parental home can be an extended process, involving one or more returns before making a permanent transition to independent housing. Respondents highlighted a diverse range and complex constellations of reasons for staying within or leaving the parental home and although we have witnessed an increasing extent of individualisation, social and cultural norms were still found to play an important role, manifest in feelings of what is 'normal' or 'right' in given circumstances.

Young people's decisions are also influenced by their fears and desires, alongside broader considerations such as resources, social expectations and structural constraints. The most decisive factor in the decision of whether or not to move to an independent residence however, was related to material factors, particularly structural constraints and uncertain labour market conditions, which have the power to force young people to remain with their parents. Considering subjective factors in the reason to leave home in terms of young people's desires, fears and preferences and the individual's aspiration for autonomy a number of features emerge. The Italian research highlighted how the prolonged permanence in the parental home can undermine the desire to become independent, as home comforts may make young people lose interest, while even short experiences of independent living may serve to enhance the desire to have a place of one's own. Another important subjective dimension that emerged from young people's accounts was represented in the fear of loneliness or not being able to cope with independent living.

The interviews with young people contradict the notion that prolonged educational pathways are the main explanation for prolonged stays within the family home, in so far as higher educated respondents often left home an earlier stage, when starting university. Whilst some of our younger respondents were too young to be considered as protracted home stayers, in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands young people tend to stay with their parents while they complete vocational training. Protracted home stayers were more evident in Southern Europe and Bulgaria, where prolonged stays are regarded by the young people as being 'obvious' having become the cultural norm. Southern European parents typically feel that staying at home for young people has become advantageous for their children, as they enjoy complete freedom, understanding, affection and help without being confronted with the feeling of being controlled by their parents; parents also feel that young people should not have to compromise their living standards when they do leave home. Elsewhere, such as in the case of the UK, where increasing numbers of young people are remaining with their parents for a longer period of time this is still not perceived as the normal state of affairs.

Within the context of the FATE sample the majority of home-leavers were found among the Danish, Dutch and German respondents, most have a high level of education and the initial place of residence is likely to be functional and non-permanent and associated with leaving home to start university.

1.3. Support in Transition

In respect of the material support young people receive from their parents among the FATE respondents to the Institutional Survey considerable variation was found across national contexts. Italian and Portuguese parents contributed most to their children's incomes (an average of €146 per month and €102 respectively), and least in Bulgaria (€39) and Denmark (€20). There was variation in young people's sources of incomes according to their educational level, those in the lowest education groups income tended to be derived from employment and state benefits, medium level education training allowances and employment, whilst higher educated respondents received most from their parents, but many also combined this with income from employment and loans or grants.

A typological analysis based on associations between multiple survey indicators and over-representation to key questions identified 5 distinct groups, based on their characteristics, attitudes and support: *Attaining autonomy by social acculturation*, a group over-represented by young people from Netherlands, Spain and UK (typically single, cultured, independent young adults who are employed but still living at home); *Dependency generated by tradition* over-represented among Bulgarian, Portuguese and Spanish respondents (fearful, materialistic, dependent young people); *Early but conditional independence* comprising the bulk of the Danish sample and half of the UK sample (coupled post-modern but vulnerable young people with a high level of economic independence); *Tense anchorage to the family of origin* (dependent, controlled, single, childless and still living with their parents) exclusively found in Italy and *liberating work ethics* (cohabiting, independent, confident young people from Germany, who are relatively economically independent and tend to be living with a partner).

From the qualitative results the forms and extent of family support to young people showed a wide range of diversity, sometimes complete sometimes partial and sometimes absent. In analysing the forms of support young people received five key dimensions or levels of support were identified: material support, network support, advice, emotional support and practical support.

In respect of divergence and convergence across the various FATE contexts there was a clear dichotomy between regions where state support predominates and others where

the family is the main provider. The most abundant levels of state support can be found in Denmark, where the need to support young people's independence is recognised as an explicit goal of social policy. The Southern European and Bulgarian contexts provide a sharp contrast, with only minimal or non-existent state support, young adults' transitions are often heavily dependent upon family resources; hence transitions become very much a family project.

Evidence of the provision of material support from families was most apparent among those who had completed higher education and young people were acutely aware especially in those cases where higher education is not free of the importance of family support for their educational careers. Although this group was over-represented by more affluent families, we also had examples of parents making considerable personal sacrifices to enable their children to realise their full educational potential. Combining employment with studying was often of critical importance in attaining a viable standard of living.

In many European countries the family has also traditionally played a role in securing employment for their offspring through the use of informal networks. In the modern context job allocation processes are assumed to have become more closely tied to cultural and educational capital. In Northern Europe outside exceptional cases there was little evidence of the use of informal networks; however it was prominent elsewhere, especially in Bulgaria and Spain. In the former this is partially a result of the legacy of state socialism, although the prevalence of this practice may also be seen in the context of high levels of competition for limited jobs.

Young people in their accounts also placed a high value on emotional support provided by parents, even more so than material support and where emotional support is not so evident, young adults articulate this loss as a noticeable deficit. This was particularly notable in the Danish case, where parental philosophies of leaving young people to find their own way in the world can translate into a missing form of support. With the increasingly uncertain nature of transitions and the fact that individuals' are increasingly held as responsible for their own decisions access to the provision of sound advice seems particularly salient. Young people were often critical of the advice that was provided through 'official sources' in the form of guidance and counselling, whilst parents although eager to support their children in their decisions were often reticent to guide their children in making educational or occupational decisions, feeling that they lack the knowledge of the modern context to provide sound advice to their children.

