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Editors

Experiencing Long-Term Unemployment in Europe

EXPERIENCING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE

Youth on the Edge

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Experiencing Long-Term Unemployment in Europe: An Introduction

Christian Lahusen and Marco Giugni

Youth Facing Long-Term Unemployment

This book examines the everyday life patterns of young adults under circumstances of vulnerability and precariousness. Its main focus is on the web of social relations that structure the everyday life of long-term unemployed young people. In particular, the contributors are interested in knowing whether these informal contacts provide resources and tools of solving problems, whether they are a source of pressures and expectations, and in how far they shape, in general terms, the person's self-conception, identity and well-being. The social sciences provide ample evidence about the precarious living situation of young jobless people in Western societies. Many studies have documented that unemployment, especially when

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it is sustained over time, brings difficulties and hardships to those affected by it, and these problems reach far beyond the immediate deprivations attributed to the loss of income. In fact, unemployment is not only associated with financial hardship; unemployed people are also confronted with social isolation owing to the loss of work-related contacts and difficulties in maintaining social relations with friends and acquaintances (Gallie et al. 2003; van Oorschot 2006), which in turn ends up reducing social capital and breaking those 'weak ties' that have been shown to be so important to get a job (Granovetter 1973). Jobless people have to struggle with the annihilation of a meaningful day structure, and leisure time becomes a tragic gift because the use of time loses purpose and direction (Jahoda et al. 1971 [1933]; Wanberg et al. 1997). At the same time, people affected by unemployment develop feelings of uselessness and dependence, are confronted with a loss of job-related identifications and personal identities (Joelson and Wahlquist 1987; Winkelmann 2009) and display lower levels of well-being. This is not an exhaustive list; many other implications could be added.

Scholarship has stressed that these issues are true for young unemployed too (Kieselbach et al. 2001; Hammer 2003), but seem to affect them particularly deeply, given the fact that young adults are in a stage of their biographical development where they are not yet fully integrated into social life as independent citizens and autonomous individuals. Processes of socialization and individuation thus evolve within a social context defined by limitations, deprivations and stigmatizations. This necessarily has an impact on the social characteristics of this group of people, that is, their social position and status, their social relations and roles, their beliefs and behaviors, their values and identities. Scholarly writing has provided many insights into these youth-related problems, particularly by highlighting 'scarring effects', that is, long-term consequences of unemployment on the future life course of the young unemployed. We know, for instance, that experiences of unemployment among school leavers tend to increase the risks of exclusion from the labor market at later stages of their lives (Gregg 2001; Cockx and Picchio 2012). Unemployed youth might be as motivated as their more privileged peers to look for work, but they are less optimistic to find a job and get ahead in life, and their life-satisfaction is affected in the long run even by past exposure to unemployment (Clark et al. 2001; Goldman-Mellor et al. 2016). In line with these observations, evidence highlights that extended joblessness increases the risks of being exposed to mental health problems sooner or later (Hammer 2000;

Strandh et al. 2014). Overall, prolonged joblessness increases the exposure to the experiences of marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination, and this condition provokes feelings of dissatisfaction, boredom, uselessness, shame, resignation and distress—with detrimental effects on the person's self-conception and identity.

Long-term unemployment, however, does not produce these effects automatically and deterministically. Research has highlighted that joblessness is harmful especially in conjunction with other social traits that might involve deprivations as well (e.g., social class, ethnic background, single parenthood, gender). At the same time, we know that long-term unemployment does not generate harmful and scarring effects inescapably, because these effects may be moderated by certain factors. For example, young jobless people are less affected by unemployment related risks (e.g., poverty, mental disorders, isolation) when equipped with higher educational credentials and qualifications, a secure financial situation, institutional support, and/or higher rates of self-esteem (Kieselbach 2003; Broman et al. 2001). In this regard, scholarly writing has recurrently addressed the importance of social support (Gore 1978; Jackson 1988; Beck et al. 2005; Lorenzini and Giugni 2011; Huffman et al. 2015). Relatives, friends and acquaintances are important pillars of the jobless' everyday life because they provide assistance in emotional, financial and material terms. Peer groups, local communities and neighborhoods offer young jobless a sense of home and an arena of communication and activity. And voluntary associations (sport or leisure clubs, welfare associations and the like) provide opportunities for recreation, networking, information and active involvement in community affairs or political matters.

Social support is therefore an important topic when addressing youth unemployment as an individual reality and collective problem. Most studies devoted to the analysis of youth unemployment have dealt with this topic in some way, thus corroborating the significance of this aspect of young people's lives (Jahoda et al. 1971; Kronauer 1998; Kieselbach et al. 2001; Hammer 2000; Beck et al. 2005). This book puts social support and the young jobless' webs of social relations at center stage. This is necessary to unfold the topic in its inherent complexity and richness. Several research questions will be addressed: In how far does social support attenuate the detrimental effects of unemployment, and which kind of social relations are of particular importance? Do social support networks suffer in case of extended exposure to unemployment, and how do young jobless cope with shrinking webs of social relations? Are networks of social

support equally important in different countries, and are they exposed to similar challenges everywhere? Are all young jobless adults in a similar position, or can we identify differences between various groups when considering gender, class, household structure and other features?

Unemployment, Social Relations and Social Support

The relationship between unemployment and social support is a complex one, and a closer look at this relationship uncovers a number of interrelations and interactions that require in-depth analysis. On the one hand, it is true that social support is a factor that moderates the harmful effects of unemployment on the jobless' daily lives (Gore 1978; Thoits 1995; Kieselbach 2003; Broman et al. 2001; Lorenzini and Giugni 2011; Huffman et al. 2015). Family members, friends and acquaintances are very often a source of resources that enable young unemployed to live a decent, possibly also normal, life. Families, peer groups or neighborhoods reproduce a feeling of belongingness, and thus offer an important antidote or vaccine to social isolation, psychological distress and a worsening outlook on the future. On the other hand, joblessness does have detrimental effects on young people's social relations, too. The risk of social isolation seems to be particularly pronounced in the period of transition from youth to adulthood. Young people are in a process of transition between school and work, between their family of origin and their own web of social relations (peers, partnership, parenthood, etc.). Under these circumstances, long-term unemployment impedes the enlargement of social networks into the area of work-related contacts and acquaintances. At the same time, unemployed young adults report about the loss of social activities within their immediate social environment, owing to the lack of resources or shame, and this withdrawal decreases the number of contacts to peers, friends and acquaintances. In this situation, the family is very often the most persistent bulwark against social isolation. However, while most young people count on the help of their families, this support is not only experienced as a blessing but also as a problem of dependence, which can inhibit personal development. Moreover, the erosion of social relations and the dependence on restricted social networks can go hand in hand with lower levels of trust in public authorities, local communities or one's fellow citizens. If unemployment and deprivation are a collective experience within family networks, peer groups or neighborhoods, their marginalizing impact might even have an imperative quality.

Overall, these findings and observations attest considerable problems and hardships related to long-term unemployment. Scholars have proposed various theoretical concepts to better understand the patterns and dynamics associated to this situation; for instance, by treating joblessness as an aspect of social deprivation or marginalization (Townsend 1987; Gallie 2004). Since the 1990s, researchers have adopted the concept of social exclusion in order to describe the underlying social condition unemployed people are exposed to (Atkinson and Davoudi 2000; Kronauer 1998; Welshman 2007; Kieselbach et al. 2001; Giugni and Lorenzini 2013). The concept has two merits. On the one hand, it allows us to subsume the various problems and hardships associated with unemployment under one overarching concept. On the other hand, it enables us to understand the situation of deprivation in its structural relations towards society. Social exclusion entails a limited access to valuable resources (schools and education, jobs and income, cultural institutions and goods, etc.) and a restricted participation in societal life. Scientists usually subdivide the notion of exclusion into a number of different fields, within which these resources are distributed: the labor market (employment), the economy (money and consumption), public institutions (educational credentials), culture (shared norms and lifestyles), social life (contacts), politics (political interest representation) and others (Kronauer 1998; Kieselbach 2003). These scholars take up a basic idea of differentiation theory and argue that exclusion is patterned according to the various sectors or fields of society (educational system, labor market, institutionalized politics, civil society, culture, etc.). These observations raise our awareness for limited and insulated forms of deprivation (e.g., joblessness amongst privileged young people, such as the highly educated), but also for cumulative and mutually reinforcing forms of social exclusion (e.g., the 'underclass' or underprivileged groups at the fringes of society in general). They enable research to address interrelations and interactions that increase the risk of social exclusion as much as they open the door for an analysis of moderating effects and mechanisms.

While the concept of social exclusion has merits, we need to use it with caution. To begin with, it oversimplifies structural relations by focusing on the question of insiders and outsiders, even though deprivation is a rather relative term and covers a range of dynamic processes of marginalization and victimization. Moreover, it conceptualizes and analyzes the situation of the long-term unemployed from the perspective of the insiders, that is, those 'included' in social life. Jobless people are those who lack the

resources fully integrated persons have. Basically, the notion therefore has a middle-class bias, because it is the latter who normally have access to higher education, good jobs and income, who are members of associations and participate in institutionalized politics, who buy and read books, go to concerts and thus are culturally active. However, we have to ask whether this focus might also limit our perception of what long-term unemployment means to young adults. Does this 'inverse' perspective on joblessness enable us to learn about the specific experiences, living conditions and life forms of jobless people? What do we know apart from the deficiencies, deprivations and hardships constitutive of their socio-economic situation? A closer look at the life-worlds, lived experiences, daily routines and coping-strategies of jobless young adults seems necessary to answer these questions. This is particularly important because we are speaking of a very broad range of people with very different backgrounds, life conditions and forms of coping. An analysis of their living conditions needs to take this diversity into account.

In recent years, research has devoted more attention to these issues. Unemployment is a factor that increases the risk of social exclusion, but does not determine it, given the multiplicity of factors (e.g., household structure and housing, class background, gender role models, single parenthood, disabilities or caregiving), which increase or decrease the young jobless' vulnerability (Ranci 2010). At the same time, research has borrowed concepts and arguments from the psychologists' and psychiatrists' long-standing inquiry into individual resilience and coping strategies. Both concepts try to grasp the ability of individuals to subsist in adverse circumstances, to deal effectively with problems and to recover from misfortune. Psychologists have listed a number of protective factors or attributes guaranteeing resilience, such as optimism, perceptions of control, self-efficacy and active coping (Rutter 1987; Lee et al. 2012). These debates are of particular relevance to our study insofar as they have tended to stress more prominently the importance of behavioral aspects and the individual's social environment (Moorhouse and Caltabiano 2007; Rutter 2012). Coping has thus become a focal point of analysis, as scholars try to grasp better the efforts of disadvantaged individuals to manage adversities (Compas et al. 2001). In the case of unemployment, researchers have been interested in understanding the way the jobless learn to live with extended joblessness, how they compensate for the loss of work, income and recognition, and how they try to maintain a decent life (Beck et al. 2005). Social support is one of the key protective factors and coping resources discussed

recurrently by these authors (Thoits 1995; Compas et al. 2001; Lee et al. 2012). These indications require qualification, though, because resilience and coping might be affected by unemployment and social deprivation in the long run, too. Moreover, studies have shown that social support by partners, relatives or friends is not always helpful in overcoming stressful situations or mental health problems when considering the potential mismatch between recipients' and providers' views and needs (Lehman et al. 1986; Harris 1992). Their behavior might even have detrimental effects on well-being and job-seeking activities (Ratcliff and Bogdan 1988; Maddy et al. 2015).

Thus, previous research urges us to have a closer look at the specific situations and experiences of young unemployed people. The long-term unemployed we interviewed belong to an administrative category (the registered long-term unemployed) that does not necessarily share the same social condition. Some of the interviewed young adults, for instance, worked informally and sporadically or had other sources of income; others were economically inactive but fully involved in caregiving in their families; and others were inactive in all senses. Moreover, the type and extent of social support also diverged considerably between those who had a rather wide and dense network of social relations, those who had intense contact to a few relatives and friends, and some who were strongly marginalized and insulated. Finally, we will see that the help they received was very different in scope and type, and not always free of pressures and conflicts. Against this backdrop, we wish to dig deeper into the everyday life of long-term young jobless people in order to identify similar patterns and distinct groupings. This opens up the way to further questions: How do jobless young adults experience their living situation? How do they organize their lives within the external limitations imposed by their long-term unemployment, and which forms of coping or problem-solving do they develop? Do they develop stable forms of living within a precarious condition? How strongly can they shape their living conditions at all? And do these patterns of everyday life diverge considerably between various groups of jobless people?

A Note on Data and Methods

Methodologically, this book studies the experience of young long-term unemployed adults in comparative and qualitative perspective. It presents findings from a comparative research project titled 'Youth, Unemployment,

and Exclusion in Europe: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding the Conditions and Prospects for Social and Political Integration of Young Unemployed' (YOUNEX) funded by the European Commission through the 7th Framework Programme and covering six European cities: Cologne (Germany), Geneva (Switzerland), Karlstad (Sweden), Kielce (Poland), Lyon (France) and Turin (Italy). The selection of the six cities relied on a number of criteria relating to the objectives of the larger project. One of them was to compare local situations across countries characterized by different welfare systems and more specifically different 'youth unemployment regimes' (Cinalli and Giugni 2013). Within each country, we then picked a city where unemployment was high when compared to the national average, in order to guarantee a sufficiently extended population of potential respondents with enough internal variation. Within each city, we recruited very different respondents considering socio-demographic traits (such as gender, age, household structure, migration background, educational attainment) in order to map the experiences of unemployment in a comprehensive manner. This sampling strategy conforms to standards of qualitative inquiry (Charmaz 2000; Glaser 1992; Miles et al. 2014; Mills et al. 2006) and is not oriented to guarantee representativeness, but rather to inductively develop theoretical conclusions on the basis of a sufficiently differentiated and complex sample. While our findings cannot be generalized directly to the entire population of young long-term unemployed in the city or country, they do reflect important aspects of the experiences of unemployment in local and national contexts.

An important part of the research work has consisted of a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with young long-term unemployed conducted in each of these cities in 2010, that is, in times of economic crisis in most of the countries. The interview guidelines aimed at stimulating the young people to speak freely about various aspects of their daily lives, including such topics as the patterns of daily life, finances, contacts and social support, relations to public authorities, voluntary associations, and politics, job aspirations and future prospects. In each city, 25–30 interviews of about 60–90 minutes were conducted with young people aged between 18 and 30 and who were unemployed for at least 12 months at the time of the interview, following a sample strategy that tried to grasp the variety of experiences (gender, age, ethnic and educational background, etc.). All the interviewees freely accepted to participate and were informed about the purposes of the research. In addition, their anonymity was ensured as their real names have not been used in reporting their answers.

Data retrieval and analysis followed principles of exploratory, qualitative and inductive research and adapted various guidelines of Grounded Theory (Glaser 1992; Miles et al. 2014; see also Charmaz 2000, 2006; Mills et al. 2006). The comparative approach was particularly revealing in order to identify similarities and differences, while the qualitative and inductive methodology was of particular importance to listen more carefully to the multidimensionality and complexity of the issues under analysis. It enabled us to detect the intricate interrelations between long-term unemployment as an individual reality, the networks of social support within which young jobless are embedded, and the specific constraints tied to their unemployment status and the welfare systems they are part of as citizens of different European cities.

The explorative and inductive approach of our comparative data retrieval and analysis was particularly helpful in addressing the social conditions of young jobless in a comprehensive and systematic manner. On the one hand, we were able to draw a more differentiated picture of unemployment, vulnerability and social exclusion amongst young long-term unemployed people. While our analyses corroborate the conclusion of scholarly writing that unemployment is associated with problems of social marginalization, they show that this relationship is not at all deterministic. This is true because jobless do shape their living conditions in some way, for instance by coping, adapting or resigning. At the same time, we were able to consider the impact of structural constraints and social classifications. Our inquiries show that the extent to which jobless adults are able to cope with their situation and the ways they do so is also influenced by their specific employment history, their gender roles, their social class or ethnic background, their household structure and family status, amongst other factors. In this regard, the comparison of individual respondents' life conditions and activities is particularly telling. These comparisons show, for example, that the experience of long-term unemployment differs significantly between men and women, between young people living with their children and those living alone, between those with a middle-class background when compared to those with a working-class background.

On the other hand, our qualitative approach followed comparative aims in order to advance knowledge about the social reality of young long-term unemployed adults in different European cities. The analyses offered in the chapters that follow show strong similarities between the situations of young long-term unemployed across the cities under study. However, differences emerge as well when addressing the specific experiences young

adults make during their unemployment, the way they organize their everyday life and the amount and type of social support they receive. Some of these differences are related, for instance, to the moderating role of the family, the stigmatization of unemployment in the private and public sphere, the relations young adults maintain with state authorities such as unemployment agencies. These findings also mirror the differences between the cities, because they are related to specificities of the cultural, institutional and social context of these localities.