From the respondent's accounts of the current support provided by parents this appeared to be provided in largely unconditional ways, although once again a distinction could be drawn between Southern and Northern European contexts. For less affluent families in the Southern contexts distinctions could be made in the provision of material support according to the resources of the family. For less affluent parents, at least in the case of Spain, the attitude could be summed up as, 'If you don't study you will need to work' while among affluent families, the philosophy was more one of, 'If you don't study you can't work'. Although current support was provided in a largely unconditional manner, the deeply enshrined reciprocal expectations embedded within policy and culture, among parents and young people alike, meant there were clear expectations of future reciprocity. This tended to take the form of ongoing support between the generations and particularly in the case of young women expectations of caring for parents in old age. In Northern contexts reciprocal expectations proved more diverse, and many parents did not expect their children to provide for them in old age.

1.4. Family Cultures

The Institutional Survey highlighted a prevailing perception among young people of positive family relationships, where an image of apparently peaceful co-existence between parents and children would appear to be a clear manifestation of the flexibilisation and individualisation of family relations, forms more compatible with democratic than authoritarian family models. This was evident even in contexts where this trend is very recent. The data showed the highly feminised nature of household management and rules for both generations, in particular in the case of Southern Europe although it was also apparent in Northern European countries albeit less evident. However, there are also cases such as some of those in the Italian context whereby both parents strived to relieve their children, as far as possible from household tasks.

The general feeling of harmony highlighted by the survey results was confirmed within the qualitative analysis, where overall young people do not highlight explicit parental rules they have to comply with. The great majority of young people felt that they had enough material and immaterial room to experience autonomy. The prolonged nature of family dependency in contemporary Europe however creates new demands on intergenerational relationships, whereby parents and young people alike have to reconcile different lifestyles and new types of conflicts. A number of different conflict avoidance strategies were observed: parents may give up their own private space in order to give their children more space and comfort evident in Italy and Bulgaria, or the strategy of forced harmony where young people separate their life into an annoying family life and their own youth life, whom while at home, are more or less forced into a

certain level of harmony, observed in Spain and the UK. Other strategies are more open involving dialogue and negotiation, observed in Denmark and the Netherlands. In Denmark this was attributed to the fact that young people and their parents can more easily develop such open strategies, with a lack of economic constraints the pressure on relationships through expectations and disappointments may be less pronounced.

1.5. Representations of Adulthood and Life Plans

Surveyed respondents not only expressed a positive attitude in relation to their future job prospects, they expressed a similar level of optimism in respect of their personal prospects: family marriage and children. Young women proved to be slightly more optimistic about their personal projects compared to young men and the higher the educational level the more confident young people felt in this respect. In comparing their anticipated future social and economic situation with that of their parents half of the respondents expected some degree of upward mobility (Much better/A little better), and around a quarter felt their future situation would be similar to their parents. Interestingly comparatively high proportions of the Dutch and German respondents thought that their economic and social situation will decline in relation to their parents, whilst young people in Bulgaria and Spain, in comparison to other contexts, were more likely to have difficulty in anticipating their future prospects highlighting their perception of an uncertain future.

In terms of their own definitions of adulthood young people no longer associate adult status with characteristics that are easily recognised, or distinguished by a series of 'objective' criteria such as the end of the formative phase of life, stable entry into the job market or marriage, instead we witness what we have called the 'subjectivisation' of adulthood, one 'becomes' an adult when one 'feels' like an adult. In this respect there seems to be have been a convergence amongst the young people interviewed that adulthood has no specific age criteria, and rather than adulthood being indicative of certain socio-demographic markers for young people being an adult, like being young, is for the interviewees more of a chosen condition rather than an externally recognisable social condition.

The most frequent association with being an adult, particularly in the cases of those interviewed in Portugal, the Netherlands, UK and Italy is one of 'being responsible', responsible for ones own choices and necessities. In many of the contexts adulthood held different connotations in different aspects of the young people's lives, they feel they are adult in so far as they are capable of making their own decisions and having their own point of view on the world, however domestic dependence on their family or a lack economic dependence impedes them from perceiving themselves as totally adult. This

situation leads them to perceive themselves as both young and adult at the same time and was particularly prevalent among young people in Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and the east and west German regions.

Parental perspectives on adulthood differ, in Southern Europe and in the Bulgarian context, where protracted housing dependency is common; here many parents maintained the traditional markers of adulthood within their definitions in so far as they were associated with independent living and new family formation. In the UK, Netherlands, Denmark and Germany the traditional markers of adulthood seem to be of secondary importance in parents' conceptions of adulthood, here being adult is conceived more in terms of the development of young person's ability to become independent and self-responsible. In their parents' eyes they were already adults or well on their way of becoming so, even when they remained in a situation of semi/dependency. Young people's perspectives on the future in terms of their life plans in their traditional meaning are less and less widespread. For them the future seems to be shaped, more by imagined rather than preset goals, placed in an indefinite temporal horizon or by alternatively by short-term clear-cut plans. This limitation of plans to the temporal frame that borders the immediate present can be viewed as a strategic response to a future perceived as unforeseeable, short-term plans can be easily modified. The respondents view the decisions made, not as reversible, but as potentially re-definable or flexible, for some this flexibility can represent the opening of the possibility of new life experiences, new options, for others especially among those who have already experienced unemployment, it can be transformed into a nightmare period of uncertainty, a time without guarantees.

2. Young Adults, the Family and Transition Regimes

In the modern European context the role of the family has gained importance across different transition regimes (Iacovou, 2003; Sgritta, 2004). On the one hand, the investments required for access to stable and qualified careers have increased considerably, at the same time state support in the form of benefits and grants have been reduced. On the other hand, it also seems within a general climate of increased uncertainty and insecurity young people prefer to invest their own means into the 'small freedoms' provided by consumer lifestyles rather than in the freedom of gaining an autonomous life. Yet, different contexts provide different conditions for this change with different forms of semi-dependency (Biggart & Walther, 2005).

The findings of the study represent a broad range of particular individual and family constellations related to young men's and women's transitions to work and adulthood which often proved too complex for direct comparison of country patterns. However, the

transition and individualisation process of each young person depends on resources of social integration the distribution of which is embedded in particular relationships between the individual, the family and the state. We have referred to these constellations as 'transition regimes' that result from specific paths of modernisation. Rather than describing national transition systems they refer to clusters of countries sharing a similar 'Gestalt' (Kaufmann, 2003) of socio-economic structures, institutions and cultural patterns of 'normality'. These regimes set the scene of legitimate aspirations and demands between individuals and society in which young adults are confronted with the demands of the labour market but also to develop life plans that are subjectively meaningful. In so far as these demands are becoming more contradictory and basically more resources are required to cope with them, the relationship between state and family is losing its 'natural' self-evidence, differences in regulating integration become of interest.

Due to the absence of direct access to the labour market and a structural deficit of policies addressing young people's transitions in terms of training or welfare in the *sub-protective* transition regime representing the Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal there is no alternative to family dependency. Although corresponding to a majority of comprehensive support constellations and a wide acceptance of this from both young people and parents, this has been referred to as 'forced harmony' due to a lack of alternatives (López Blasco, 1996). In many cases this harmony appears to be authentic and balanced; still, the lack of alternatives means that potential conflicts need to be either dealt with or avoided within the family. In fact, there are cases in which either the price is parental intervention into choices and decisions, or the relationships are characterised by coexistence reduced solely to material support. A resource may be the normality of the 'long family' whereby dependency is not ascribed to individual failure but rather simply due to the conditions of growing up. The family is an acknowledged reality, referred to as 'social amortisator' and therefore the possibility of staying in the parental home is not necessarily perceived as 'support' (*it's my house*).

In constructing themselves as autonomous however young people either are restricted to the field of leisure and consumption or they have to engage as responsible adults in the common household, especially in the case of young women. However, it needs to be added that they are also more demanded by parents as active adults.

The situation in the *post-socialist* transition regime represented by Bulgaria, and to a certain extent also by Eastern Germany, at first glance looks similar to the South of Europe with a predominance of extended dependency where the majority experienced comprehensive and relevant family support. The difference however consists in the

relatively short period over which changes from largely stable but prescribed status passages have become individualised and risk laden transitions. In Eastern Germany this has been compensated at least superficially by the introduction of Western structures, whilst in Bulgaria the question for state support leads to antagonism ('*What state?*'). As a result either parents make enormous sacrifices in order to secure their children's transitions into stable and secure positions or young people's transitions are part of family strategies in which very often plans of emigration play a central role. The accumulation of both economic and cultural capital becomes dedicated to the objective of realising the promises of transformation, in the West.

Whilst it shares the experience of transformation with Bulgaria, Eastern Germany can also be associated with the *employment-centred* transition regime. The orientation of the welfare state towards a standard biography has for some time been nourished by a large coverage of standard employment. Standardised vocational training routes still are reminiscent of this, although, especially in Eastern Germany, the transition from vocational training to employment no longer provides guarantees. In the Netherlands this has led to a considerable flexibilisation of training and employment. However, the fact that large cohorts of school leavers profit from a secure and even waged status and widely developed system of institutional support contributes to downplaying and even neglecting the role of the family. In fact, most respondents in both parts of Germany and the Netherlands, whether they still lived with their parents or not, in fact enjoyed substantive help from their families due to insufficient state support. Support from the state was either perceived as either lacking transparency or alternatively a distrust of institutional actors was displayed. Due to the fragmentation and prolongation of transitions, many pursued a second training course or further education when their initial choices proved to be unreliable in delivering labour market integration adding to further dependency on their families. Therefore, this results in the reproduction of social inequality being transferred back into the realm of families, which weighs even more in those cases, in contrast to Southern Europe, where support is either non-existent or only provided to a limited extent.

In contrast to the Southern European countries family dependency is not acknowledged as a normal reality but instead has to be negotiated at the individual level. At least with regard to the FATE sample, in the Netherlands young people profit from a flexible mixture of traditional family forms combined with post-modern negotiation patterns. In Germany in only a few cases have families developed a conflict culture, therefore many young adults are very ambiguous about the experience of family support and the moral intricacies of relative autonomy.

In the *liberal* transition regime, for which the UK stands, with its focus on the individual or private provisions and responsibility, the extension and fragmentation of transitions can again be interpreted differently. Here a tradition of advanced autonomy through young people's comparatively early economic independence has been turned into a situation of relative autonomy, or even dependency. Similar to the case of employment-centred regimes a lack of state support is criticised, especially in relation to the introduction of tuition fees for higher education. For most young men and women accepting parental support is not perceived as 'normal' which is reflected in either their economic contributions to the family household or by accepting jobs beneath the level of qualification in order to achieve economic independence. Being contrary to normative assumptions, staying longer within the family home is not accompanied by increased level of conflicts which reflects the utilitarian culture which is woven into the structures of the liberal welfare and transition regime (cf. Walther, 2000). Despite of the profound change towards a higher dependency of young people compared to few decades ago, the UK sample had the highest proportion of respondents who had not received any support.

The only regime type in which a significant share of young men and women's transitions are characterised by advanced autonomy is the *universalistic* transition regime represented by Denmark. The fact that young people are recognised as full citizens, even while still being in transition is reflected through their entitlements to educational allowance until the completion of a first period of training or education; a support which is consciously appreciated by one group of respondents while for others it is so natural that they do not even conceive of it as 'support' but as a right (similar to young people in the South considering the parental home as 'theirs' and their prolonged stay therefore as a given). Interestingly, a majority of respondents still report very close relationships with their parents whom they describe as very supportive. It seems that their partial economic independence, which means that they move out comparatively much earlier, enables them to interact with their parents on a relatively autonomous level as adults; not distorted by any relationships of dependency and control. In their accounts support is framed in terms of being helped to reflect on choices and to learn to be independent, which also meant the intentional parental strategy of restricting support to foster interdependence. Although among the Danish sample the share of those with personally chosen yo-yo-transitions is highest, they still enter the labour market at a younger age than in any country (cf. EC, 2004; Biggart & Walther, 2005).