United in Diversity? A Comparative Perspective on a Common Theme

Scholarly writing has given various reasons why informal networks are important for young adults' everyday life. Studies of social capital have repeatedly highlighted that the number and type of contacts to family members, friends and acquaintances has an impact on the inclusion of individuals into social life (Putnam 2000; Stolle 2007). Moreover, they propagate the adoption and diffusion of civic norms that tie individuals to local communities and larger societies (Putnam 1992). In another reading of the same concept, informal networks are a source of social capital insofar as they enable individuals to mobilize the potential resources their social contacts have (e.g., funds, information, further contacts, work, institutional access points). Social capital provides them with help to reproduce or improve their living conditions (Bourdieu 1980; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Jackson 1988; Morris and Irwin 1992). Finally, informal networks are also important instances of socialization. Depending on the living conditions and experiences of these contacts, they might bring about distinct group norms, ideas and aspirations, which deviate more or less explicitly from dominant expectations and ideals propagated by politics, state authorities or public opinion (Whyte 1943; Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Bay and Blekesaune 2002; Baron 2008; Hobbins and Lahusen 2015).

Social relations have thus considerable effects on the everyday life of young jobless people, even though the specific influence will vary according to the number and type of contacts they maintain. They therefore require systematic inspection. For this purpose, we propose to answer three major analytic research questions. Firstly, it will be necessary to understand the structuring impact of long-term unemployment on the web of social relations. From scholarly writing we know that unemployment can have a limiting or destructive impact on social capital, particularly if we

are speaking of a long-term situation of joblessness (Jackson 1988; Morris and Irwin 1992). Available evidence, however, argues that this relation is mediated by social and cultural factors that might vary across countries (Gallie et al. 2003). Hence, it is necessary to listen more carefully to the potentially destructive factors or forces. Is income the main problem; that is, do jobless young adults report that the lack of funds leads to a loss of shared activities and personal relations? Is the loss of experiences, purposes and aspirations a problem; that is, do these adults observe a loss of commonalities with their families and peers? Or is the public stigma of joblessness the cause; that is, do the respondents withdraw from personal contacts because of prejudices or personal feelings of shame? These factors and forces might not be equally relevant for all kinds of unemployed people in all countries. Indeed, the destructive impact of unemployment might vary between the various groups of young adults interviewed, for instance when taking gender roles and social class, and therefore differing expectations of men and women, of middle-class and working-class youth into account. At the same time, it will be necessary to consider whether these destructive forces vary between the residents of the various cities analyzed, given the fact that financial hardships, forms of sociability and cultural expectations will diverge between European cities when taking their different welfare systems and the institutionalized norms and ideas into consideration (Esping-Anderson 1990; Sainsbury 1999; Gallie and Paugam 2000).

Secondly, we wish to reconstruct how young people try to cope with the hardships imposed by unemployment on their everyday life. In particular, we wish to understand the ways in which they try to reproduce and upkeep informal networks of social relations within a situation of material deprivation and cultural stigmatization. In the first instance, we will be interested to observe which types of social relations are strong and robust, and which the more feeble and precarious. There are indications that the family of origin provides a solid net of social relations that young unemployed adults can rely upon under all circumstances, while friends and acquaintances are less prone to maintain their ties under situations of stress (Jackson 1988; Morris and Irwin 1992). However, this observation does not need to be true for all jobless people, because it disregards the personal preferences, skills and resources that different jobless adults might have or lack. An inductive analysis must therefore be particularly interested in identifying the resources and strategies used by the unemployed to (re)construct social relations under circumstances

of precariousness. If a lack of income is an inescapable reality for many jobless young people, do they develop strategies of cashless forms of sociability and networking to uphold social relations, or do they stress austerity and retreat? If the lack of work experiences and purposes is a fact, do they reduce expectations and resign to inactivity, or do they center on private, leisure-related, civic or political purposes of sociability and networking? If stigmatization and discrimination are part of a lived experience, do they retreat or do they sort out contacts and work on resilient relations? In all these cases, jobless young adults will find different answers to their situation, and it will be interesting to see whether these differences are related to social categories and context. Indeed, it is to be expected that the role of family support, for instance, will diverge between different European cities, as much as it will when considering the situation of female and male jobless individuals (Leana and Feldman 1991; Qureshi 1996).

Thirdly, we are interested in the impact social relations might have on the lived experiences of long-term unemployment with its constraints and limitations. Here, we join a long-standing research strand that has tried to substantiate the importance of social support in reducing financial hardships, ameliorating social isolation, preventing mental stress and keeping up optimism, well-being and purposeful activities towards the future (Kieselbach 2003; Compas et al. 2001; Beck et al. 2005; Huffman et al. 2015; Maddy et al. 2015). However, we also conform to the evidence generated by those studies that have highlighted the potentially unsupportive behavior of informal networks, and the related pressures and conflicts tied to the relations towards friends or relatives (Ratcliff and Bogdan 1988; Thoits 1995; Lehman et al. 1986; Harris 1992). Consequently, we must ask various questions. Do unemployed young people use contact with their families and friends in order to secure monetary support or cashless forms of exchange, and does this entail relations of dependency? Do they rely on their families and friends to organize their everyday life activities, and are job-seeking activities an expected part of that? Do their families and friends grant them the comfort and recognition they require, and is this understanding free of implicit or explicit forms of stigmatization? Also in this regard, we expect to find differences between the cities and between different groups of young jobless. We might expect, for instance, that pressures to take up a job might be higher on men than on women (Ratcliff and Bogdan 1988; Leana and Feldman 1991; Qureshi 1996), while the pressure might be more generalized in countries with

higher employment commitments, such as the Northern European countries (Wel and Halvorsen 2015).

The following chapters provide rich evidence about the living conditions of young jobless adults across Europe. They provide vivid accounts that show the detrimental effects of long-term unemployment on their everyday lives. At the same time, they assemble evidence on the ongoing efforts to subsist during these adverse circumstances, to solve some of the unemployment-related problems and to recover from misfortunes. And finally, they sensitize us for the specific limitations these young people are exposed to in their attempts to gain independence and get ahead in life. These case studies thus converge in the call to listen more carefully to their accounts, and to become aware of the specific hardships and pressures they are exposed to at a time of accelerated social transformations.

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Youth Long-Term Unemployment in France: Challenging Common Trends

Didier Chabanet, Manlio Cinalli, and Damien Richard

INTRODUCTION

It is easy to get the impression that everything that could be said about the experience of unemployment has already been said many times over. Beginning with Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel's pioneering study of unemployment in the little Austrian village of Marienthal in the 1930s (1933), sociologists have time and time again described long-term unemployment as a form of social death, invariably referring back to the Marienthal study for support. In France, the first large-scale analysis of unemployment, which was carried out in 1966 in a context of full employment, reached fairly similar conclusions (Ledrut 1966). There is no denying the profoundly damaging effects of unemployment on people's lives and on society as a whole, especially since the 2008 economic crisis. Nevertheless, what the present chapter will seek to answer is whether this still holds true today, in France, in the specific case of youth unemployment. This question is partly motivated by the implicit bias apparent in the literature

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on this topic. In the words of Didier Demazière: 'If pioneering studies have fed and legitimised a sociological approach to unemployment which defines it as a destabilising and traumatising experience, a catastrophe bringing humiliation, apathy, anaemia and depression in its wake, it is […] because they base their analysis on a specific type of unemployment, that experienced by adult male heads of households made redundant for economic reasons, and because they see unemployment as a state rather than as process evolving over time' (Demazière 1995: 93).[1] In the past 20 years, certain studies have suggested that unemployment can be experienced in a different way, but they have been few and far between (Schehr 1999; Maurer 2001). These include Dominique Schnapper's by now classic take on 'chômage inversé' or 'reverse unemployment', in which she showed that for certain individuals unemployment could be experienced as a positive opportunity to take time out in order to focus on activities incompatible with full-time employment (Schnapper 1984). However in a later edition of her work published some 13 years later, Schnapper did question whether such experiences of unemployment would still be possible today, given the increasing importance ascribed to the value of work.

It is striking that the experience of youth unemployment is almost systematically left out of this discussion, as if there existed no difference between their situation and that of other, especially older, unemployed people.[2] On the contrary, this chapter will contend that there is something quite specific about the way young people experience unemployment, and that their experience does not quite conform to the broader patterns laid out by sociologists. Although unemployment undeniably affects social ties and heightens the risks of isolation, the experience of unemployment among young people is not always as severe. Perhaps because of their relative youth, the desocialization process undergone by the young unemployed is not as dramatic as what their older peers go through. Bearing out this intuition are the specific unemployment programs which have mainly been targeted at young people for the last 40 years and which typically provide young job-seekers with a lot of support throughout the application process. What is more, their very youth could mean that they benefit from tighter and more supportive social networks of family and friends, mitigating the desocializing aspect of joblessness. The fact that youth unemployment has been such a massive phenomenon for several decades, especially in France,[3] may also have decreased the stigma of joblessness and thereby also the feelings of guilt associated with it. In short, there are many reasons to think that the experience of unemployment

among young people in France is quite specific, and certainly not entirely aligned with the experience of the unemployed in Marienthal.

In regard to method and sources, this chapter draws upon information collected through 20 in-depth qualitative interviews with long-term unemployed (over one year) aged 18–34. Fieldwork was conducted in Lyon in 2010 and 2011. A first set of interviews was carried out at the exit of unemployment centers (agences de 'Pôle-emploi'), then expanded with another set of interviews through snowball via the first set of interviews. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, with interviewees varying in terms of age, education, socio-economic status and gender. The analysis was performed in line with teaching of grounded theory by Charmaz (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). In particular, the analysis has been structured according two main dimensions. The first dimension, which will be treated in Section 'Facing the Crossroads between Work and Unemployment', refers to the complex relationship between the young unemployed and the unemployed center. The second dimension, which will be treated in Section 'Social Networks', focuses on specific social networks that young people use (or do not use) when coping with periods of unemployment. This research interest also allows for discussing the role of the 'small society', to use a well-known definition of 'private sphere' in Tocqueville (1981), as well as considering the importance of the way in which the young unemployed organize their days. Overall, the analysis puts emphasis on a number of key variables such as age, social position, cultural capital, gender and the effect of specific processes of socialization in a given territory.

Facing the Crossroads between Work and Unemployment: The Relationship Between the Young Unemployed and the Unemployment Center

For a majority of young unemployed, the experience of unemployment becomes concrete in the specific relationship with the unemployment center, that is, the Pôle-emploi. This latter is normatively shaped according to expectation that the main goal of the unemployed is to come back to work soon. This normative expectation is even stronger in France than in other European countries owing to the strong attachment that French citizens have to work (Davoine and Méda 2009). The pressure which Pôle-emploi

and society at large puts on the young unemployed seems to suit some of them well. Specifically, it does not appear to unsettle those with enough trust in their own abilities. In spite of having been out of work for over a year, their words do not betray any particular sense of discouragement. Coming from a wide variety of social backgrounds, these individuals believe that their perseverance and efforts will eventually secure them a job, even at a time of economic upheaval. They therefore make sure they adhere closely to Pôle-emploi's guidelines. 'Sure, it's tough, but I need to believe it's possible, anyway I don't have a choice, I don't have much previous [professional] experience, that's my main problem, it's what I need to get, but I hang in there, I tell myself that my turn is going to come, so yes, I do everything I can to make it work….' (Fanny, 21). It is often those who come from a more privileged background, which places a greater emphasis on the values of willpower and of personal success, who are best able to embrace the institution's discourse, which gives great importance to such notions as 'project', 'creation', 'initiative' or 'autonomy' (Thalineau 2009). This allows them to draw on their own personal values to motivate themselves in their search for employment, thereby endowing the search with greater meaning and giving them greater hope of a positive outcome.

> When you've been out of work for a long time, it really becomes a test of character. You need to get a grip on yourself, because no one else is going to help you. No one else is there to get you out of bed in the morning! You're in the lurch, and you have to get yourself out of it. In a way this is really when you go from being a child to being an adult. You need to believe in yourself and you need to be ready to fight to get what you want.
>
> (Romaric, 28)

For the opposite reason, the discourse of Pôle-emploi just does not seem to 'take hold' with other young people who pin their hopes almost exclusively on the private sphere. Almost all of these are young women coming from a working-class background, with little to no cultural capital. For them, being out of work is not perceived as a major problem since their main aspiration is to set up a home and to start a family. They therefore tend to stress their desire to fully devote themselves to their children. Though some of these young women deplore their lack of employment, they appreciate the time that it frees up for housework and childcare. 'When you're out of work, you can really be there for all the people you're close to. […] Once I have children, I think it's best not to work, because it's important to take good care of the house' (Kim, 29).

Laura (20) concurs: 'In five years' time, I'll already have a baby. Perhaps I'll even be married, why not, I'm all for marriage, but I don't care which comes first, the marriage or the baby […] I'll have my child and I want to bring it up […] I also want to take care of my husband and of the house.' In the course of the interviews, the idea often came up that unemployment is less acceptable for a man than for a woman. The suggestion that the private sphere remains the 'natural' place for a woman is never very far away, irrespective of the speaker's gender. Conversely, not a single male interviewee considered that the role of 'father' or of 'stay-at-home parent' could adequately replace their identity as active workers. This is the sense in which unemployment is seen as a more difficult experience for 'him' than for 'her'. As Maeva (28) puts it: 'A man can't not have a job'. Two exceptions stand out, however. First the case of a young woman from an underprivileged background, for whom work is synonymous with emancipation and social autonomy. Unemployment is perceived as an obstacle to her desired social trajectory. 'I can't really do what I want, I can't save either, I feel I'm stagnating, that I'm just left out of other people's lives, I mean, left out of real life, like working, owning a house, having a job, projects, being able to decide what you want in life' (Estelle, 24). The other case is that of young educated women from the middle class, who refuse to be hemmed in by traditional gender roles. On the whole, however, most interviewees consider that unemployment is not as bad for women as for men, suggesting more or less explicitly that unemployed women should devote themselves to childbearing, to the raising of children and to housework. Manifestly, 'the symbolic role of the man as provider of the family's resources and as the sole person capable of meeting its needs, though it is no longer as true in fact (because of growing female workforce participation, of more dual-career couples and of single-parent households, for example), nevertheless remains prevalent in theory' (Nezosi 2000: 15).[4]

As a result, some unemployed young women appear to have given up on an already low set of expectations. They are often women with scant social capital, and the life they describe comes across as monotonous, devoid of any real content, but also of any strong sense of disappointment. Such is the case of Elodie (22), who lives with her mother. She is plagued neither by emptiness nor by strong anxiety about the future, since she does not expect anything from it, and since her present circumstances effectively shield her from extreme precarity. What transpires from her words is more a form of deep non-investment in the world. Elodie (22) is not interested in anything in particular, she describes her life as if it were not really hers,

without expressing any feelings, neither regret, nor passion, nor anger. She does not 'blame anyone', 'does not know what tomorrow will bring', 'has trouble planning the future', 'does what [she] has to do to find work', has not found any but 'does not really know why'. Her plans for the future boil down to 'having a job, a house, a dog, a husband, children', a form of normality concentrated on the private sphere.

Clearly, the social trajectory of a young person who believes in his or her own ability to find work and that of another who identifies with traditional gender roles and exclusively focuses her ambitions on the private sphere are very different; nevertheless, in both cases they cope reasonably well with unemployment. Although it is not perceived as a happy or positive experience, unemployment does not automatically trigger a loss of meaning or a psychological collapse.

From Feelings of Failure to Strategic Adjustments

For other young people, however, the discrepancy between the expectations of Pôle-emploi and their own inability to find work can be a painful experience. Several interviews feature many passages mentioning the 'boredom', the 'feeling of pointlessness', the 'discouragement', the 'embarrassment' or even the 'shame' experienced by the unemployed. The entire system is indeed geared towards an active empowerment of the unemployed person who is encouraged to be the main actor of his or her search for employment, an expectation which many fail to live up to. 'Not only are the unemployed expected to search for what they are unable to find, but they are also blamed for not reaching this inaccessible goal' (Morel-Jayle 2000: 196–197).[5] Many young people would need a space where they could voice their doubts and frustrations in order to be reassured, but instead they feel compelled to play a part—that of the dynamic individual devoting every waking hour to finding work—which they cannot possibly live up to. Hence the importance, for many unemployed young people, of the few times during workshops or training periods when they are actually in close contact with other job-seekers, and therefore able to relate their experiences to those of a larger group. Rather than the certification obtained, what most participants value about these events is the possibility to open up and to share their experiences with others who are in the same situation.