In this case, delayed labour market entry is a result of supported detours in the transition to work rather than due to forced detours without support, as in the case of Southern and South Eastern Europe. The Danish case highlights the inclusive effects of guaranteed entitlements to individualised support, and the effects of the synergy

between a dynamic economy and universal welfare state. This is even more impressive as it has been a mixture of labour market flexibility, activation and welfare guarantees that have led to a decline of relatively high rates of youth unemployment that were witnessed in the early 1990's. In contrast to this, in the employment-centred as well as in the liberal regime contexts the limited inclusiveness of the respective welfare models becomes particularly visible under condition their respective regulated or flexible labour markets.

3. Towards Integrated Transition Policies

The particular Danish approach of 'flexicurity' meets the underlying characteristics of what has been conceptualised as *Integrated Transition Policies* (Walther, Stauber et al., 2002; López Blasco et al., 2003). Although such a positive appraisal of the universalistic regime should not neglect the stable but minority of young people who fail to profit from the system to the same extent as others, the so-called 'remainder group'.

This concept of Integrated Transition Policies (ITP) suggests that policies concerned with youth transitions need to be coordinated in a holistic way, starting from the individual's *biographical perspective*, and one that tries to link different aspects of youth life with different youth related policies, in particular those that are aimed at education, employment, autonomy and social support. Integrated Transition Policies aim in the first instance to enable young people to take responsibility, with *flexible support* and *active participation* as its main principles by providing young people with real choice and influence in society (cf. Walther et al., 2004). These two principles, as we shall see below, closely correspond to the general aims of the European Commission, the European Parliament and other institutions like the Council of Europe for developing civil society and fighting social exclusion.

Although within the youth policy sector the concept of participation is conceptualised in terms of influence and shared power (citizenship), in other policy fields (as in education, training, employment, autonomy from the family) it tends to continue to have a rather passive meaning, and therefore reflects a trend that separates civil society from the welfare state and undermines its integrative potential (Walther et al, 2002). Integrated Transition Policies, therefore, may also be understood as a strategy that aims to reshape existing transition policies in a youth policy perspective.

The individualisation of youth life and youth transitions requires policies to do more to promote institutional reflexivity. Institutions need to assess their policy interventions in terms of their biographical effects, taking into consideration what might successfully serve one person, can also contribute to the exclusion of another due to the different

subjective perspectives of young people. This institutional reflexivity is also necessary for a meaningful coordination of youth related policies as they are being postulated in the White Paper: A New Impetus for European Youth. The integration of transition policies foresees in the first place a reciprocal opening and integration of policies that up until now only exists in a rather isolated way. In the following we will roughly sketch the most important aspects of Integrated Transition Policies, namely education and training, employment, welfare and youth policy, in form of general policy, before relating the findings of the FATE-project to the specific European policy discourses;

- *Education and training policies* aimed at young people's skills and qualifications should respect the fragility of young people's motivational processes. By giving full recognition to informally acquired skills, whereby the starting point should be the empowerment of young people's strengths rather than highlighting individual deficits;
- *Employment policies* creating jobs for young people or placing them in existing jobs or schemes need not only fit with labour market demands, but take more account of young people's everyday lives and lifestyles;
- *Youth policies*, e.g. youth work activities, in which experiences with more participatory approaches have been developed should be acknowledged as also important for the 'hard' sectors of education, training and employment instead of being regarded and de-valuated as 'soft' areas of cultural and leisure time activities.
- *Welfare policies* addressing young people's material needs through social benefits should be linked with employment, education and training policies in a way which enables individual choice and the possibility to experiment with different options as well as enabling young people to become autonomous. As soon as individuals are forced to accept institutionally pre-defined measures, their motivation is likely to be undermined.

Promoting Integrated Transition Policies does not necessarily mean liberating young people at all cost from the need for family support. Again the Danish case has shown that families are, or can be, the key towards instilling 'ontological security' in young people which is necessary to confront the uncertainties of post-Fordist societies (Giddens, 1990). In this respect, the brief sketch of Integrated Transition Policies may even extend towards a flexible integration with general social policies and in particular family policies. Rather than forcing young people to choose between staying at home supported by their parents or moving out and being activated by increasingly conditional welfare and

education policies, the balance between flexibility and security may also mean to choose whether individualised support is invested into an individualised lifestyle or a family or network. In sum, the findings of FATE strongly support the idea that it may be a hazardous strategy to reduce welfare provision while appraising social capital. It is rather suggested that the need for social security (in a broad sense) has increased to the extent that both the social capital of families and other networks and welfare need to reinforce each other mutually inclusive way.

3.1. Towards a holistic research on youth transitions

Finally, we want to come back to our main aim: to provide a more comprehensive picture of young people's transitions to work and adulthood by means of a combined research approach. The de-standardisation of youth transitions in respect of fragmentation and individualisation excludes knowledge production which follows one-dimensionally institutional assumptions of success and normality simply being in terms of being in education, training or work. In so far as young people are increasingly held individually responsible for their integration, their motivation, decisions, and strategies are as an important part of social reality as labour markets and education systems. If the process of young people's individualisation and integration is to be analysed appropriately their families, which are often reduced to their inherited economic, cultural or social capital, need to be considered as well as other peer networks and other 'significant others' (Mead, 1934). This is even more important if the impression is correct that European research on youth transition is being focused in the direction of policy assessment in which individual subjects tend to be reduced to potential participants of the workforce.

4. Policy Recommendations in relation to EU Discourses

In this concluding section we will develop recommendations for a policy agenda based on the "FATE"-Project results drawing on the broader policy discourses and concepts within the field of youth and youth related policies in Europe.