> I had the opportunity to take a language course, I was part of a group and I really liked it, I realized that I wasn't the only one struggling, we talked

quite a lot, I mean you connect with people even if it's only for a few days, and you realize you're not the only one, and that other people have their own problems, and that cheered me up…

(Ismène, 22)

The discrepancy between what the institution expects of the unemployed and their actual situation often breeds discouragement, which in turn triggers feelings of failure, often experienced on a very personal level, since the discourse of Pôle-emploi and of society at large keeps extolling the importance of personal initiative, of energy, of willpower and of the effort which job-seekers need to put into their search (Linhart et al. 2009). The closer their personal identification with their professional role, the stronger the feelings of discouragement and failure experienced by those unable to secure employment. For instance, this is the case of many young people from a working-class background.

for my father it was tough when I lost my job because he worked his entire life, that's what it was like back then, and so for his son to not be able to find work, that just wasn't acceptable […] Even my mother didn't think that I was a real man, because I wasn't working, I wasn't employed, I wasn't integrated into society […] That was really tough, because when it's your parents, then it really gets to you, and you tell yourself, shit, even my parents see me like that, like a slacker, they never said anything but you kind of feel that's what they're thinking, and then it just really messes you up…

(Karim, 21)

In order to reduce this cognitive dissonance, young people end up curtailing their professional ambitions. They no longer aim, as in the early stages of their job search, to find work that corresponds to their qualifications and to their desires in order to feel fulfilled. Instead, they look for any job in order to escape their feelings of worthlessness and of shame. 'What kind of work I would take? Housecleaning, handling work, dishwashing, anything, working in a fast-food restaurant, you name it. Anything I can get' (Maxime, 23). Stéphanie (33) expresses similar feelings: 'The only thing that matters is to find something, whether I like it or not, the only thing that matters is to actually be working.'

Questioning the Moral Value of Work

The experience of unemployment is different for those who do not ground their personal identity on their work. This can be the case for people whose relatives have also been unemployed, be it a parent, a brother or a sister. Among certain underprivileged groups, entire generations have suffered from lack of work, or from precarious or sporadic work. As a result, it is considered a normal experience, and it no longer carries any specific stigma or any burden of guilt, at least within the family unit. For others, work has always been a purely economic imperative, something you do to earn a living and 'because you've got to do something'. In the case of young manual workers with experiences of hard and strenuous jobs, work is sometimes perceived only as a chore. Some young people also remember prematurely aged fathers worn down by grueling factory work. When that is the case, unemployment does not have the same meaning. It is perceived as acceptable as long as government benefits are generous enough to live on. Although the eventual resumption of work is seen as unavoidable, work comes across as alienating rather than enriching, and not as an important part of personal identity.

> I've worked in a factory, I've done handling work, I've been a night watchman, hard work, because the conditions are really bad, they don't treat you well, you don't know what it's like unless you've done it, but when you work nights, or out in the cold, you do it because you have to eat, but you would much rather be someplace else […] When you've been through that, unemployment doesn't seem all that bad.
>
> (Charlie, 29)

Some young people even appear to deal quite well with prolonged periods of unemployment, of precarity or of odd jobs. They seem to have chosen a modest though not destitute life, some aspects of which particularly appeal to them: the flexible hours, the possibility of pursuing a profession (or of not doing so at other times), the strong feelings of independence associated with their way of life. Charlie (29) has been out of full-time employment for a number of years, and does some odd jobs from time to time. He often works off the books. Thanks to his skills as a mechanic he makes some money repairing his neighbors' cars. His words express neither shame nor any sense of stigma. He does not idealize his situation, he clearly sees the advantages and the disadvantages of it, but he does not see a stable job, such as the one he had for a couple of years in an

automotive manufacturing plant, as a desirable alternative. Charlie (29) is quite representative of a certain type of former worker who, having had various menial, repetitive and unprestigious jobs, prefers to evolve outside the strictures of formal employment. They are not put off by the work itself, since they can at times be intensely busy, but rather by the hierarchical nature of the workplace and by its collective mode of organization; for this they are often labeled as 'deviant workers' ('actifs déviants') by Pôle-emploi (Demazière 1992: 355).

> Almost everyone knows me in the neighborhood, I've worked in a car repair shop, if someone has a problem with their car, I can fix it, I can fix engines, it's good for me and for them, I'm much cheaper than a regular garage and it allows me to live. I don't owe anyone anything, and I don't have to take shit from anyone.
>
> (Charlie, 29)

Some middle-class, college-educated young people with significant social and cognitive resources also manifest a similar detachment in their attitude to unemployment. Aurélien considers that one should 'dedramatize unemployment' since 'it affects more and more people' and since no-one can 'stem its flow' (Aurélien, 23). Generally, young people whose educational level would seem to shield them from unemployment, at least of the prolonged kind, did not become unduly worried when they found themselves out of work. Well supported by their families and often still housed by their parents, they typically felt confident about the future and used the first few weeks of their unemployment to relax, to take care of themselves and to catch up with old friends. 'At first you think it's not going to last, so you just enjoy the good sides of not working, of having more time to do things' (Julien, 24). Being out of work makes it possible to rest and to recuperate from the accumulated exhaustion of a fast-paced professional life.

> When I lost my job, I was exhausted, burnt out as they call it, I was just sick and tired of it all, I didn't even enjoy my work anymore, I just turned up so I could collect my paycheck in order to live. And suddenly, when I lost my job, I felt I could breathe again, that I finally had some time for myself. Do you realize, I had completely forgotten what that felt like.
>
> (Stéphanie, 33)

In the case of Laurent, being out of work made it easier for him to spend time with his family and to care for his children:

> There were some good sides to it, I took care of my kids, dropped them off at school, did the shopping, I made them dinner on time, we were close, they would tell me about their day, I could take them to the swimming pool or to sporting practice, I had some time for myself and to take care of the house.
>
> (Laurent, 35)

What emerges from this section is the variety of young people's experience of unemployment, and the important influence of variables such as gender, social class and cultural capital, the last two of which are closely connected. Of the three categories examined here, only the second one manifests some similarities with the unemployed in Marienthal. Another important influence on young people's attitudes to Pôle-emploi, however, is the importance they ascribe to work as a value, and to the quality of their social networks, especially the ties to family and friends.

SOCIAL NETWORKS, FAMILY AND THE 'SMALL SOCIETY' IN PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

We will start by examining the part played by the 'small society' in the way young people experience unemployment. The interviews offer a rather nuanced view of its importance. Although the family does represent a source of financial and emotional support for many young people, it can also become a space riven by conflicts and tensions, especially in higher-income families. Two tendencies emerge from the range of possible scenarios. Low-income families, who are unable to offer much financial support and for whom unemployment is a common occurrence, tend to accept it as a fact of life. More affluent families, however, who have more social and cultural resources at their disposal and who tend to offer their children financial help are also more demanding towards them and fail to understand why they cannot find work. In the first case, the unemployed receive little or no help, but this is not perceived as a problem, whereas in the second case, more substantial help is offered but this leads to conflicts and to incomprehension. Social relationships also play an important part for most unemployed young people, except for those at the very top of the age range or for those with very limited cultural capital. Most young people are able to reactivate social resources pre-dating their unemployment, and to develop new forms of sociability not dependent on work. These relationships can be built around casual encounters, leisure activities or volunteering. How differently young people deal with this can be seen

from the various ways in which they 'structure their days'. While some of them struggle with boredom and aimlessness, others barely find time for everything they have to do. Manifestly, unemployment does not necessarily entail a loss of social relations.

Havens or Prisons? The Ambiguous Role of the Family

For those who struggle socially or financially, the family plays a crucial part. In France, its remit is not very well defined, be it socially or legally. For Serge Paugam, this is an indirect consequence of the strong institutional support on offer for the unemployed, including more generous benefits than the European average. In contrast with more Mediterranean countries, the focus in France is always on government intervention and scant attention is paid to so-called 'primary' networks of solidarity operating at the level of the family or of the neighborhood (Gallie and Paugam 2000). There are a few rare instances of young people relying entirely on their own resources, be it because of distant family ties or out of a sense of pride which keeps them from asking their parents for support. Most of the time, however, families remain the last line of defense in times of hardship. Young people turn to their families for emotional and financial support, and often move back in with their parents when their finances become strained.

Families offer solutions, but they can become a potential source of problems. They provide support, but they also encourage young people to look for work, including by suggesting that they could be doing more to find it. Words which are meant to reassure ('I'm sure you will find a new job') can eventually turn into a source of guilt ('are you sure you've done everything you could?'). The impact of such indirect accusations is all the more devastating as they are emotionally loaded. Here the discourse of the family echoes that of institutions such as Pôle-emploi, cementing the idea that not finding a stable job is unacceptable; this is a painful message for anyone who has been looking for work without finding any.

> My mother was the one who nagged me most. 'You need to find something, you can't just sit around' […] Everyday she just tells me the same thing […] I can't help but resent that my mother and father put so much pressure on me. Even my mother didn't think that I was a real man, because I wasn't working, I wasn't employed, I wasn't integrated into society.
>
> (Karim, 21)

As soon as it becomes obvious that finding work is proving harder than expected, the family steps up its pressure, especially among the fairly privileged. Many interviews point to a deep misunderstanding between a younger generation born in a context of high unemployment and who view it as a systemic problem, and an older generation of parents who have not experienced it for themselves and who fail to understand why their children cannot find work, even as they do not hesitate to support them financially. Though these young people do not consider themselves responsible for their unemployment, it does put them at odds with their social environment.

Low-income families can also put pressure on their children, but this is not as common, and when it happens it is more indirect. It can be the case in families where the parents have invested so heavily in their children's education that failing to find work triggers tremendous feelings of guilt in the child. In these situations the child usually prefers not to ask the parents for help, not because he or she believes that it would not be forthcoming, but rather to avoid disappointing them that little bit more. Some of the interviewees in this situation never talk about their unemployment with their family because they find it too embarrassing, even if everyone is aware of their predicament. 'I spent an entire year doing nothing but looking for work, not even attending a training course. We don't really talk about it, ever' (Julien, 24). To avoid offending their children, some parents are very discreet in their offers of assistance; they will put children up for a couple of days, or over the weekend, or give them permanent access to one of their cars. All things considered, the families that deal best with this situation are those with previous experience of unemployment.

> my mother and my brother are unemployed, there's just not enough work for everyone… I don't even know how many times I've applied for benefits, same thing for my brother, my mother not as much but that's because she's not always looking for work. We're all in it together…
>
> (Noria, 20)

A particularly interesting case is that of the unemployed over the age of 30, the oldest ones in this case study, who were socialized in the workplace for several years and who have children of their own. They show how difficult it is to have a serene discussion about unemployment in a family context. Laure (20), for instance, hides her unemployment from her child, in the sense that she never talks about it, out of a sense of delicacy

and in order not to worry him, to shelter him, to allow him to 'stay in his childhood world'. The experience of unemployment can also put relationships at risk.[6] Some of those affected become withdrawn, touchy and aggressive, leaving their spouses uncertain of how they should deal with the situation and whether it should (or should not) be verbalized. The problem is particularly acute for couples where the spouse's personal identity is tied to their professional status.

> When you've been unemployed for a long time, you don't really have anything to say. Your partner comes home at night, and tells you about his day, what he's doing, his problems, everything that is going on, the people he meets. And you don't have anything to say, or almost nothing. You've only done boring tasks, and half the time you don't even feel like talking about it. It's tough, because without work you're nothing, so after a while it's hard not to start resenting everyone, even your partner, even if he hasn't done anything to deserve it.
>
> (Julie, 24)

In the case of younger unemployed people, however, there is no evidence to suggest that unemployment has a destabilizing effect on their love life. As is often the case with people their age, their relationships do not always last very long, but how long they do last does not seem to be influenced by their employment status. During the interviews, not a single person under the age of 25 mentioned any link between their breakups or their relationship issues and their unemployment. This discrepancy underscores the difference between the youngest of the unemployed, who have almost no experience of the world of work, and the older ones, who have been profoundly shaped by the years they spent working. In other words, the romantic life of the youngest interviewees does not seem to be directly affected by their experience of unemployment.

Social Networks

The scholarly literature has shown that any job loss is accompanied by a dramatic reduction of social ties and almost always causes the isolation of the unemployed. This leads us to distinguish two situations, looking at the age and the cultural resources of the unemployed. The distinction between very young and less young unemployed seems relevant to understand the effects of unemployment in terms of social integration. In particular, the study of ties is crucial, since those who have exercised a

professional activity for several years before they lose their jobs could rely on contacts as a key form of sociability. So the loss of job translates into a traumatic moment, which often comes together with feelings of uselessness, the fear of judgment and of stigma, isolation and so forth. Some young unemployed avoid social life so as to avoid engaging in any type of discussion with peers.

There is also a sense of guilt about having fun while looking for a job. A satisfactory level of social relations is also linked to cultural resources accumulated before losing the job. In addition, the problem that confronts the long-term unemployed is linked to the loss of purchasing power. Expenses are limited, especially those that are not necessary and hence related to social relations, such as going out with friends in bars, restaurants, purchase of gifts and so forth (Nezosi 2000: 6). Far from being a simple lack of fun and relaxation, this process puts under strain the whole dimension of identity with a group of peers, weakening the occurrence of extensive ties with people of the same age, who share the same interests, activities, passions and so forth.

There is an increase in time that is dedicated to video games and television. In fact, the Internet and access to social networks is the only category of property that no young unemployed would renounce. This is obviously today an indispensable tool for job-searching, but it is also the way in which to preserve a minimum of social relations while being at home, or more simply in a less sociable environment. The greater amount of time that is spent at home comes together with the desire to practice more sporting activities. These latter stand for taking care of personal health, but also for feeling that one is doing something that is good and not useless (Castel 1995). At the same time, the role of the 'best friend' becomes more important, providing a source of stability and reliability at the very time when everything else and everybody else disappear. Accordingly, borrowing money seems sometimes easier from a very good friend than from a relative. In the words of an interviewee, 'to ask a friend is less hassle since a friend doesn't ask for many questions and trusts you. And once you give back the money, everything is sorted.'

Emphasis should also be put on the energy that some young unemployed dedicate to preserving social ties and forging new ones. In many cases, contacts or activities can be reactivated, particularly for most culturally endowed unemployed individuals. Free time, in a sense, is crucial to compensate at least in some part for the lack of money. So it is always

good to seize inexpensive opportunities, whether in a cheap café, in an association with local residents or during a walk in the countryside. Many young unemployed like to attend a particular place as part of a routine, whether this is a sport club, a bar or an association. This is the case for Enzo (27), who has been playing music for several years in the company of some friends in various bars in Lyon. Since he is unemployed, he appreciates even more those moments of exchange and conviviality, which also bring him some money. In his words, 'I enjoy playing music with old friends, now that I have more time to meet back with them.' This type of sociability also depends on specific neighborhoods that provide more places where people can meet. The geographical territory is therefore an important variable to understand how the experience of unemployment can be lived differently. The young unemployed can find a better place to live especially in a place where unemployment is normal, sometimes as an intergenerational legacy, and work has long since lost its centrality. In this place, friendship neighborhood can play a much stronger role for the nurturing of social ties.

Some consideration should also be given to potential resources that were gathered before the job loss. Generally, we know that the unemployed often do not vote (Pierru 2005) and that their participation in community life is weaker than that of people having a regular job (Paugam 2006: 22). Our interviews confirm these results, because many interviewees say that they do not vote and have no interest for politics. The role of trade unions, or associations of the unemployed, which are relatively active in the region of Lyon, is almost never mentioned in the interviews. Yet the analysis shows that higher education goes hand in hand with a greater interest in collective issues and social problems such as the environment, sustainable development, recycling, social justice, animal rights and so forth. There is also some meaningful link with the decision to engage in political discussion and in associations of different kinds. Volunteering can thus be a way to regain a sense of personal and social utility in times of unemployment.

In some sense this is a new type of civic involvement that is different from old commitment to ideals that aim to transform deeply society. Maeva (28) is a member of the 'Restos du cœur'. This is an association that helps poor people by providing food, particularly in winter. When Maeva had a job she used to send money to the association, though she never engaged in its activities. Now that she is unemployed, she has been involved directly in food distribution, thereby giving a positive sense to

this period of unemployment. In her words, 'For me the Restos du cœur is very important. Particularly in hard time, it is good to help out people who need even more help […]. I meet with people, it's hard, it's about people who could not eat without the food they are offered […] and I am doing something useful.' The case of Maeva, who has found a better sense of her life in a situation of unemployment, shows the huge variation of social relations that the young unemployed can develop. This variation is evident in the way that the young unemployed organize their own days, opposing those who have only a limited social and cultural capital and struggle to come out of a situation of anomie on the one hand, to those who, on the other hand, have successfully developed strong interests outside the working environment and successfully use these experiences in situations of unemployment.

'Structuring One's Days'

Time management comes across as a constant concern for most unemployed young people, to such an extent that 'structuring one's days' emerges as a recurrent leitmotiv in many interviews. It becomes emblematic not of one but of two radically different ways of dealing with unemployment. This difference can be related to an individual's cultural capital but also to the issue of social identity. One configuration is that of young people who have not studied very long, who are not very open to the world and whose interests are mainly tied to the world of work. When individuals like this face unemployment, they are often overcome by a feeling of torpor, which they try to shake off by organizing their days in a vain fight against 'complete unemployment' (Schnapper 1984), a state characterized by boredom, isolation and self-doubt. The very effort they put into it seems taxing, however, and more often than not it denotes an incipient discouragement. The only reason they establish rules is to try and rouse themselves from their torpor. The energy with which they go about structuring their days is best understood as a reaction to a deep feeling of listlessness. Gradually, this organizational drive concentrates itself more and more on the domestic space, as social relationships shrink. The aim becomes to 'not get up at noon… to get out of the house… to get dressed, to exercise a bit… to meet up with someone at least once a day, etc.' (excerpts from several interviews). In some cases, keeping busy, finding things to do and avoiding boredom become ends in and of themselves.

I try not to get up too late, usually nine thirty or so, because there's not much point in getting up too early either, and then either the weather's nice and I go out, or I bum around in front of the TV, or play video games, anything to pass the time, I read a bit, I watch quite a lot of movies, when I'm at home I mostly look at TV or use the computer.

(Romaric, 28)

Another configuration is the one where personal activities take up a large part of a person's time. Many unemployed young people mention activities and hobbies. Manifestly, unemployment does not always involve social death. At times, it can even be reconciled with political engagement. One young unemployed woman stands out. A militant feminist coming from a politically active family and deeply involved in a number of far-left organizations, she is mobilized in a fight for 'social change'. Her political convictions were formed long before she became unemployed, an experience which helped cement her belief in collective action. When she speaks, her words express neither guilt not discouragement. Because of her militant convictions, she is able to endow her own experience of unemployment with a greater meaning (Pochic and Bory 2014) and to preserve an important network of social ties.

As far as I'm concerned it's obvious that unemployment has deep political roots, it's the result of a system that exploits workers and only benefits the wealthy. That's where the root causes of unemployment lie, in a social and political system designed to exploit the great majority of people, and first of all the unemployed. That's what we fight against at the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire], that's what we want to end.

(Adeline, 24)

In other cases, the number of things to be done is such that it requires real efforts in time management. This is particularly noticeable among single mothers who seem very busy even when they are out of work, and who never complain about a lack of social relations. 'Because of my son [8 months] my days are really full. I take care of him, I feed him, I take him out, I make sure he gets everything he needs… During his naps I check job postings, I work on my English since I know it's important [but] I also need to take care of the house, to do the shopping, I often visit my parents who live nearby, I see some friends, I'm really quite busy when I think about it…' (Laure, 20). In spite of being quite monotonous, their life does not lack meaning since it enables them to bring up a young

child in decent circumstances, and since it endows them with an eminently recognizable social identity, being a mother. What this example shows, quite plainly, is that people's lives are not always exclusively focused on the world of work.

Final Remarks

Manifestly, the experience young people have of unemployment escapes easy categorization. What our study shows is that the apocalyptic vision of unemployment echoed by sociologists ever since the Marienthal study does not offer a sufficient explanation. To understand the lived experience of unemployment among young people in France, it is important to begin by studying the institutional framework which both facilitates and constrains their job search. Pôle-emploi's imperatives are perceived very differently depending on each person's character and social, cultural and cognitive resources. One category of young people fluctuates between full adherence to Pôle-emploi's discourse and a merely superficial engagement with its message. This group can in turn be subdivided between middle-class young people who draw on their self-confidence in order to resist the pressures exerted on them, and young women with little cultural capital, who focus almost exclusively on the private sphere and do not seem very affected by their lack of work. In spite of their clear sociological differences, neither of these groups suffer from unemployment-induced trauma, depression or loneliness.

In that sense they are quite different from the second category under consideration, which consists of unemployed people who suffer from a strong feeling of personal failure. Coming from working-class or more privileged backgrounds, what they have in common is their strong identification with the values of hard work, which causes them to be profoundly affected by the experience of unemployment. In order to escape from the suffering this situation entails, they have a tendency to give up on their professional ambitions in order to find work faster. These are the young people most deeply affected by the experience of unemployment, since it robs them of their self-esteem.

For a third category of young people the experience is, on the contrary, construed as entirely normal, thereby removing the stigma of unemployment and making it easier to come to terms with. This is a common scenario among underprivileged youths who have grown up at a time of economic crisis, and in a social context where work has lost its central importance and where unemployment has almost become the norm. The same distancing, however, is also at work among young people from the middle class, who have reasonably high levels of social capital and good

cognitive resources, who manage to deal rather well with the absence of work and who are not too affected by its desocializing consequences. For these young people, the most difficult aspect of unemployment is family pressure, especially coming from parents who project their own ambitions onto their children. In circumstances like these, what becomes problematic about unemployment is not its psychological or social effect on the person concerned, but rather the tensions it creates within the family unit. If we take this into account, our initial observation about the supporting role of the family needs to be somewhat qualified.

On the whole however, the 'small society', understood as a person's network of friends and family, represents an invaluable resource for the young unemployed. Its support can nevertheless be ambiguous. The families who have enough resources to financially help their unemployed children are also those that have most difficulty coming to terms with their situation, and therefore submit them to an intolerable amount of pressure. Conversely, low-income families with a long history of unemployment and of precarious work tend to have a more instrumental approach to work and to better tolerate their children's situation. In terms of social integration, how well unemployed young people fare depends on their age and especially on the amounts of cultural capital they accrued before losing their job. Territorial dynamics also play a part in facilitating the social integration of the unemployed. Older workers, having been socialized in the workplace for a number of years, often lose their social networks alongside their job. That puts them at a particular risk of isolation. For the others, how well they succeed in maintaining their social relations depends very largely on the cultural resources at their disposal, which they can then reactivate when unemployment hits.

The broad range of reactions to unemployment expresses itself in the different ways in which young people structure their days. Those with scant cultural capital struggle with boredom, discouragement and low self-esteem in their attempts to pass the time. Those who had strong pre-existing interests outside work, however, are usually able to reactivate them when they become unemployed, thereby endowing their life with meaning. The specific case of unemployed single mothers serves as a reminder that it is quite possible to develop a social identity not directly linked to the world of work. All in all, what the wide variety of these experiences suggests is that the reality of unemployment among young people in France is different from the experiences of the unemployed in Marienthal, and that any study of the deleterious influence of unemployment, especially on young people, would be well advised to approach its subject matter in as nuanced a way as possible.

Notes

1. 'Si les recherches pionnières ont alimenté et légitimé une vision sociologique du chômage qui le définit comme une expérience déstabilisante et traumatisante, une catastrophe entraînant humiliation, apathie, anémie, dépression, c'est […] parce qu'elles s'appuient sur un profil particulier de chômeur : adulte masculin, chef de famille, licencié économique et constituent le chômage comme un état plus que comme un processus temporel.' (Demazière 1995: 93)
2. Schehr's 1999 study is a notable exception to this trend, but it is of limited interest given how little data was collected; Schehr based his conclusions on a mere four interviews.
3. Since the early 1980s, the unemployed make up between 7 and 11 percent of the active population. Over the same period, youth unemployment stands at twice that level, culminating in 2016 at 26 percent.
4. 'La symbolique de l'homme apporteur des ressources du foyer et seul capable de subvenir à ses besoins, si elle est de moins en moins vraie dans les faits (développement de l'activité féminine, multiplication des couples bi-actifs et des familles monoparentales, par exemple), n'en demeure pas moins toujours d'actualité' (Nezosi 2000: 15)
5. 'Les chômeurs sont non seulement soumis à l'injonction de chercher ce qu'on ne leur permet pas de trouver, mais se voient également reprocher de ne pas réussir à atteindre cet objectif indépassable.' (Morel-Jayle 2000: 196–197)
6. Separations are far more common among the unemployed that for those in stable employment (almost 39 percent compared to 24 percent) (Castel 1995: 414).

Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Adeline (F), born in 1987, university education (BAC+3), in a relationship, without children, father bus driver, mother childcare worker.

Aurélien (M), born in 1988, two-year higher degree in mathematics (DEUG), married, without children, father middle manager in a large company, mother executive secretary.

Charlie (M), born in 1982, vocational diploma in mechanics (BEP), single, without children, father factory worker, mother not working.

Elodie (F), born in 1989, without qualifications, single, without children, father unknown, mother factory worker.

Enzo (M), born in 1984, university education (BAC+2), married, without children, father engineer, mother primary school teacher.

Estelle (F), born in 1987, vocational cooking qualification (CAP), without children, father specialized worker, mother specialized worker.

Fanny (F), born in 1990, high school diploma (BAC professionel), in a relationship, without children, father deceased, mother nurse.

Ismène (F), born in 1989, without qualifications, married, without children, father bricklayer, mother secretary.

Julie (F), born in 1985, without qualifications, in a relationship, without children, father postman, mother secretary.

Julien (M), born in 1987, vocational diploma in graphic design (CAP), father artist, mother working for a non-profit.

Karim (M), born in 1990, vocational diploma in industrial electronics (BEP), single, without children, retired father, mother housecleaner.

Kim (F), born in 1982, vocational sewing diploma (CAP), without children, father printing worker, mother working for a government agency.

Laura (F), born in 1991, vocational qualification in hairdressing (BEP), single, without children, father deceased, mother not working.

Laure (F), born in 1991, vocational sales diploma (BEP), single mother, father sales representative, mother not working.

Laurent (M), born in 1976, without qualifications, father estranged, mother retired.

Maeva (F), born in 1983, vocational diploma in childcare (CAP), single mother, one child, father activity leader, mother working in the town hall.

Maxime (M), born in 1988, without qualifications, single, without children, father building professional, mother worker.

Noria (F), born in 1991, vocational diploma in maintenance technology (BEP), single, without children, father building caretaker, mother cashier.

Romaric (M), born in 1983, high school diploma (BAC), single, without children, father physiotherapist, mother dentist.

Stéphanie (F), born in 1978, vocational high school diploma (BAC), divorced, two children, father unemployed, mother sales assistant in a department store.

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Being Long-Term Unemployed in Germany: Social Contacts, Finances and Stigma

Bettina Grimmer

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the social contacts and personal networks of young long-term unemployed in Germany. In social research on unemployment, it is argued that long-term unemployment often leads to a reduction of social contacts, to social isolation and to a decline of social capital (Gallie et al. 2003; van Oorschot et al. 2006; Lindström et al. 2012). This also holds true for the young unemployed (Donovan and Oddy 1982; Hammer 1993). For them, this process is particularly severe, since family as well as peer-group relations are crucial in transition to adulthood (Chisholm and Hurrlemann 1995).

However, the underlying mechanisms of this process of isolation as well as the factors contributing to it are largely unknown. How do social contacts change in times of unemployment? Which social contacts are the most vulnerable and which are likely to endure long times of

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unemployment? What are the reasons for the erosion of networks of the young unemployed? And how can this be avoided? What strategies do the young unemployed use to circumvent negative effects of unemployment and prevent social retreat and social isolation?

To answer these questions, this chapter makes use of 19 semi-structured qualitative interviews of long-term unemployed between 20 and 34 years of age that were conducted in 2010 among inhabitants of the city of Cologne. In the interviews, which were between 30 and 90 minutes long, the young unemployed talked about their biographies, their experience of unemployment, their financial situation, their daily activities, their families and friends and their relation to politics. The data was analyzed using the Grounded Theory approach by Strauss and Corbin (1990) in order to identify the most important unemployment-related problems and their interplay with different living conditions.

This chapter argues that two dimensions have an impact on the interplay of unemployment and social contacts as well as social activities: the financial situation of the young unemployed on the one hand and their experience of stigma on the other. To compensate for financial hardship the young people make use of social capital, and to prevent stigmatization they use justifications of their unemployment. The effectiveness of these strategies is, at least partly, shaped by the living conditions of the young unemployed. After a short literature review discussing the state of the art and introducing the theoretical concepts of social capital and stigma, the relationship between unemployment and different types of social networks will be clarified. The following sections deal with the most typical reasons for an unemployment-related decline of social contacts and the present strategies of the young unemployed to impede them. In order to deal with financial hardship, the young unemployed make use of social capital; encountering stigma they rely on justifications for their unemployment. The findings are discussed with regard to possible structural explanations, while the conclusion summarizes the results and highlights some country-specific aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, FINANCES AND STIGMA

During the 1970s, when unemployment rates increased significantly in Western Europe and many young people struggled to find employment after finishing school, youth unemployment became a political issue. This raised the interest of social researchers, in particular regarding the

consequences that joblessness had, especially on young people. Scholarly writing about youth unemployment thereby follows the tradition of earlier unemployment research from the 1930s, most prominently the study of Marienthal, which found that unemployment has far-reaching consequences for people's social lives (Jahoda et al. 2002). In her later research, Jahoda systematized these early findings and argued that work does not only fulfill the direct function of covering the financial needs of the worker, but also has a series of latent functions, such as providing a time structure, social status, identity and social contacts (Jahoda 1982). As a result, unemployment leads to a lack of these functions, going hand in hand with a decrease in individual well-being. Most of the classic studies on youth unemployment share this assumption and show that coping with joblessness goes along with a reduction of well-being, such as depression (Banks and Ullah 1987; Donovan and Oddy 1982; Feather and Davenport 1981) decreased levels of self-esteem (Banks and Jackson 1982; Breakwell 1985; Feather 1982; Gurney 1980) as well as social isolation (Donovan and Oddy 1982; Hammer 1993). However, especially for the young unemployed who have not experienced long periods of working routines, it is not clear whether the absence of work is actually the main determinant of individual well-being, or whether it is actually their financial situation. Several studies have shown that poverty is much more relevant than employment status (Álvaro and Garrido 2005; Fraser 1980; Kelvin and Jarret 1985).

This seems to apply particularly to the issue of social isolation. For individuals, participation in consumption and leisure activities is becoming more and more important (Bauman 1998), and young people in particular find and define their identities through consumption (Chisholm and Hurrlemann 1995; Willis 1990). As a consequence, the young unemployed often feel excluded from these important areas of life and, therefore, from their peers (Coffield et al. 1983; Hammer and Julkunen 2005; Julkunen 2000; Roberts 1983). Moreover, the relationship between financial situation and social contacts seems to be mutual. Scarce financial resources may be the cause of few social contacts and activities, but at the same time their consequence. And given that the young unemployed often receive support from their parents (Álvaro and Garrido 2005; Hendry and Raymond 1986), more differences concerning their financial situation than among the older unemployed could be assumed, and, as a consequence, create different starting positions for networking. Families and other social networks may provide social capital, that is 'the profits which accrue from

membership in a group' (Bourdieu 1986: 249). The concept of social capital is based on the assumption that individuals can benefit from social relations. Earlier research found that social capital can be helpful in dealing with unemployment under certain circumstances (e.g., Garrett-Peters 2009; Helliwell et al. 2014; Lindström et al. 2012; Winkelmann 2009), but these studies conceptualize social capital in line with Coleman (1988) and/or Putnam (1993, 2000) as the existence of social contacts (and other factors such as trust and norms) without defining the concrete outcome of social relations. For the purpose of this study, which is interested in the interdependence of financial resources and social contacts, it seems more promising to define social capital in line with Bourdieu's notion (Bourdieu 1986). In these terms, social capital is neither a social network nor a single social tie, but the financial and/or material resources deriving from networks or relations. The amount of social capital thus depends on the intensity of social contacts, on the extent of the network as well as on the resources available through network members. Hence, the concept of social capital is a useful tool for understanding how the young unemployed in Germany define their financial situation, how they deal with financial constraints, how they are hindered from participating in social activities und what strategies they use to stay connected to other people.

As mentioned above, financial situation appears to have a bigger impact on well-being than employment status. Yet one dimension has been neglected by classic unemployment research (except by Cobb and Kasl 1977), a dimension that cannot be explained through finances. Employment status matters, even—or even more—for the young, when they experience stigmatization for not working and living on welfare. According to Goffman, stigma means 'the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance' (Goffman 1968: 9). If the young unemployed feel stigmatized by society or by other people, this will directly affect their social relations and activities. The interdependence between well-being and social integration has been extensively investigated. While some researchers found that social relations in terms of support had positive effects on well-being (Hendry et al. 1984; Clark and Clissold 1982), others found an ambivalent or even negative impact of social support (Hammer 1993, 2000; Hendry and Raymond 1986). Moreover, scholars who took the employment status of the communities or networks of young people into account found that unemployment-related distress was lower in regions with high unemployment, concluding that social contacts to other jobless might lead to a normalization

of unemployment and attenuate its negative effects (Clark 2003; Clark and Oswald 1994; Donovan and Oddy 1982; Roberts 1983). However, it is not clear how these findings apply to the aspect of stigma, and earlier research on youth unemployment does not provide an answer to this question.