4.1. Recommendations in relation to Lifelong Learning

The FATE study provides clear evidence in respect to the intricate relation between structural and individual factors in late modern youth transitions. Among many other things, this implies *new learning demands*. On the one hand this concerns the increased qualification and skills demanded by the labour market in the context of the knowledge economy; on the other it relates to the necessity of developing a reflexive attitude towards ones own biography, 'biographicity' (Alheit & Dausien, 2000), in order to cope with the fragmented nature of the life course and uncertain transitions. Learning in the

human life-course has therefore changed its character completely; there is now a necessity for *lifelong and life-wide learning* for all.

In order to achieve the objective of an inclusive and competitive knowledge-based society the EU aims at 'making a European area of lifelong learning a reality', one where lifelong learning is related to informal, non-formal and formal learning and whereby it is expected to reconcile ...

"... active citizenship, social inclusion, personal fulfilment and employment-

related aspects. The principles which underpin lifelong learning and guide its

effective implementation emphasise the centrality of the learner, the

importance of equal opportunities and the quality and relevance of learning

opportunities." (EC, 2001a).

The findings of FATE point to a number of key issues that relate to these aims:

- 1) The *centrality* of young people has been the starting point of the FATE project in analysing their needs and the support they receive in coping with their transitions to the labour market and independent adulthood. While in general transitions have been prolonged and the demands have become more complex our findings support with great clarity that modern transitions in Europe for the majority no longer occur in a smooth and predictable way. A growing number of young people need the assistance of their parents and other significant adults and institutions to manage their transitions. The diversity of transitions and constellations of support highlights how different these demands and needs are; in so far as education and support systems do not provide sufficient *flexibility* for individually *tailored* strategies.
- 2) It is not only young people that need to adapt to the rapid social and economic change in Europe, but also teachers, trainers, counsellors and parents themselves. In particular *intergenerational relationships* must be conceptualised as *mutual learning* relationships. The results of FATE show the stages and turning points in the life course of young people where this mutual learning either occurs or is prevented from occurring. In particular parents from lower

social classes are not well informed about the nature of labour market change and the associated problems with modern transitions, although they express a desire for such knowledge in order to understand and have more effective discussions with their children. In so far as parents typically become the main supporters of their children they need specific information and guidance about labour market developments and the risks related to modern youth transitions.

- 3) It is well acknowledged that lifelong learning requires *information, counselling and guidance* to bridge the gap between educational and career institutions on the one hand and the needs of young people in transition on the other. One might expect that educational institutions and employment services provide sufficient information about labour market developments and counselling to help young people to take decisions during their transitions. Our results show though that this is often not the case. Educational and career professionals are often not aware of the specific and complex needs of their clients. Services need to be arranged in a way that professionals listen more closely to young people and do not only address the transition to work in an isolated way whereby other aspects of biographical construction and everyday life are neglected; especially in the case of those most-at-risk.

Face-to-face counselling needs to be complemented by user-friendly software for young people in transition giving constantly updated information about labour-and housing markets. Labour offers abroad should be included.

- 4) FATE findings confirm the close relationship between education and social background, especially in relation to family resources in the form of economic, cultural and social capital. In a context of declining welfare provision for young people in transition the *reproduction of social inequality* is therefore being reinforced rather than weakened. If access to welfare provision is not universal lifelong learning policies may exacerbate social inequality rather than promote equality of opportunity.
- 5) Further research in relation to lifelong learning is therefore required to assess issues of access and the barriers to lifelong learning, in particular on the destinations of young men's and women's learning biographies over time using longitudinal research in which the relation between status achievement and biographical construction is assessed by research approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative methods.

4.2. Recommendations to Employment

The EU's Employment strategy or what has become known as the Lisbon Strategy, committed Europe to the challenge of becoming the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Since then the achievements that have been made towards this aim have been acknowledged as disappointing due to the unfavourable economic conditions since its original conception. However rather than abandoning these ambitious goals at the EU level the Lisbon strategy has recently been given a renewed emphasis through the 'Kok Report', the recommendations contained within the Draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005 and President Barroso's communication to the Spring European Council – COM (2005) 24. Demographic changes have also been highlighted as having profound implications for the future European economy and the extent that it will be able to finance welfare systems with an ageing European population.

In relation to young people the emphasis on employment has tended to be placed upon improving education and training systems, reducing school dropout and promoting active labour market policies for the young unemployed. The Draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005 also highlights the deteriorating job prospects of the young and the need to facilitate mobility and labour market transitions.

- 1) Policies aimed at the tackling the problem of an ageing population and a declining labour force should not only focus on active ageing policies, but it is equally important to smooth young people's routes to earlier economic independence. The FATE results suggests the differing extents to which education and labour market transitions have become decoupled from broader transitions to adulthood, with these two personal projects now running on parallel tracks or continuing along linear albeit truncated paths. This decoupling was most apparent in the Danish case whereby with the relative autonomy provided to young people in the form of strong state support, young adults have often formed new families well in advance of completing their education and labour market transitions. In contrast we find more linear patterns, particularly in Southern Europe, where with the extreme nature of prolonged family dependency with extended educational pathways and unfavourable labour market contexts for young adults delay the onset of new family formation.
- 2) With the significant investment that families make in extended education, with the uncertain nature of modern transitions to labour market young people and their parents need reliable and up-to-date information on the demands of the

modern labour market. The FATE results highlight how young people and their parents have bought into the concept of the knowledge economy and strive for increasing levels of investment in education often at considerable personal sacrifice. However in many cases initial choices prove to be the wrong ones, resulting in a significant wastage of resources and time, as new alternative pathways have to be pursued. As young people are increasingly held responsible for their own decisions there is the need to empower them to make informed decisions, aware of the potential opportunities and risks in the modern labour market.

- 3) Although previous research has highlighted the vulnerability of those with low level qualifications (an under-represented group among our respondents) to labour market exclusion, even those who succeed in obtaining high levels of qualification often fail to capitalise on these investments and end up over qualified for the employment opportunities in the labour market, highlights the need for employment growth to match the increasing supply of educated labour.

4.3. Recommendations in Relation to the EU-White Paper “New Impetus for European Youth” and the Coordination Process of European Youth Policies

With the White Paper ‘A new impetus for European youth’ resulted from a broad consultation process across Europe, the European Commission has started a new phase in developing a European framework of cooperation in the youth field. Main aims of this new impetus are to enhance the effectiveness and synergy of youth related policy measures at national and European level and to improve the impact of national policies in this respect. While the White Paper relates to both specific youth policies (especially youth work, youth information and international exchange) and interdepartmental policies for young people (see above Integrated Transition Policies) four key messages are highlighted (EC, 2001):

- promoting *active citizenship* for young people;
- expanding and *recognising areas of experimentation* beyond formal education;
- developing *autonomy* of young people;
- the *European Union* should serve as a role model and champion of values in this regard.

Based on this, four key priority areas were defined to be coordinated between the Member States:

- Participation.
- Information.
- Voluntary service.
- A Greater understanding of youth.

Complementary to the question of the coordination of national youth policies, the White Paper defines other youth related policy areas in which youth should be taken more into account in a holistic way: education, lifelong learning (formal and non-formal), mobility, employment, social protection, family, housing, and combat of racism and xenophobia.

The FATE project can contribute with some significant findings and recommendations with regard to some of these policy aims:

- 1). The findings show that even if young people are obliged to remain longer in a status of extended or partial dependency, the aim of becoming economically, socially and emotionally independent e.g. to become autonomous persons, is still central for the majority of them. Therefore, measures and programmes supporting the emancipation process of young people should belong to the core of youth policy. This should not happen from a problem-oriented perspective but rather from a holistic approach. In other words, policies should not only *support* the emancipation process of young people but also to guarantee it (such as the case of Denmark). This means, that policies should make autonomy accessible for all young people and be in accordance with young people's different trajectories and biographical choices. Only in this way will autonomy oriented policies be more than rhetorical politics.
- 2). Evidence is provided that housing emancipation is an important marker of transition into adulthood and one that needs to be seen as a process rather than a clear-cut event. In this respect, leaving the parental home can be considered as an extended process, during which the young person may experience intermediate forms of housing emancipation and/or return one or more times to the parental home before making a permanent transition into an independent household. Our qualitative analysis definitively supports the existence of intermediate housing arrangements where young people are partially independent and partially dependent on the material support of parents or other

institutions. Where parents and young people privilege the maintenance of a certain living standard it is difficult for young people to move out. Housing like other subjects related to the autonomy of young people therefore needs to be considered as a normal and important part of youth policy; that is through not only providing appropriate housing but also by enabling and motivating young people to live in housing arrangements of intermediate dependency and autonomy. In fact, it seems that even relatively short experiences of independent living enhance the desire for autonomy and therefore it is important to offer such opportunities, for example through student exchanges, voluntary work, etc..

- 3). The study of young people's perception of the concept of adulthood across Europe shows, that they do not associate the idea of adulthood with a specific age or with access to specific markers of transition. For most interviewed young people adulthood is associated with the capacity to assume *responsibilities* for their own lives and for society and with the *possibility and capacity to make their own decisions*. In this perspective, the FATE findings support directly the White Paper's aims on participation since for obtaining these competencies young persons have to assume different responsibilities in real life. Therefore youth policies should create many different forms and possibilities for young men and women and remove obstacles to participate in significant areas of society. Whereby young people can hold responsible positions and be involved in different decision-making processes in order to obtain such competencies; e.g. in associations, NGO's etc., as citizens at the local, regional or national level, in schools but also in youth work and in the context of measures for the professional and social integration of disadvantaged young people (cf. Walther et al., 2004).
- 4). Findings demonstrate that adulthood is increasingly becoming a subjective and chosen condition, free from external identifying markers. In a certain sense, time has stopped delimiting adulthood in a clear and unequivocal way (Côté, 2000). To this vision of adulthood corresponds an open temporal horizon in which life plans are difficult to develop. The young people interviewed view decisions made (as much in their studies and work as in the area of relationships) not as irreversible but rather as re-definable ('flexible'). Youth policies should contribute to making the future more predictable for young people. Therefore, access to high quality *information* that is personally relevant for life and career planning needs to be provided. Such services should promote

the participation of young people in the production, configuration and dissemination of youth relevant information.

- 5). The "flexibility" of young people and their short range future plans are strongly linked with biographical experiences that many of them have made and with the uncertainties resulting of such experiences. In relation to career planning one important question is, how can youth policies, especially in the field of *counselling*, support young people in taking decisions when it comes to the construction of an individualised (mostly "patch work") life plan which is viable, meaningful and secure. In this perspective, the strategies developed by young people to cope with uncertainty should be considered in the process of policy making, especially in the framework of vocational and occupational orientation. It is well known, that counselling before and after leaving educational institutions needs to be improved. This should especially be done also in non-formal educational settings (e.g. in youth work; educational work with disadvantaged groups, etc.) where young people's own experiences count more. Anyhow, a concept of vocational guidance based on a combination of personal-experience and expert knowledge should receive much more attention than is the case today.

4.4. Recommendations in relation to the EU Social Inclusion Process

The EU's Social Inclusion Process was implemented in 2000 with the aim of securing the objective of social cohesion highlighted in the Lisbon Strategy of making Europe the most competitive knowledge-based society. It claims to follow a multidimensional approach and is based on four key aims:

To facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services: key aspects in this respect are training, employability, reconciliation of family and work, lifelong learning but also access "for all" to resources allowing a life "in accordance with human dignity" and to "decent and sanitary housing".

- 1) *To prevent the risks of exclusion* by "policies which seek to prevent life crises which can lead to situations of social exclusion, such as indebtedness, exclusion from school and becoming homeless" but also "action to preserve family solidarity in all its forms".
- 2) *To help the most vulnerable:* here reference is made explicitly to disadvantaged youth, immigrants, and areas marked by exclusion.