The reason why stigma is a rather neglected category might be historical. Research on youth unemployment was most prominent during the 1980s and early 1990s, when the phenomenon was relatively new and stigmatization of the unemployed seemed to be less common. But after years of persistent mass unemployment during the 1980s and 1990s, national governments introduced policies to push the unemployed into the labor market. These workfare policies were first introduced in the United States and, with some modifications, adapted by the United Kingdom in the course of the 'New Deal' (Daguerre 2004; Peck and Theodore 2001), which then served as a kind of role model for many European countries, and especially Germany (Seeleib-Kaiser and Fleckenstein 2007). In addition, the European Union played a major role in harmonizing national social policies, having a pronounced emphasis on activation (Van Berkel and Møller 2002). These reforms of the welfare state towards activating policies were accompanied by changing discourses about unemployment. For instance, some authors assumed that a comprehensive welfare system would lead to a growing 'underclass', lacking work ethic and dependent on social security (Mead 1986; Murray 1984). Accordingly, the problematization of poverty, for which an extensive welfare state seemed to be the solution, gave way to a debate on welfare dependency, for which the welfare state itself was seen as the source of the problem. In Europe, the debates legitimizing policy changes made use of the term 'exclusion' instead of 'underclass', which sounded less controversial but nevertheless had similar notions and partly endorsed the same moral judgments (Levitas 1998). In public debates and political speeches during the time when activation policies were introduced, there was an incremental use of individual-blaming rhetoric, while structural explanations of unemployment and poverty became less present (Fairclough 2000). During this change of discourse, which took place in Germany during the late 1990s and early 2000s, unemployment was publicly related to individual shortcomings and lack of willingness to work (Serrano Pascual 2007). As a consequence, the status of unemployed people within the public discourse is different compared to the situation when most of the youth unemployment studies were published. This raises the question whether and in

which ways the young unemployed in Germany experience stigmatization, how they deal with it and how stigma is related to social contacts and activities.

Long-Term Unemployment and Social Contacts: Colleagues, Family and Friends

The relationship between long-term unemployment and social contacts is not deterministic. It differs not only among individuals and their living conditions but also among different types of social networks. The most obvious loss of social relations through unemployment refers to the contacts established through work. Most employees get in contact with other people at work, talk to their colleagues or spend their coffee or lunch breaks with them. Work provides relatively easy access for meeting other people and the opportunity to maintain social relations—because colleagues usually meet every day without actively initiating it. In almost any job, social contacts are thus inevitable. These work-related social contacts are important in two ways. First, colleagues provide a pool of people the employee gets to know and may get to know even better. Regular contacts offer opportunities to intensify social relations among colleagues, and sometimes colleagues become friends. This opportunity is strongly restricted during times of unemployment, and it becomes harder to maintain relationships with former colleagues. Secondly, work-related contacts are not necessarily limited to colleagues. In most jobs, there are opportunities to get in contact with other people, such as customers, and even the journey to work may be an opportunity to connect with the outside world. In this sense, working is not about regular contacts and making friends, but rather participating in public life. When talking about the experience of being unemployed, some of our respondents particularly stressed this aspect and said that they suffered especially from not being among other people. For instance, an unemployed young mother compares her current daily routines to those when she still had a job:

> I come home, I feel free, I'm happy and I'm in contact with the outside world instead of staying at home every day and watching TV. You kind of isolate yourself.
>
> (Nicole, 30)

On the other hand, there are social relations that are not or only to a limited extent affected by unemployment. The strongest social bond the

unemployed can rely on is their nuclear family. Parents in particular are very important for most of the young unemployed. The majority of our respondents are in contact with their parents, or at least one parent, several times a week. Most of them live in the same city or even in the same neighborhood and meet their parents, while others use the phone to talk to their family if they are further apart. Only very few of the young unemployed (and only men) said they had little or no contact at all with at least one of their parents. However, these youngsters come from broken families, are now family men and are strongly attached to their wives and children. In general, the young unemployed living with their partner and children are more focused on their own nuclear family, while singles and single mothers are more strongly related to their parents. Concerning the quality of family relations, there is a similar picture. The largest group of the young unemployed say they have a very close connection with their parents or one parent and the second largest group describe their relationship as good but not very close. Young people from problematic family configurations tend to keep more distance from their parents. As to young people's relationships with their siblings, the situation is even more polarized. Some of them are very closely connected, while others broke ties with them or have a distant relationship.

In times of joblessness, ties within the nuclear family seem to be the most robust type of social contacts, as parents and sometimes siblings are still the most important persons in the lives of many young unemployed. Family relations do not appear to change much during times of unemployment. Only a few of the respondents said that these relationships had changed since they were unemployed. Those who have problematic family ties already had them before, and a healthy relationship does not obviously change because of unemployment. Certainly most of the parents are not happy with their children being long-term unemployed, and sometimes they express worries or criticism, as one respondent among many others tells us:

> My family was always like, they always accepted us the way we are, and if you get along like that, you get along. But my mother, yeah, she sometimes does bother me and stuff.

> (Thomas, 32)

However, this does not seem to affect the relationship significantly. Most of the parents, whether they criticize their children for being unemployed or not, appreciate their children and understand their difficulties in breaking into a tough labor market, and they try to support them as far as

they can. On the other hand, more distantly related family members and sometimes even siblings or grandparents tend to judge the young people for being unemployed; they express incomprehension and reproach. Single connections between family members are then likely to become more distant. But as most parents strongly stick by their unemployed children, they keep the family together. Hence, there is no significant disintegration of family ties for young people in times of unemployment. A reduction of social contacts or a weakening of ties within the nuclear family is unlikely.

In between these two types of networks, colleagues and working contacts on the one hand and family ties on the other, there are also friends, neighbors and acquaintances. These contacts are not work-related and thus not necessarily declining, but they are more fragile than family bonds. It is these types of networks that are at risk of shrinking or even breaking away during long-term unemployment. As the interviews show, there are two sources for limitations to social activities and, as a consequence, to keeping up social relations outside the nuclear family: financial hardship and stigma. The following two sections discuss these issues and the respondents' strategies for dealing with them.

Financial Hardship and Social Capital

Limited financial resources was an issue that came up in almost all of our interviews with the young unemployed. Two of them had not obtained unemployment benefits yet and lived in their parents' households, receiving only a little pocket money for their private needs and activities. Both of them had turned to the Public Employment Service (PES) to apply for unemployment benefits when we met them for the interview, in order to overcome the dependency on their parents. All the other respondents obtained tax-financed flat-rate unemployment benefits because they had been unemployed for more than one year. In 2010, these benefits consisted of costs for housing and heating plus a lump sum of €359 for costs of living per month. Those who were unemployed, aged younger than 25 and living with their parents obtained only €287 per month. For children living in the household the jobless parents received an additional amount between €215 and €287 per child, depending on the age. Single parents obtained an additional payment of €129, while unemployed living with their partner obtained only €323 each. Consequently, from an objective point of view, there are no substantive differences in how much money the young unemployed get from the PES. This is also reflected in the respondents'

subjective experience of their financial situation. Almost all of them say that their money is scarce, but as long as there are no unexpected expenses they manage to get along with their money. Two respondents, Mary and Cansu, both single mothers, said that they could live comfortably on their money, and one, Thomas, said he could hardly cover his expenses.

Thomas lives with his wife and their three children. His wife is unemployed as well, so the whole family is dependent on unemployment benefits. He describes his situation as a 'struggle for survival' and thereby underlines that he faces difficulties in fulfilling even basic needs. He does not receive any support from family members, and there is no one he could ask for help if there were urgent shortages. Of course, even with Thomas it is not always about 'not starving'. His 'struggle for survival' does not comprise the mere physical problem of having enough food, but rather problems regarding the children's participation in social life—that they are not excluded in school. To prevent his children from stigmatization, some money has to be spent on things that contradict the logic of 'no more than what is absolutely necessary'. In this context Thomas talks about his daughter, whose friends always buy a bottle of toffee-flavored milk from the tuck shop during the breakfast break at school. Although Thomas and his wife would prefer to save the money and do not see the use in drinking flavored milk at all, they give her €3 each week to buy it. Thomas' strategy to prevent his children from suffering from his poverty restricts his own opportunities to engage in social activities. The last time he and his wife went out without their children was four years ago. In the meantime, they have stopped even thinking about what they could do because everything causes expenses, from paying a babysitter to buying a drink. His financial worries restrain Thomas from social activities with other people and result in him losing contact even with friends and family members.

> In the past, I could for instance go to my neighbors next door, I could eat there and stuff, I could do that, could talk to my buddies and stuff. Today, the neighbors don't give a shit what you do, and we don't give a shit what they do, so to say.
>
> (Thomas, 32)

And he explains this as follows:

> Well, I think, the main reason is that people really gnaw on their situation. That they—I don't say they have so little money that they could not

buy anything for a barbecue, but for me—in my opinion everyone cocoons himself in his problems and no longer communicates with other people.

(Thomas, 32)

As Thomas puts it, worries about the financial situation can lead to a 'cocooning' behavior and social retreat. Although Thomas, who lives in a deprived neighborhood, describes it as a general observation, it shows through that this process applies above all to his own situation. It is not that he could not raise a little money to invite his neighbors, but he does not feel like it anymore. Worries and distress due to unemployment make social activities feel exhausting, which results in social isolation. It is a vicious circle of not having enough money to engage in social activities and to stay in touch with people, and on the other hand losing social contacts that could compensate for poor financial resources if necessary. In the end, there remains nothing but the anomic feeling that one is not able to do anything. Thomas is an interviewee who seems to be quite far along in this process of financial deprivation and social isolation.

Most of the other respondents try to maintain regular social activities, but face occasional limitations. Many of them mentioned the increased amount of time available for spare time activities, but these often require spending money, which is almost always scarce:

Then you have so much time that you would actually need a lot of money not to get bored. [...] If you could go to the swimming pool every day in summer, or every day, whatever, go to the amusement park, then it would be fun, right? But in the end you cannot do anything, sometimes you just sit there and wait. [...] I think it is partly very exhausting to do nothing.

(Hanna, 25)

Thus, the bias in the time–money relation in the lives of the young unemployed leads to limited opportunities regarding taking part in social activities. As Hanna explains, most spare time activities involve costs, and not going to the swimming pool or to the amusement park (one could also list cafés, pubs, movies—locations where young people usually meet) hinders the unemployed from staying in touch with their acquaintances and from getting to know new people:

Yes, that's true, you face your limits sometimes. When they say, come on, let's go out tonight, then in the end of the month you've got to count your money and say, well, that's not working out, it won't work.

(Dieter, 28)

When Dieter's friends go to the pub in the evening, he is sometimes not able to join them, and needs to stay at home from time to time. As he says, this does not really impede his friendships and will not stop them asking him every time they go out, but there is always a danger of getting detached from them in the long run. In general, the closer the friendship is, the less likely it is that financial constraints will harm it. Close friends will meet at home and avoid public places that force them to consume things if one of them cannot afford it, but this prevents the unemployed from meeting other people that are not close friends. Many of our respondents said their network of friends has shrunken during their unemployment to only a few, but very close and reliable relationships.

To impede this process of detachment from social activities, the young unemployed who have reliable contacts use their social capital, which can, to a certain extent, compensate financial constraints. While for most of our interviewees, there was the possibility of borrowing money in case of dire straits, such as a broken washing machine, some of them borrow money not only in problematic situations. For instance, Wolfram, a young unemployed person living with his unemployed father, has friends who even offer to help him out when planning social activities. This enables him to escape from the circle of social isolation and economic deprivation and to maintain his social activities:

> When my friends say, come on, we want to go to an upcoming concert or so. I say no, I don't have the money. Yeah, come on, we advance you some money and you pay it back whenever you can, or like that. So they really take care that we still can do as many things as possible together.
>
> (Wolfram, 29)

However, this kind of support is connected to several requirements. First, the friends must be *willing* to 'invest' some extra money in having Wolfram with them. As we have seen above from Dieter, this kind of support is not the rule. Depending on the friends' attitude, they may also just accept the fact that there is no money left and go without the unemployed friend. Generally speaking, this kind of support requires a contact of high quality, that is, a close and trustful relationship, and the unemployed person must be an important member of the group. Second, the friends must be *able* to spend the extra money, which means that their financial situation must be better than the one of the unemployed friend. Hence, this pattern of support occurs only among the unemployed whose friends have an income from work or a high amount of parental support.

Many of the respondents said that their friends would certainly lend them money, but they are not able to do so:

> Yes, if it's possible. But mostly, the people, no matter who, because they live on unemployment benefits as well, and then it's not possible. Maybe between the first and the fifth of the month, but after that… […] What really helps is that you babysit each others' kids sometimes, things like that. So that you can go out with your wife some time.
>
> (Jens, 28)

In networks with generally tight resources, there is hardly money left to borrow. Instead, there are other forms of social support, such as babysitting, as Jens tells us. This gives him free time to go out without spending extra money on a babysitter, but it is not a solution to the problem of consuming in public places with scarce finances. Thus, going out and meeting other people remains rare.

On the other hand, borrowing money from friends to take part in social activities implies that the unemployed must be willing to take the money from their friends or relatives. For some of them, borrowing money is a sensitive issue, and most of the respondents avoid facing such situations:

> I'm not a guy who asks, you know? Dad, do you possibly have some 20 euros or so? I don't ask. Because I think one should rather work before you scrounge from your parents, or whatever.
>
> (Halil, 24)

For Halil, asking for money is not legitimate. Because he blames himself for being unemployed, he is convinced that he alone has to bear responsibility for this situation. Not asking for money is a question of honor. For others, this issue involves feelings of shame. When, during the interview, Nicole was asked if her friends would help her out, she needed a short time to think. Then she said that they probably would, but that she would never ask them because it would be too embarrassing for her. Needless to say there is still a difference between asking for money and taking money that is offered. Halil, who would never ask for it, usually takes the money his father gives him. On the other hand, Wolfram would probably not ask his friends for money to join them.

Finally, there were two respondents that said they could live comfortably with their money and whose use of social capital goes further than borrowing money. Both of them are single mothers, both of them

receive a lot of support from their network and they are also the two most socially active of our respondents. However, the kind of support they receive is quite different. Cansu lives with her daughter in her parents' neighborhood. After splitting up with her husband, she faced mental health problems and stopped working. Now she has been unemployed for five years, but she asserts: 'I don't feel like I'm unemployed because of my family'. Her father came to Germany as a son of Turkish immigrant workers in the 1960s and was self-employed running a restaurant. With the money he earned, he acquired real estate property and now lives on the rental income. In general, the financial situation of the family is very good. The parents support Cansu's brothers, who are students, and also her:

> My furniture for instance. I have been unemployed for five years, and I got everything from my parents. For instance, holidays, three weeks, [...] my father paid it. [...] So, they support me. [...] They also go shopping for me. Well, I get round about 500 euros per month, I can also save some money.
>
> (Cansu, 28)

Cansu's parents give her in-kind support as well as extra money. Consequently, she does not have regular expenses and can use all of her money (unemployment benefits and what she earns from moonlighting) as pocket money. Further, the parents pay everything for Cansu's daughter, from everyday commodities to violin lessons. Being asked about her expenses, Cansu answers:

> Not for my daughter. If I think something is really beautiful, then I buy it for my daughter for sure. Apart from that, I don't have any expenses.
>
> (Cansu, 28)

However, Cansu knows about her privileged position. Her friends are unemployed single parents as well, but do not have anyone to support them. She tells us that she lends money to her friends almost every month. To sum up, Cansu never faces financial trouble, and therefore it is not surprising that she takes part in lots of social activities. Being asked if her circle of friends has changed since she is unemployed, she says:

> It has changed, yes. It has grown (laughs). If you have time, it gets more and more. Because before, I worked at the supermarket for eight hours, until 10 p.m., so when I was at home, it was almost 11. I couldn't do anything

then. I couldn't go anywhere. And since my unemployment this has changed, I have more friends now.

(Cansu, 28)

Thanks to the extensive support she has, there is no bias in Cansu's time–money relations. For her, not going to work means having much more time—time that can be spent with other people, friends and acquaintances, on taking part in social activities and thus getting to know even more people. Her example shows that parental support makes a big difference for an unemployed person's financial situation. However, this kind of support does not only depend on the parents' financial background, but also on their willingness to support their child. While Cansu's parents support their daughter so that she can maintain her living standards, for Hanna, who is in a similar situation, living alone with her son and coming from a wealthy family, it is quite different. Although her parents buy clothes and toys for her son, they never give her any cash:

> Certainly I can't go there and say, it's the end of the month, so I would need some 100 euros or so. Then my mother would say, no, you have to make it on your own. That doesn't work. Just as a matter of principle. [...] But of course you will lower your guard only once or twice, that you go there and ask, can you give me some money, and she says no. So you won't do that constantly.
>
> (Hanna, 25)

The interviews show that the family is always addressed first when the young unemployed are in financial trouble. If it is not possible to receive support from the family, friends help out, if they are willing and able to do so. We have already seen this from Wolfram, whose parents are unemployed as well and thus not able to support him, but whose friends make sure he can still participate in their activities. With Mary, support provided through friends and acquaintances goes even further. Mary was born in Russia and came as an au pair to Germany ten years ago. She decided to stay and opened a restaurant with her partner. After a couple of years, her son was born, and some years later they split up and closed the restaurant. She has now been unemployed for four years. Mary has very close contact with her parents and her sister and calls them every day. However, since they live in Russia, they cannot assist in her everyday life:

> It's just like, for me, because my family is so far away, then you have to rely on your friends, I'd say. [...] Yes, I have very good friends.
>
> (Mary, 31)

For Mary, the problem consists of needing to replace her missing family contacts with a dense network of friends. This will only work if the relationship is comparably close and trustful. Mary has managed to acquire such a network. Her friends differ in age as well as in their social and cultural backgrounds, and most of them have an income from work. Therefore, they can support her in different ways. Further, despite having broken up with her child's father, she has a close relationship with his family, who now serve as a 'second family' for her. Because of them, she does not need to worry about her son:

> Of course, I enjoy really very good support from the family. Moritz, I think I've bought him two T-shirts in seven years. In seven years! Otherwise he gets everything from our acquaintance, and from his grandma, and from his dad he gets everything from Nintendo to Nintendo Wii, whatever. And this is the money that normal unemployed can't afford. If I did not have this kind of support, then I don't know how it would be.
>
> (Mary, 31)

Moreover, Mary is very busy maintaining her living standards. At the weekends, when her son is at his father's place, she waits tables at a restaurant, and whenever she can she participates in public employment measures to earn some extra money. Since she cannot afford to have her own car, she has made a deal with a grandaunt of her son. The old lady lives in a retirement home, and Mary goes shopping for her, takes her to the doctor or just spends the morning with her some days a week. In return, she may use the aunt's car whenever she needs it. Further, she is always in search of things that other people do not need anymore.