- 3) *To mobilise all relevant bodies*: apart from mobilising authorities and “adapting administration and social services to the needs of people suffering exclusion” also the responsibility and participation of citizens is recalled; including those suffering exclusion.

The overall message however is that social inclusion can only be facilitated by a higher employment rate; also to preserve and modernise European Social Protection Systems.

The FATE project can contribute relevant findings and recommendations in this respect.

- 1). Young people across Europe and across different educational levels are highly motivated to enter meaningful and sustainable careers. However in many cases our results show that this leads to a significant compromise in occupational aspirations, long waiting periods of dependency and uncertainty, and various attempts to retrain including completely new directions taken in relation to training or study courses. Our findings suggest that it is not so much a lack of activation or employability rather the lack of employment opportunities that needs to be addressed by social inclusion policies.
- 2). In most cases, young people can only follow their own choices if parents are in a position to undertake significant investments in tuition fees and living costs. It has become very obvious how unequally the possibility of meaningful choice is distributed not only according to socio-economic background, education, gender and ethnicity but also according to different transition regimes. If social inclusion implies the participation of individuals policy objectives have to extend beyond purely labour market integration to the structural and personal possibilities of career choice.
- 3). Both quantitative and qualitative data show the increasing risks and obstacles that young people encounter in their transitions to work and the extent of competencies, resources and opportunities that are required in order to cope with prolonged and fragmented labour market transitions. However, as long as they have not achieved a stable position in the labour market they are excluded from civil and social rights such as to live an autonomous life. Within our study Denmark was the exception, whereby young people in transition have only restricted access to welfare and housing provision and even these restricted access options have been reduced in recent periods. ‘Being in transition’ therefore needs to be included in and secured by the status of citizenship.

- 4). this is reflected in an apparent distrust of young people and their families in state institutions. In Southern and Eastern European countries it is mainly the complete lack of state support that is criticised ('What support?' 'What state?'). In other European countries grant and benefit systems are estimated as insufficient and conditional, while the long-term consequences of utilisation (such as debts in case of study loans) are widely held as not transparent and impossible to calculate. Counselling services are criticised for a lack of sensitivity to individual needs and desires and their perceived ineffectiveness.

Only the Danish young people expressed satisfaction, especially with the system of educational allowance which provides them with a certain degree of economic independence.

Access to support – be it material or immaterial – therefore needs to be much more direct and automatic; without stigmatising the users.

- 5). The study provides a rich body of evidence that young people and their families in fact try to compensate for the lack of state support by mobilising their own resources. However, apart from reproducing inequalities – in terms of unequal economic family resources, in terms of sometimes gendered parenting, in terms of support in career and life planning depending on parental education level – this has considerable impacts on young people's lives. Findings reveal different constellations of dimensions of family support and of the conditions under which they are provided due to which family support is not always experienced positively.

These constellations are highly individualised which calls for *flexible support systems* with entitlements and access not being regulated according to fixed thresholds of age, education level, duration of unemployment or family income. To 'preserve family solidarity' implies not to overburden it but to provide complementary support according to individual needs.

In sum, it needs to be said that the reality faced by most of the young men and women interviewed in the study is far from the objectives of autonomous and participatory citizenship as suggested by the notion of a European social model committed to social cohesion. In contrast, the complexity of transitions is rarely addressed by institutions and neglected by the currently even reinforced one-dimensional employment orientation of social policies. The claimed multi-dimensional approach is rarely set into practice but struggles with powerful boundaries of segmented policy sectors. Rather than starting from the aim of full employment Integrated Transition Policies (López Blasco et al., 2003;

Walther, Stauber et al., 2002) are more likely to lead to sustainable social inclusion if starting from individuals' biographical perspectives and to flexibly combine different instruments enabling young persons to take responsibility for their own lives.

V. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

The dissemination of the FATE results have taken a number of forms, these include the incorporation of the materials into University teaching at postgraduate and undergraduate levels, as well as dissemination of results through conference papers and journal articles both at the local and international level many of these activities remain ongoing.

1. Publications

Bendit, R. and Hein, K.(2004): Young Europeans´ transitions to adulthood: expectations regarding personal autonomy and family formation. In: Hübner-Funk, S. (ed.): Research in Progress. *Selected Studies of the German Youth Institute. DJI International Series*, Vol. 1, p.177 - 192

Bendit, R. and Hein, K. (2003): Jugendliche in Europa auf dem Weg in die Selbstständigkeit. Internationale Studie "Families and Transitions in Europe" (FATE). In: *DJI- Bulletin*, N° 63, Sommer 2003, p. 4-7

Biggart, A. and Walther, A. (Forthcoming, 2005) *Young Adults Yo-Yo Transitions: Struggling for Support between Family and State in Comparative Perspective*. In Leccardi, C. (Ed.) *Growing up in a Changing World: Transitions to adulthood in a comparative perspective*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Biggart, A., Bendit, R., Cairns, D., Hein, K. and Morch, S. (2004) *Families and Transitions in Europe: State of the Art Report*. Brussels: European Commission.

Hernandez, J. and Lopez Blasco, A. (2005) *Puralidad de Formas de Familia: Las Familias Monoparentales con Hijos a Cargo*. Valencia: Naullibres.

Lopez Blasco, A. (2004) *Familia y Transiciones: Individualizatacion y pluralizaacion de formas de vida*. In Informe Juventud en Espana 2004. INJUVE, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.

Lopez Blasco, A. (2005) *La Trama de los Itinerarios de Emancipacion*. In Teazanos, J. (ed.) *Los Efectos dela Dualizacion Social en la Poblacion Juvenil*. Madrid: Open University.

Pappámikail, Lia (2005), "Relações intergeracionais, apoio familiar e transições juvenis para a vida adulta em Portugal: valores, representações e projectos", *in Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, N. 46

Stauber, B. and Goltz, J. (2004) Konflikt, Kontinuität und doing gender

- Familienbeziehungen junger Frauen und Männer im Übergang, *Widersprüche*, Jg. 24, Heft 92, S. 17-35.

2. Conference and Seminar Presentations

Bendit, R. (2003): "Familie als Ressource im Übergang Schule- Beruf" ("Family as a Resource in the Transition Process to Adulthood"). *Presentation at the Congress of the University of Bielefeld: Berufsorientierung in unübersichtlichen Zeiten. Anforderungen, Strategien, Konzepte* (Professional Orientation in Complex Times. Requirements, Strategies, Concepts). Bielefeld, 11/12.Dec. 2003

Biggart, A. and Walther, A. (2001) Young Adults' Yoyo-Transitions: Struggling for Support between Family and Welfare State. *Family Forms and the Young Generation in Europe*. Milan 2001.

Biggart, A. (2004) Support in Transitions: findings and reflections on the relationship between young people, the state and family in Europe from the FATE research project. *European Observatory on the Social Situation Demography and the Family, Annual Seminar, September 2004, Europe's Coming Generations*, Brussels.

Kovtcheva, S. (2004) Youth Transitions and Family Support in Transforming Social Context: reflections from the New Member States. *European Observatory on the Social Situation Demography and the Family, Annual Seminar, September 2004, Europe's Coming Generations*, Brussels.

Lopez Blasco, A. (2004) La trama de los Itinerarios de emancipación. *VIII Foro sobre Tendencias Sociales: Tendencias en exclusión social y políticas de solidaridad*. UNED Madrid November 2004.

Lopez Blasco (2003) Las Transiciones de las personas jóvenes: un espacio entre la familia y la autonomía de vida. *La Juventud actual en el marco educativo y social*. Santander June 2003.

Machado Pais. J. (2003) Emocionalidad y Nuevas Formas de Comunicar, participação no seminário "Los Jóvenes del Siglo XXI: Sociedad de la Información y Nuevas Identidades", organizado pelo Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud, Universidad Autónoma de México, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) e Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF), Ciudad de México, Janeiro de 2003.

Machado Pais. J. (2003) *Trajectórias Juvenis*, conferência apresentada ao "*Simpósio Internacional e Multidisciplinar 'Da Infância à Juventude. Trajectórias normais e trajectórias desviantes'*", organizado pela Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra, Auditório da Reitoria da Universidade de Coimbra, Fevereiro de 2003.

Machado Pais. J. (2003) *As Danças da Memória Quando os Futuros são Sombrios*, comunicação apresentada no Seminário "*As Múltiplas Faces da Memória: Territórios e Cenários das Lembranças*" (mesa redonda: "*Memória, Tempo Presente e Prospecção do Futuro*"), organizado pelo *Centro de Memória* da Unicamp, Faculdade de Educação da Unicamp, Março de 2003.

Machado Pais. J. (2003) *Buscas de Si: Expressividades e Identidades Juvenis*, *Conferência de abertura do Seminário "Culturas Jovens e Novas Sensibilidades*, organizado pela Universidade Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, Agosto de 2003.

Pappámikail, Lia (2005), *Social Inequalities, Family and Transitions to adulthood: support strategies in a weak welfare state context*, paper to be presented at the *37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology*, Stockholm, July 2005

Pappámikail, Lia (2005), "To be (in)dependent in family home: regularities and singularities in autonomy construction in transitions to adulthood in Portugal", paper to be presented at the interim meeting – *Lisbon Workshop on Contemporary Families*, European Sociological Association, March 2005

Pappámikail, Lia (2005), *Transições para a vida adulta: percepções e avaliações do apoio familiar*, paper presented at *V Congresso Português de Sociologia*, organized by the Portuguese Association of Sociology, took place at Universidade do Minho, under the theme «Contemporary Societies: reflexivity and action», May 2004;

Pappámikail, Lia (2005), "Jovens e Dinâmicas Familiares: relacionamento e redes de apoio na Europa", paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of Serviços de Psicologia e Orientação da Casa Pia de Lisboa*, under the theme *Adolescence(s): paths of an invented time*, took place at Centro Cultural Casapiano, April 2003.

3. Ongoing activities

Publication and dissemination activities of the FATE results remain an ongoing concern with planned collaborative publications amongst partners in addition to the current publications listed above. The results of the FATE research will be discussed in the international meeting (ISA RC 34 *Sociology of Youth*, Italian Sociological Association,

University of Salerno) "Youth: An Uncertain Future?" February 18-19, 2005. An article is being prepared for the German Journal 'Familienforschung' and serious consideration is being given to publish the findings of the comparative report as a book or a series of journal articles in key English journals.

Aside from these direct activities related to the FATE project results a number of other indirect activities have been stimulated by the collaboration established through the project.

Several members of the project consortium are cooperating in the 'Thematic study of Policy for Disadvantaged Youth' for DG Employment and Social Affairs, coordinated by the German partner and including other FATE partners from Spain, Bulgaria, UK and Denmark.

A number of proposals are being prepared for the 6th Framework Programme:

- A proposal for an Integrated Project for the 1st call was submitted addressing de-standardisation of transition over the whole life course (to be revised for the 2nd call).
- A Marie Curie Research training network is planned regarding this topic.
- A follow-up of the FATE –project is planned in terms of re-interviewing respondents under the perspective of social inequality and biographical development.
- A proposal is planned on youth and intergenerational relationships between formal and informal contexts of growing up.

The research findings are being further explored and developed by a number of doctorates which are being developed in relation to the FATE-research, in Denmark, Italy, Germany East.

The DJI Scholarship Programme for Young Researchers has funded a post-graduate project to develop some of the issues within the FATE project aimed at comparative analysis of young people and young adults subjective perception of adulthood in Germany, Italy and Chile.

The UK researcher employed on the project has received a Post Doctoral Scholarship from the University of Lisbon to work in an area related to the project.

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