> But I think, I dress very nicely, I have a great family from which I really get support, or from my sister-in-law I get a lot of things. That's like, in my home, I did not buy a single piece from my own money. Oh wait, the plants, cachepots for the plants (laughing). But then I'd say, I don't feel like poor, sort of. Yeah? Because from my mother-in-law, furniture from my mother-in-law, there a table of- and so on. And the stuff, it's actually always good. Because of that, many people say, Mary, you unemployed? On 300 euros, how do you live? I say, yeah, like this. But nobody believes that I'm unemployed.
>
> (Mary, 31)

Thanks to her extensive use of social capital, which includes quite creative cashless forms of exchange and consumption, Mary can save some

money and spend it on what is really important to her—clothes. For her, it is crucial how she dresses and that neither herself nor her home looks 'poor'. She succeeds in representing a high living standard and uses status symbols such as dresses, furniture and the car to prevent stigmatization for being unemployed. Of course, Mary, who comes from a wealthy family, has to put much more effort into not feeling poor than other unemployed who are less 'sophisticated'. To put it bluntly, Thomas' daughter needs a bottle of toffee-flavored milk to be socially accepted, while Mary's son needs a Nintendo Wii. How the unemployed perceive their financial situation depends to a large extent on the living standards they are accustomed to:

> Sure, I don't talk about that to anyone, but it's definitely hard for me, because I've grown up really differently. I really got everything when I was a kid. And when I wanted to have one pair of trousers, I got two instead. And when I wanted to have some shoes, I got them, even though the price was 200 Marks. So there was no 'No'. And if Mum said no, because she couldn't, then Daddy said yes. And we used to go on holidays two or three times a year or so. Yeah, something like that. I'm just—I just need to adapt, like going on holidays, now that's just impossible.
>
> (Hanna, 25)

For Hanna, who grew up in a middle-class family with a strong attachment to consumption and leisure activities, her situation forces her to cut back significantly more than, for instance, Wolfram, who grew up in a working-class family, whose parents were temporarily unemployed and who is thus accustomed to several saving strategies. For him, unemployment is not as much connected with a loss of social status, and thus he does not have to invest much work in symbolic status attainment. Instead, he can use his social capital for social activities. Accordingly, not only parental social class but also the living standards of the social network is an important reference point. If friends and acquaintances have a costly lifestyle, the unemployed are more likely to get support from them, but the jobless also need to invest more money into social activities and into consumption so that they do not get detached from their network. As the interviews have shown, if the young unemployed have children, more social capital needs to be acquired to stay engaged in social activities, because for all parents interviewed the most important thing is preventing their children from stigmatization. Otherwise, the parents will comprise in order to spend their money on things their children need to evade exclusion.

To conclude, social capital seems to be the best means to combat financial hardship. It may appear tautological to argue that lacking social capital results in social isolation. But, indeed, it refers to the vicious circle mentioned at the beginning of this section. Reliable contacts to friends and acquaintances, and sometimes family members, are not only able to compensate for the lack of money, but also provide opportunities to engage in social activities. At one end of the spectrum there is Thomas, who no longer has friends nor frequent contact with neighbors and family members, living with his wife isolated from the outside world. Missing help and support furthers their social retreat. At the other end of the spectrum there are Cansu and Mary, relying on a large amount of social capital which helps them to maintain and even expand their social networks. Most of the young unemployed are located somewhere in the middle, where a moderate use of social capital helps them not only to cope with financial troubles but also to maintain an occasional engagement in social activities and thus to maintain the most important of their social contacts. But social capital does not only work on a mere financial or material basis, it has also a symbolic dimension. Financial resources compensated through social relations can also help prevent stigmatization for being poor. Mary, for instance, and also other respondents, say they spend most of their remaining money on clothes instead of other things because it is important for them not to 'look unemployed'. Especially for the young unemployed it seems to be important to achieve certain status symbols that are required among their friends and acquaintances. This is even more important if the friends have an income from work and can afford more than the least expensive things. The young unemployed need to invest extra money to be or to feel socially accepted and to maintain their group memberships, which grant them access to other important resources. Further, parental class seems to strongly influence social capital in terms of availability of financial support as well as in terms of the living standard it is used to maintain.

STIGMA AND JUSTIFICATIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In addition to financial issues, unemployment as a social status can also impede social networking. Some of the respondents say they are confronted with prejudice in their everyday life. According to some notions, unemployment is considered as an illegitimate practice and thus the label 'unemployed' is a stigma that goes along with social devaluation,

excluding unemployed people from the group of 'normal workers'. There are three potential sources of stigma for the young unemployed: personal contacts, public encounters and media comments. Having been asked if he feels that people treat him differently because of his unemployment, a respondent says:

> Well, I have that feeling, yes. When this—I try to avoid this issue because I'm ashamed of it, but when the issue is raised, then you feel that there's a distance somehow. So you feel this, that you're not accepted or so.
>
> (Patrick, 28)

Even though people do not devalue the unemployed person explicitly, according to the perception of the unemployed, other people tend to express a certain suspicion by creating distance. This may lead to feelings of shame for being unemployed and insecurity with getting in contact with new people. The young mother Nicole said the stigma of being unemployed makes it hard to get to know people and find new friends, for example in her handball team, where she feels distance from her team members:

> I noticed that when I played handball. […] When I was in my handball team and we talked about it, I noticed that. Even though they said, we don't talk about you, but about the others, those who live on welfare and don't want to work.
>
> (Nicole, 30)

Even if judgments and prejudices are not communicated outwardly, the experience of distance and prejudice about unemployed people in general leads the young unemployed to understand the distance related to their unemployment as prejudice against their own person. The stigma of being unemployed always hangs in the air when people are around who are not yet known and trusted. But even among established relationships such as friends and family members, judgments about unemployment can create a friction.

> Yes, with my siblings. That's why we have so little contact, because they don't even see me as a person. It's only about, she started thousand things, she quit thousand things, she can't do it, she doesn't achieve anything, she's a failure. And they make me feel it. My opinion doesn't count, that's a matter of principle. Not at all. […] It's just unfair.
>
> (Hanna, 25)

For Hanna's siblings, who all have employment and never been unemployed, their sister's situation is her own fault, which degrades her as a person. Hanna feels this disrespect so strongly that she has cut down contact with them to a minimum. In this case, the stigma of unemployment does not impede social networking, but rather destroys an existing network. Others reported such a process with friends, acquaintances and more distant family members, inducing the young unemployed to withdraw from them and rely on the contacts that do not involve stigma.

Apart from personal contacts, some of the young unemployed reported being stigmatized for being unemployed in public encounters. Asked about his experience with the PES, Wolfram says:

> There you really feel like a third-class person, how they treat you. Once an official asked me: 'Well, how about you search for a job?' I had a huge pile of applications with me, which employers had returned to me. 'Well, that's what they all say.'
>
> (Wolfram, 29)

In this example, Wolfram is confronted with judgments about unemployment at the PES, the place where unemployment is processed. In an ironic manner, his placement officer advises Wolfram to look for a job, and when Wolfram shows his applications to prove that he is already extensively looking for work, the clerk makes a statement which reveals that he does not believe him. By doing so, the placement officer imputes an unwillingness to work to Wolfram and further doubts his credibility, making Wolfram feel not only to be a second-class but even a third-class person. Many of the respondents reported similar incidents at the PES, feeling they were treated disrespectfully by their placement officers. However, they face such situations not only within the PES:

> I was on my way home from the unemployment benefit office, and some ticket inspector freak from KVB [public transportation services] was like, he thought I couldn't hear it, he was like, about me: 'Look at this lowlife, he has collected his dole again.'
>
> (Wolfram, 29)

In this episode, the ticket inspector identifies Wolfram as a PES client and disrespectfully comments on this insight. He equates going to the PES with 'living on the dole', which makes Wolfram a 'lowlife'. And

even beyond such personal encounters, stigmatization occurs in an indirect way, as the following example illustrates. Being asked whether he ever faced prejudice for being unemployed, Thomas answers: 'No, not yet. No.' This is when his wife harshly interrupts the interview:

> Don't you watch TV? Only three months ago, we were in a stew about, because, all of the unemployed are boozers and things like that, I mean these are prejudices, aren't they?
>
> (Thomas' wife, 25)

For Thomas' wife, disrespectful or judgmental media releases mean that she faces prejudice for her situation. When Thomas justifies his previous answer and explains that he had understood the question being about personal contact, she says: 'To me, this is personal.' In this respect, Thomas' wife is not an exception. When asked about prejudice, many respondents mentioned the media and how stereotypes about the unemployed are spread.

Even though such public encounters and media reports do not affect the social relations of the unemployed directly, they make the unemployed aware that they are not respected in public. They belong to a socially unaccepted group, and when they are in contact with other people they have to position themselves towards it. All of these sources of stigma, whether in direct contacts or mediated through television or newspapers, have in common that they locate the reason for unemployment in negative attributes of the unemployed person. As a result, unemployment appears to be a mere question of willingness or unwillingness to work, or at least personal weakness. This notion was implicitly present in most of the interviews, in the sense that long-term unemployment is an issue that has to be explained, and it led the respondents to offer justifications for their unemployment. This implicit need for justification also shines through the accounts of their daily routines.

As mentioned in the previous section, Mary is someone who has a lot of social contacts, and her description of the structure of her day shows that she is busy all the time. She gets up at seven, calls her sister in Russia, takes her son to school:

> Yeah, and then, clean up, go shopping, cook, yes, go with friends to the city center sometimes, or currently I'm at the PES very frequently because of this internship [...]. Yeah, then I pick the child up, then I have to bring

him to his sports, on Mondays we have gymnastics, on Wednesdays we have handball, on Thursdays we have chess and so on. That's, yes, in the evening, then you're—At six we are mostly at home, when all this sports is over, yeah, at ten I go to bed, read a book, yeah.

(Mary, 31)

This passage shows that caring for a child can fill the whole day. In the mornings, when her son is at school, Mary has time to run her errands and sometimes to socialize with friends, and the rest of her time is devoted to her son. Mary is so busy that she does not mention their daily meals, while other respondents put much emphasis on this because the meals give their days a structure. For Mary, parenthood is a kind of project that gives her life a purpose. Using 'we' when talking about her son's sports activities, she demonstrates that she is highly involved in them. As a result, her current situation does not leave room for full-time employment. However, Mary implicitly explains that she is indeed not passive when it comes to work: she does work at the weekends, is busy organizing internships, employment policy measures and applying for part-time jobs. Therefore, she has a convincing argument to justify her situation and states that she is neither unwilling nor lazy. Mary says she does not 'feel unemployed' and that she never faces prejudice for her employment status in her everyday life. Concerning stigmatizing media reports, it is easy for her to detach from passive, unwilling and lazy unemployed people, stating that her situation is completely different. Accordingly, Mary embraces workfare policies and positions herself beyond the side of 'the unemployed'.

Cansu is in a similar situation, living alone with her daughter who is also in elementary school. She cares for her daughter and her home, runs her errands, meets family members and friends every day and helps out in her uncle's family business by the hour. But unlike Mary, her commitment to the labor market is significantly weaker. Working full time is not yet an option, and she is not interested in a regular part-time employment either because she thinks it would not pay her to do so. Cansu does not make attempts to illustrate her commitment to looking for a job. In spite of that, she does not experience stigma. Instead, she answers: 'No. Everyone is unemployed. Nobody has a job.' In her social network, being unemployed seems to be a rule and is thus not questioned. Contrary to the present discourse, Cansu locates the reason for her unemployment in the economy, implying that she has nothing to be blamed for. However, the strategy of externalizing unemployment does not work for everyone. Having in mind

the reactions of Hanna's siblings to her unemployment, they do not seem to be interested in general unemployment rates. For Hanna, who is also a single mother, with a pre-school son, justifying her unemployment with her parenthood does not work:

> At some point, you think that you're dumb. Or you stultify after a while, if you don't find any tasks to fulfill any more. It's all about—like anyone can do that. Anyone can wash the dishes, and anyone can peg out washing, anyone can iron. But the thing that characterizes you as an individual person, that's your vocation. And if you don't have that, there is a lot missing. So, a lot for yourself.
>
> (Hanna, 25)

For her, the role of the housekeeper is not enough. Even if she was busy all day and had enough money to live comfortably, she would still miss something. In contrast to Mary, who defines herself as a mother in the first instance and who is always looking for work she can integrate into her schedule, Hanna misses having a vocation, which is important for her identity. Hence, single motherhood is not always enough to justify unemployment. It works only in combination with a specific conception of parenthood, which, in the case of the sample used for the present study, is a rather traditional concept of female work, either combined with many efforts to be as active in the labor market as possible (Mary) or with an externalization of unemployment as a structural problem (Cansu).

Young unemployed people who are not single parents do not have such convincing arguments to justify their situation. Dieter, who is single and lives alone, describes his day as follows:

> Eh, yeah. Get up, have breakfast, then I sit down at the computer and write applications, so I look for job offers and apply for them. Yeah, and then, read the newspaper, and (laughing) actually that's nearly all. That's nearly all, I'm afraid.
>
> (Dieter, 28)

When Dieter talks about his day, he stumbles ('eh') and laughs. This marks that for him it is embarrassing to have nothing to do. This reaction occurred among many other interviewees as well. In the interview situation, they seemed to feel ashamed for their lack of activities. There is not enough purposeful activity in their daily routines to justify their unemployment. Nevertheless, even Dieter positions himself in the discourse

about unemployment by recounting his activities. Like an employed person, Dieter gets up in the morning, has breakfast and then turns on his computer in order to work—except that, as an unemployed person, his work consists of finding employment. In his narration, Dieter makes clear that he is not unwilling to work, he is not lazy, does not sleep long and is really trying hard to find employment. In doing so, he also detaches himself from the notion of those who are happy to be unemployed. Such implicit statements can be found in almost every interview. Even Cansu, who has a convincing justification of her unemployment and refuses to see it as an individual problem, assured the interviewer that she wants to work, compared to some others who do not. This discourse seems to be present to a large extent among the young unemployed, who assure others that they are the 'good' unemployed, willing to get a job. This helps them to prevent stigma to a certain extent, but as the example of Nicole has shown, even if people say 'we know you're different, we don't talk about you', there remains a certain distance that complicates socializing with others.

To conclude, there are several situations in which the young unemployed may encounter stigma in their everyday lives: personal contacts, such as family members, friends, acquaintances and new people; situations in public, such as local authorities and public places; and media reports, which reproduce stereotypes about the unemployed. While personal contacts sometimes erode or do not turn into good relationships, the other forms of stigma affect socializing indirectly. The awareness that one is not fully accepted by other people makes some of the young unemployed more cautious with their social contacts. The extent to which they perceive stigma depends on how they justify their unemployment. Single motherhood seems to be the most promising way of justification. Since there was no single father in the sample, it is not clear to what extent these findings can be generalized to both sexes. However, single motherhood is not a justification per se. It works only if it goes alongside a traditional understanding of female work that does not comprise the idea of having a vocation. Moreover, as can be seen from the examples provided, single motherhood needs to be combined with other forms of justification, such as regular attempts to find employment or an externalization of unemployment, considering it a structural and not a personal problem. The latter strategy seems to work best for people who are in social networks of many other unemployed, when unemployment is not a single case but normal, and among people who understand the situation

from their own experience. The sample of this study does not provide other successful justification strategies besides single motherhood, but this does not mean that it is the only one. However, having said that, social contacts with other unemployed people strongly decreases the risk of being stigmatized, even if in such networks the young people need to justify their unemployment to themselves. As the example of Thomas' wife illustrates, even if they live among other unemployed people and do not face stigma in personal contacts, they witness the public discourse about unemployment through the media and realize their connection to a socially unaccepted group. In the interviews, to a certain extent, all of the young unemployed felt the urge to position themselves towards the individualizing discourse about unemployment, stating that they are on the side of the 'good' unemployed.

Discussion: Class, Gender and the Network's Employment Status

The empirical analysis has shown that the young unemployed cope with their situations in different ways, but did not discuss these variations systematically. Social contacts and activities depend, to a certain degree, on the availability of financial resources as well as on the experience of stigma. Social capital as well as justifications about unemployment are used as a solution to evade financial hardship and stigma. The remaining question is which factors have an impact on social capital and perceived stigma. What about the 'silent structures' (Edwards and Weller 2010) that shape the young people's experience, their trajectories and identities?

Regarding social capital, social class and, to a smaller extent, gender seem to be important determinants. The interviews corroborate findings from earlier studies arguing that parental support is usually addressed first (Álvaro and Garrido 2005) and show that friends are asked if the family is not able to help out. As a result, the extent to which the unemployed can rely on support depends largely on the financial resources of the family. Therefore, it is obvious that parental class has an important impact on the availability of social capital and thus the experience of unemployment. It also seems to influence the subjective experience of the financial situation. The living standards one has grown up with, and to a smaller amount the financial power of friends and acquaintances, serve as a reference point for assessing one's situation. The unemployed

who have not grown up in a wealthy family tend to cope better with a scarce budget, while at the same time they are less likely to be supported by their parents. On the other hand, young unemployed people from the middle class have more social capital and invest more work in maintaining a certain living standard, including opportunities to participate in more social activities. Previous research has shown that under certain circumstances the middle class cope better with unemployment than the working class (Little 1976), and from the perspective of social capital this analysis affirms this argument. As to gender, there are striking differences in the sample, and women seem to be much more active in accumulating social capital than men, which was also found in previous research (Frydenberg and Lewis 1991; Julkunen 2001). These differences are particularly strong in young parents. On the one hand there are very busy and creative mothers and on the other hand there are rather passive and resigned family men. Nevertheless, these findings must not be generalized without caution, because the sample is quite biased with regard to the respondents' social backgrounds. While the men had on average lower educational degrees and came from working-class families, mothers, and especially single mothers, were less disadvantaged. They had higher educational degrees and came more often from middle-class families. The gender effect may thus be a hidden class effect. But, in addition, it shows that the German labor market is still less accessible for young (single) mothers even though they have good qualifications.

Stigma, in contrast, seems to depend on other structural factors. Social class does not seem to matter here; at least, there was not a clear pattern. However, as described in the empirical section, the only successful justification was single motherhood, which points to gender as the main determinant. Earlier studies found ambivalent results concerning the question whether women cope better with unemployment than men (see Donovan and Oddy 1982; Julkunen 2001), but parenting of small children may, for some women, ease the problem of being unemployed (Julkunen and Malmberg-Heimonen 2005; Russell and Barbieri 2000). The sample of this study confirms these results, showing that for some women, single motherhood is an apt justification for being unemployed and may prevent stigma. This justification strategy works if it is combined with other justifications such as willingness and activity or externalization, and if the unemployed mother has a traditional understanding of female work beyond the concept of having a vocation. Only the combination

of these various aspects prevents women from stigmatization. A second factor influencing the experience of stigma seems to be the employment status of the social network. Stigmatization through other people in situations of personal contact occurs mostly among unemployed persons with social networks consisting of people who are in paid work. Earlier studies (Clark and Oswald 1994; Donovan and Oddy 1982; Roberts 1983) found similar tendencies for the young unemployed, leading to the assumption that living in an environment consisting of mostly unemployed people could reduce such experience and have positive effects on coping with it. However, as the discourse stigmatizing the unemployed is so present in the public, even unemployed communities cannot completely evade it and are urged take position to it as well.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the relationship between long-term unemployment and social contacts is rather complex and depends on various different conditions. While work-related social contacts obviously break away, the nuclear family turned out to be the most robust social network, which is rather rarely affected by unemployment. The same holds true for close friends in most of the cases, but more distant contacts such as less close friends, neighbors and acquaintances are at higher risk of declining. This process goes along with two major negative effects of unemployment: financial hardship on the one hand and stigma on the other. While financial hardship limits social activities with friends, family networks seem to be more prone to stigma. In addition, both of these obstacles may complicate meeting new people and are in some cases likely to result in social retreat. However, long-term unemployment does not necessarily lead to social isolation. Most of the young unemployed fear this process and work on counteracting it. They use social capital to compensate their financial hardship to a certain degree, such as parental support, borrowing money and sometimes even creative non-monetary forms of exchange. The more and better social relationships they have and the more resources available within the network, the easier it is for the young unemployed to maintain social activities and stay in touch with the outside world. Concerning stigma, the picture is more complex. The young unemployed may experience stigma either through personal contacts, public encounters or the

media. Even those who are only exposed to indirect sources of stigmatization need convincing justifications of their unemployment for themselves. Ambitious parenting by single mothers seems to be the most successful form of such justification, especially in combination with either high job search activity or an externalization of unemployment, considering it as a structural and not a personal problem. However, in the sample of this study, good justification strategies go along with a high amount of social contacts. One may thus hypothesize that similar to the social capital dimension, a high number and frequency of social contacts might impede the experience of stigma, while social isolation increases the sensitivity to stigma. To expose the indirect effects of stigma on social relations as well as the question about what intensifies or relaxes the experience of stigma, further investigation is needed.

In general, this study points to two aspects that seem to be specific to the German case. First, as the section on social capital has shown, the financial situation of the unemployed seems to be the most important aspect that influences the experience of unemployment in general and social activity in particular. The amount of unemployment benefits for young long-term unemployed is the same for everyone in general (adapted to the household situation) and quite low. However, severe financial hardship, described as 'struggle for survival', seems to apply only to single cases. Most of the young unemployed seem to succeed in coping with their tight budget, although this includes the need to cut expenses on consumption, thereby facing noticeable constraints in social activities with middle-class members if not compensated through social capital. The availability of social capital seems to be strongly connected to parental class. Secondly, the young unemployed in Germany experience being unemployed and living on welfare as a stigma. Prejudice about the unemployed not only makes them aware that they conflict with socially accepted norms and values but may also contribute to social retreat. Even if prejudice is not faced within personal networks, stigmatizing media discourses about the unemployed are so prominent that they can hardly be eluded. Stigmatization seems to affect all of the young unemployed to a certain extent. As Giazitzoglu (2014) described, people categorize the unemployed into two groups. On the one hand, there are the good and deserving ones, who are considered to be victims of the economy and work hard on becoming re-employed. About them, the public is compassionate. On the other hand, there are

the lazy and undeserving ones, who face much hate in public opinion. In the interviews this study is based on, it was obvious that the respondents put much work into emphasizing that they distinguish themselves as the deserving unemployed rather than the lazy ones, and thereby perpetuate the stigmatizing discourse about the unemployed.

APPENDIX 1

Table 3.1 List of interviews

Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Occupation according to training	Last occupation	Civil state	House-hold members	Brothers and Sisters	Nationality	Place of birth	Arrival in Germany
Mary	F	31	University diploma	Assistant director	Waitress	Single	1 child	1	Russian	Russia	23 years old
Thomas	M	32	Compulsory school, apprenticeship	Roofer	Store detective	Married	Wife, 3 children	1	German	Cologne, Germany	
Daniel	M	20	Not completed compulsory school	None	Unskilled worker in car production	In a relationship	Mother, sister, fiancée	1	German	Cologne, Germany	
Hanna	F	25	Lower level secondary education	None	Unfinished apprenticeship in car dealership	Single	1 child	3	German	Cologne, Germany	
Wolfram	M	30	Compulsory school	None	Temporary work for different employers	In a relationship	Father	None	German	Cologne, Germany	
Nicole	F	30	Upper level secondary education	Actress	Internship in media company	Married	Husband, 1 child	3	German	Cameroon	9 years old
Cansu	F	28	Compulsory school	None	Cashier in department store	Single	1 child	2	Turkish	Cologne, Germany	
Jens	M	28	Compulsory school	Roofer, unfinished	Security guard (employment measure)	In a relationship	Partner, 2 children	2	German	Cologne, Germany	
Dieter	M	28	Lower level secondary education, apprenticeship	Precision engineer; paramedic and disinfector	Paramedic	Single	None	1	German	Cologne, Germany	

Table 3.1 (continued)

Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Occupation according to training	Last occupation	Civil state	House-hold members	Brothers and Sisters	Nationality	Place of birth	Arrival in Germany
Kerstin	F	34	Not completed compulsory school	None	Nursing (employment measure)	In a relationship	2 children	2	German	Cologne, Germany	
Selina	F	24	Lower level secondary education, apprenticeship	Dental assistant	Dental assistant	In a relationship	2 children	None	Cameroonian	Cameroon	16 years old
Patrick	M	28	Compulsory school	None	Internship in night nursery	Single	Mother, father	1	German	Cologne, Germany	
Janine	F	23	Not completed compulsory school	None	Helper in cash and carry wholesale	Single	Mother	2	German	Cologne, Germany	
Tessa	F	24	Not completed compulsory school	None	Sewing shop (employment measure)	Single	Supportive housing	3	German	Cologne, Germany	
Esma	F	23	Lower level secondary education, training	Security guard	Security guard	Single	Grandmother, grandfather	None	German	Cologne, Germany	
Peter	M	21	Compulsory school	Salesman, unfinished	Temporary work for different employers	In a relationship	Mother, father, partner	10	German	Cologne, Germany	
Marvin	M	20	Compulsory school	None	Temporary work for different employers	In a relationship	Partner, 1 child	2	German	Cologne, Germany	
David	M	24	Upper level secondary education	None	Helper in insurance company	Single	None	None	German	Ostwestfalen-Lippe, Germany	
Halil	M	24	Compulsory school, apprenticeship	Warehouse logistics operator	Warehouse logistics	Single	Mother, father, brother	1	Turkish	Cologne, Germany	

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Long-Term Unemployed Youth in Switzerland: Coping with Exclusion from the Labor Market in a Country with Low Unemployment

Jasmine Lorenzini and Marco Giugni

INTRODUCTION

As the Great Recession unfolds in Europe, unemployment—and, more strongly, youth unemployment—is a major concern for political actors and citizens alike. In many countries, the number of persons who are unemployed is seen as the main problem. However, the problems and difficulties related to unemployment—and, more specifically, to youth unemployment—cannot be reduced to an assessment of the number of unemployed. In this chapter, we propose to highlight the negative lived experiences of long-term unemployed youth in a context of low youth unemployment.

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In so doing, we show that unemployment is a disruptive life event for young people and that it should be taken seriously even when the numbers are not alarmingly high as in the case of Switzerland, but also in other European countries such as Austria, the Netherlands, and some Nordic countries.

Unlike other European countries, especially in the south of Europe, Switzerland is blessed with a notoriously low unemployment rate. In 2014, the average unemployment rate equaled 4.5 percent of the labor force, a much lower level than in countries such as France (10.3 percent) and Italy (12.7 percent), let alone Spain (24.4 percent), to name a few examples.[1] The differences are even larger when it comes to youth unemployment, which is the main focus of this book: Youth unemployment is at 8.6 percent in Switzerland compared to much higher figures in the same three other countries (23.2 percent in France, 42.7 percent in Italy, and 53.2 percent in Spain).[2]

Yet things are perhaps not as idyllic as they seem. Of course, compared to the countries mentioned above and also compared to other European countries, Switzerland remains an 'employment heaven'. With closer scrutiny, however, we find a matter of concern. To begin with, a youth unemployment rate of 8.6 percent may be an acceptable figure in comparative perspective, but nonetheless it does represent a substantial number of people who are excluded from the labor market; and, as we will argue throughout this chapter, the situation experienced by these youngsters cannot be reduced to a question of exclusion from paid employment, but the analysis should be broadened to embrace their lived experiences in terms of social inclusion and personal well-being. In addition, it is important to consider that, for those who are facing unemployment, the presence or absence of many others sharing the same situation may be both negative and positive. In a context of high unemployment, the labor market prospects may be very negative. However, the attribution of blame rests not only on the individual but also on some cyclical and contextual factors. In addition, the unemployed are not alone in this situation, which might reduce the social isolation and the psychological burden related to long-term unemployment, while in a context of low unemployment the employment prospects may appear more favorable as there are jobs in the labor market, but at the same time the unemployed may feel very isolated in their situation of 'not being able to find a job'.

We investigate the social and personal consequences of long-term unemployment for young people in Geneva, the Swiss city with the highest unemployment rate. Nevertheless, this remains quite low compared to

other countries, allowing us to assess the negative consequences of youth long-term unemployment in a context of low unemployment. We contend that the negative consequences of being unemployed—most notably in terms of psychological effects such as stress, loss of confidence or even depression, or in terms of social isolation and exclusion—may impact individuals struck by unemployment, even more strongly so when unemployment is low and therefore more likely to be perceived as a personal failure. Our analysis aims to answer two main research questions: How is unemployment experienced by youth who are struck by it in a durable fashion? More specifically, we propose to analyze the different kinds of difficulties long-term unemployed youth face in terms of their financial, social, and personal situation. Thus, how does unemployment relate to social exclusion and personal well-being? In addition, we propose to explore the importance of significant others in coping with these difficulties. Thus, what are the coping strategies developed by long-term unemployed youth to deal with their situation? As we will try to show, these two questions are closely linked, as the personal experience of being unemployed and the dynamics of social exclusion or inclusion reinforce each other.

The chapter is based on 20 face-to-face interviews with young long-term unemployed living in Geneva. They are aged 18 to 34 years old and have been looking for jobs for one year or more. The in-depth interviews included questions about their employment involvement, unemployment situations, financial situations, relationship to the unemployment office, family and social lives, political lives, well-being, and plans for the future. We tried to understand what meanings they gave to their specific employment situation and how they were dealing with those specific situations.

We conducted the interviews between spring 2010 and winter 2010–2011. The interviewees were selected from those who had responded to a survey carried out in the research project. Out of the approximately 200 youngsters who approved of being contacted again, we selected 22 of them, taking into account, to the greatest extent possible, age and gender quotas. In the end, we have quite a heterogeneous sample of young unemployed, not only in terms of age and gender but also in terms of family situation, education level, and nationality. Appendix 1 shows the full list of interviewees and their social characteristics.

The chapter is a descriptive analysis that presents the richness of the material and the central concepts emerging through qualitative analysis, which borrowed some analytic procedures from grounded theory research design. More specifically, for the analysis we combined approaches developed for

grounded analysis by Charmaz (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). We started with a micro-coding of the first five interviews, which implies a line-by-line analysis of the interview transcript. This permitted us to see the main topics emerging from the field material and to compute a list of the codes that would be used for the analysis of the 20 interviews. Based on this list of codes, we coded all of the interviews one by one while at the same time writing memos that helped us to understand how the interviewees experienced their unemployment and how the different concepts mobilized were combined. These memos served as the basis for the common analysis of the 20 interviews. We confronted them in order to see the mechanisms that we were trying to understand.

The remainder of the chapter unfolds as follows. First, we address our interviewees' understandings of the meaning of unemployment. Then we move on to the problems they face related to their unemployment and how they cope with these difficulties. These contribute to explaining how the lived experiences of unemployment are related to processes of social marginalization.[3] We conclude with a discussion of the role of significant others in offering support—but sometimes failing to do so—to the long-term unemployed youth.

The Meaning of Unemployment

A minimal definition of unemployment rests on the idea that unemployed people lack a paid job (Demazière 1995). To this, we should add that they are searching for a job in order to distinguish them from inactive persons. We use this core element in the definition of unemployment to understand more specifically what unemployment means for the young long-term unemployed whom we interviewed. Hence, we focus on how they perceive the differences between having a job and its absence. What does it mean for them to be employed and unemployed? This is an important starting point before we analyze the consequences of long-term unemployment as it gives more substance to the idea that unemployment implies that something is missing and offers a personal understanding of what the interviewees see as missing at a given stage of their lives. It also shows how they qualify the specific situation in which they are living, namely the lack of a paid job. These definitions vary from one unemployed person to the next, but some core elements emerge.

Most of the long-term unemployed we interviewed have already had a job; only the youngest, Theo and Juliette, have never had one. However,

they all have an idea of what it means to have a job. The young unemployed consider having a job to be very important, as we can see in the comments they made about what a job represents for them: 'Do like everybody—have a job, a life' (Theo, 18); 'having a day like everyone else' (Norbert, 22); '[Work] represents, um, well, life, normality, a normal life' (Sonia, 27). These quotes show the importance of having a job. Employment is a central element of life in our society; it is considered an element that defines normality, in the interviewees' words, or we could say conformity with dominant trends in society. In fact, even more than having a regular day like everyone else, more than being normal, 'having a job means we exist' (Xenon, 34). Having a job is an essential element of being a member of our society; as Juliette says, 'Here, if we want to be somebody, we have to have a job' (Juliette, 20).

Hence, the absence of a job entails many other lacks, apart from employment and earnings, which can be psychological or social. In fact, the analysis of the interview shows that a job represents not only a goal in itself but also aspirations toward important elements of having a job, such as normality, social contacts with colleagues or with clients depending on the job one is doing, contributing to society, good health and the financial independence that can sustain a social life. Employment and the personal and social benefits related to it are understood as a whole:

> Work is health; work is good for your spirits. Being able to work every morning, get up, do something, it is very important. It is enhancive for a person; at least it's the case for me.
>
> (Kamelia, 31)

Thus, employment represents more than a source of income; it is a source of social status which brings both economic independence and social recognition. In the case of youth, it also appears to be related to the transition to adulthood. Indeed, employment, as well as the often associated financial and housing independence, are key elements in the steps leading to becoming an adult (Van de Velde 2008). The words of the long-term unemployed youth we interviewed highlight the idea that the lack of a paid job delays their transition to adulthood. The importance of employment not only in becoming but also in being considered an adult may be more strongly associated with employment in a context of low youth unemployment as other young people around them all have jobs, while in contexts of high youth unemployment having a job may be

less strongly associated with the transition to adulthood. More specifically, in some high-unemployment countries, for example Italy, lacking employment may hinder multiple steps in the process of becoming an adult as it often results in limited financial independence because of the lack of unemployment benefits for youth and also because one has to live with one's parents (Rusconi 2004).

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT: A TALE OF SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION?

In this section, we address the impact of the lived experience of unemployment on social marginalization. The lived experience of unemployment is the daily confrontation with the lack of a paid job which can affect one's financial, personal, or social situation to a varying extent, depending on how unemployed youth make sense of their current situation of unemployment and how much emphasis they give to different dimensions of their lives. We consider five main aspects of the lived experience of unemployment: financial difficulties and worries, personal well-being, discrimination and stigmatization, social life, and daily structure. These five dimensions are derived from the interviews. Yet they are similar to those identified by Jahoda et al. (2002 [1933]) in their seminal study of the unemployed in Marienthal. They showed that the experience of unemployment is related to a decrease in social contacts, a lack of participation in collective aims, the absence of an acceptable status and the absence of regular activities. Although many of these aspects have been analyzed for the unemployed, few studies have specifically addressed the experience of unemployed youth (Hammer 2003), let alone long-term unemployed youth. Since all these aspects are important in order to understand how, if at all, the process of social marginalization takes place, we discuss them sequentially before we bring them together in the discussion of social marginalization.

Financial Difficulties and Worries

Financial difficulties and worries were a predominant theme in the interviews. As we mentioned above, the Swiss context is characterized by a low level of unemployment and also of youth unemployment. Another important characteristic of the context at hand is the generosity of the welfare state. The Swiss welfare state is sometimes viewed as pertaining

to the residual or the liberal regimes (Armingeon 2001). However, in the last decades the adoption of new welfare policies has enhanced the social protection it offers and made it more comparable to other western European Bismarckian regimes (Bonoli 1997). In fact, the Swiss unemployment scheme was introduced only in the early 1980s; yet it offers a broad coverage—including to youth who have not contributed—and generous benefits (Champion 2011). Unemployment benefits replace between 70 and 80 percent of one's previous wages, and most of the youngsters we interviewed benefit from it. Nevertheless, they face financial difficulties that may be related to their low reference wage (20 or 30 percent loss on a low income may still be considerable) or because of the length of their unemployment and the use of all their savings during the period of unemployment.

A number of studies have analyzed the effects of unemployment on financial hardship, pointing at its contribution to poverty (Gallie et al. 2000; Hauser and Nolan 2000). Our main concern here will be on the young unemployed's perceptions of the financial situation they face and what this implies for their daily lives. Importantly, unemployed youth have to cope with a limited amount of money to pay for their basic needs such as housing and food, but also such bills as insurances and telecommunications. They have little extra money for their hobbies or other social activities. The question we address below is the following: What is seen as especially difficult for them?

> Well, the negative—it's your situation. It's, um, you have no job, you're not able to find one, you have no money, that's it, you know; anyway, in the end, it's the money. Yeah, it's clear cut, yeah.
>
> (Xenon, 34)

A low income means one needs to calculate every expense and try to find solutions for reducing them: finding cheaper food, avoiding social activities, such as going out with friends for drinks, giving up hobbies or finding alternatives. Although they always have to think about their financial restrictions and spend as little money as possible, they are quite clear that they do not miss anything vital. For the younger unemployed whom we interviewed, they are still living with their parents and thus have their basic needs covered by their families (housing and food at least). More generally, all of them have housing and food, and most of them also have people to whom they can turn in case they need some

financial help, if they need to borrow money to finish the month or in order to pay unexpected expenses. Yet some aspects make the financial situation more difficult to bear. In particular, having children increases the amount of money needed, but also fosters financial worries as children make demands in an effort to acquire the types of material goods their friends have.

The opportunities to receive financial support may be related to the fact that they live in a context of low unemployment and that they are young. First, the context of overall low unemployment means that they can turn to their family for help and that they are not part of families or communities plagued by unemployment where no one can help and support others financially. Secondly, being young allows the receiving of help from family, yet it hinders their financial independence. The unemployed rely on their families, and sometimes on close friends, to help them to pay for their living, and this is difficult to bear, as Seni often repeats in her interview: 'They pay for my life'. This includes not only basic needs but also social activities. Even if friends are willing to offer drinks and invite them out, the young unemployed feel ashamed and are unable to enjoy their nights out if they are invited. Hence, they prefer to stay at home or do other activities that are free.

Considering that unemployed youth stress that they are not confronted with extreme financial hardship and that they are able to find financial assistance, it is important to note that in Geneva youth unemployment does not result in poverty. Nonetheless, financial difficulties have detrimental consequences for their personal well-being and their social inclusion. Financial worries and shame constitute a mental burden caused by the lack of money to pay for one's expenses. Importantly, long-term unemployment results in psychological distress that hinders personal well-being (see Ervasti and Venetoklis 2010 for a discussion of the relationship between financial worries and mental health). This relates to studies on the non-pecuniary cost of unemployment (Winkelmann and Winkelmann 1998). The non-pecuniary costs refer to health, mental well-being, and sometimes happiness. Previous research shows that these non-pecuniary consequences of unemployment may be even more important than the pecuniary ones, which calls for attention to be placed on this additional dimension. The other major consequence of reduced income is a limited budget for social activities—either hobbies or social contacts. We discuss both aspects in detail in the next two sections.

Personal Well-Being

We use the term personal well-being to refer to the multiple aspects of one's psychological well-being, mental health, and more generally satisfaction with one's life which the long-term unemployed mentioned during the interviews. Previous research has shown the importance of unemployment's consequences for personal well-being (Clark and Oswald 1994; Fergusson et al. 2001; Goldsmith et al. 1996; Hammer 2000). We mentioned above the importance of financial worries. However, they are not the only source of distress negatively affecting unemployed personal well-being (Ervasti and Venetoklis 2010). Indeed, unemployed people are less satisfied with their lives (Warr 1999; Whelan and McGinnity 2000; Winkelmann and Winkelmann 1998). They also face risks of depression, stress, and harassment as employment is a source of personal and social satisfaction (Nordenmark 1999). Again, few have looked at these aspects for the young unemployed (Hammer 1993; Hammer 2000). Here we focus on unemployed youth and how the quest for a job becomes perceived as an insurmountable problem and a burden.

The personal well-being of young long-term unemployed is affected by the experience of unemployment and a long-lasting job search. The quest for a job becomes an insuppressible problem and a burden. It is insuperable because they have used all of their resources and have tried all the strategies they could think of and still cannot find a job. It is a burden because it is something that is always with them; it defines them to a certain extent and they cannot dismiss it. Hence, in this section, we pose this question: What are the psychological consequences of long-term unemployment stemming from the young unemployed's perceptions of their current situation?

The long-term unemployed we interviewed stress in particular the loss of motivation and willingness to do things. Some of them explain how they start to stay at home and are, little by little, disconnected from the broader social world. Their time schedule is unique—they do not work during the day, and in the evening they have limited resources to go out and spend the evening with friends. For instance, seeing one's children going to school while one stays at home with nothing to do, or looking at the empty parking lot because everyone in the neighborhood has left to go to work, is perceived as a failure. The study of the unemployed in Marienthal in the 1930s highlighted the disruptive effects of unemployment on time structure (Jahoda et al. 2002 [1933]). These symbolic elements bring the unemployed back to their condition of inactivity and being left at home:

> It is not easy to accept… yeah… yeah it's a burden… it's too heavy for me to carry every morning when I get up, and I see the children leave, and me, I stay home, fff.
>
> (Kamelia, 31)

> Yes, it's harder [to stay home]; ah la la, because one feels so harmful; one looks at the neighborhood; the parking lot is empty; one feels one is… one is useless.
>
> (Adeline, 27)

Hence, the unemployed suffer from an overall lack of motivation, which turns into a real incapacity to do things. Even physically, one becomes tired and struggles to complete long-lasting activities. Some of the unemployed mentioned that they get up early in the morning because they have family obligations, they have children and get them ready for school, or because they try to have routines established in the morning so that they can quickly go out and start the day. It appears that having a timeframe imposed on them is helpful with regard to the psychological distress. It structures the days and helps feeling better. Meanwhile, others sleep in late and thus lose time: '[My main activity]… at the moment, I think, it must be sleeping. But, otherwise… I sleep very little' (James, 32).

Moreover, this isolation and demotivation are linked to a loss of self-confidence and to reduced self-esteem. Employment also carries social value for the person who is engaged in it; the activities in which one is engaged are valorizing:

> When one is unemployed, and that one did not have activities for a, quite a long time, and the activities, it's something valorizing… and um, so, one is a little, or at least for me, I was in a spiral of, yeah… of… loss of self-confidence, of yeah, downgrading.
>
> (Louis, 34)

Moreover, consider the fact that it is difficult to think about something else. We come back to this issue when talking about coping strategies. For now, we only want to mention what Juliette has told us: 'ça me prend la tête'; which means for her that she is constantly thinking about her unemployment and losing self-confidence and self-esteem, telling herself she is worth nothing. Another interviewee mentioned the sleepless nights as an illustration of the magnitude of the worries related to unemployment: 'I mean,

[unemployment] is a baffling problem, yeah. Sometimes you cannot sleep at night' (Romuald, 32).

Personal resources are very important while coping with unemployment, in particular one's capacity to (re)motivate oneself constantly and not to be overwhelmed by negative feelings about both one's situation and oneself. As we have described above, long-term unemployment has negative consequences on the psychological state of young unemployed people. They are affected in their psyche by the lack of a job, the reduced social contacts, the odd daily structure, the inactivity and the difficulties they face in finding another job. They lose self-confidence, self-esteem, and a feeling of mastery over their own life. Hence, inner resources are important in coping with these issues; they cannot only rely on others to help them (re)valorize them.

One of the most important forms of self-help that we find in the interviews is positive thinking and self-reassurance. In particular, the unemployed talk to themselves and confirm their choices and their abilities, and try to make positive assessments of themselves. For instance, they tell themselves not to worry and that it will work out: 'I tell myself: "it's not that dramatic, it will work out fine," I will finally find a job' (Ray, 30), or they try to motivate themselves anew and to keep active: 'It's difficult, you know, because every time I have to tell myself: "You're doing that and maybe soon it will be easier to find a better job"' (Ana, 35). They also tell themselves they did the best they could: 'I often repeat to myself that, um: "I try to do the maximum"' (Virginia, 32). At the same time, the unemployed mention that it is important to take one problem at a time and not be overwhelmed by all of one's problems.

Discrimination and Stigmatization

In relation to personal well-being, it also seems important to talk about the image that the unemployed have in society as well as the personal image of unemployment that the unemployed build themselves. Research into stigma addresses how specific social positions or characteristics become salient and are considered as abnormal (Goffman 1963). More specifically, focusing on unemployed persons, research shows that unemployment is stigmatizing because it represents a threat to the dominant norm of employment (Demaziere 1992, 2003; Herman 2007). In addition, some work shows how public opinion on the unemployed is shaped by public policies (Fridberg and Ploug 2000). Here we address the following

question: Which social images of the unemployed do young unemployed stress as elements contributing to their perceived discrimination or stigmatization? This perceived stigma of unemployed affects the personal well-being of unemployed youth, but also their social life. This is important in order to understand why the unemployed would not want to go out and instead limit their social life and activities:

> As soon as one becomes unemployed, one feels that, it's as if, somehow, one does not want to work; it's our personal failure, it's because you have done something wrong, it's because of this… and um… and that, really it's a burden to live with it…
>
> (Seni, 30)

> So um, rapidly one can be seen as someone who is a millstone, a bit um, who is not searching, who is doing nothing; I don't recognize myself in this image, but I can understand that some people have it.
>
> (Virginia, 32)

The negative image of unemployed exists in society, although it is reduced by the increase in the unemployment rate and the fact that everyone knows someone who is unemployed. Yet in the specific Swiss context, the low unemployment rate reinforces negative stereotypes about the unemployed. Among these stereotypes, we find the idea that they are not making enough efforts to find a job; if they really want to find a job, they can; or they are taking advantage of the system. Sometimes these ideas are even held by family members. In particular, parents who never experienced unemployment and entered the labor market in a period of virtually full employment have trouble understanding what their children face. This aspect might be very specific to youth; it is related to the stronger stigma held against youth who do not work, and also to a cohort of youth who enter the labor market at times when unemployment is higher, making it more difficult to succeed in the transition into employment:

> Yes, from my parents, at the beginning when I was… it took them a very long time to understand, um, that it was not a question of willingness; you see, there is always this cliché and most of all for persons who have lived the full employment, the glorious years.
>
> (Louis, 34)

Well, in fact, my mother, for instance, she is... well she knows it's the crisis and everything, but she, she is not in it, because for them, they have found, um, it was easier for them to find a job.

(Juliette, 20)

However, mostly, this negative conception of being unemployed is perceived indirectly—the unemployed do not face people who hold negative stereotypes about them and make remarks. Rather, they hear comments about the unemployed made by friends or other people and also in the media. Radio, newspaper, or television sometimes report on the unemployed, and the images they carry are often quite negative and do not correspond to lived experiences of unemployment. The same is true for public institutions. Politicians and political parties sometimes make discourses or base their ideas about unemployment on negative a priori. This is especially so in the case of youth, as Sonia states: 'It's true that many persons would say, oh but yeah, they have, they are young, they just have to work.'

The unemployed themselves perceive the situation of unemployment as being partly a freeloader situation, but not totally. This is quite ambiguous; unemployment stands halfway between a right and something they are taking advantage of. This is particularly the case for those who are trying to reorient their careers or have ambitions to find employment in specific fields and are not yet ready to accept just any job, especially a job with bad conditions or something they do not want to do. They can feel guilty about that, as we see in the excerpt below:

[What do you mean when you say: 'I have the impression to take advantage of the system'?] I think it's a luxury that I... well, it is quite paradoxical, because on the one hand, I... am looking forward to leav[ing] this situation and I, I search, but I only search for things I am interested in. [...] maybe it's true that I could have decided to look elsewhere and stop telling myself I want the luxury to do something I enjoy, and so um, take what comes and so no longer be unemployed.

(Virginia, 32)

The accounts of the long-term unemployed youth show that sometimes it is quite difficult to assume, personally and socially, the fact of being unemployed. At times the solution is not to mention one's situation to people who are not friends or relatives. When the unemployed have

other activities, they do not say they are unemployed but only talk about employment measures they are taking or intermediary earnings.

Social Life

The experience of a long period of unemployment has consequences for one's social life. Often the unemployed face a disruption of their social ties: they are more isolated and less often in contact with people who do not live with them (Gallie and Paugam 2003; Paugam 2008). How do long-term unemployed youth perceive the impact of unemployment on their social lives? In the descriptive analysis below, we see that social life is connected to the three dimensions that we discussed above: financial difficulties, a reduced overall motivation to do things, the experience of shame, and the attempt to show that one is not idle.

Importantly, all of the long-term unemployed youth we interviewed had to limit their social life and find ways to cope with little money and energy in order to engage in social activities.

> I cannot go out like before, even for a drink or something like that, or to eat something out um; so, bottom line, it [unemployment] still cuts a lot social contacts, yeah, in general.
>
> (Sonia, 27)

First and foremost, social life and social activities are related to the financial dimension discussed above. Therefore, going out with friends can be very limited in order to avoid spending money, but also to avoid depending on others to pay. It is a shameful experience to have to be invited all the time, and this is one of the main reasons for reducing social activities. Hence, we see here that not only financial limitations but also shame can be a disincentive for going out:

> Yeah, no, me, I go out, now um, in fact, I have my best friend's birthday on Friday; I go, I have no motivation at all to go; really, it's…; but I will go just to change what's on my mind, all that, but I don't feel like going you know… because we'll go out, we'll waste money, because you have to have a drink; me, I don't have the means; I won't ask her to pay for my drink… so um… I go because you know, but… but yeah, it's not easy.
>
> (Nadia, 25)

Furthermore, the financial dimension is often combined with some motivational aspects related to personal well-being, in particular the capacity to remain active and to maintain any kinds of activities:

> Well, nothing at all anymore (laughing); no it's true. Before, I used to do yoga, for instance; I had to stop because I could not pay [for] the courses anymore, so, hence, um, nothing at all anymore. Even, I used to read a lot; since I have been unemployed, I don't feel like reading anymore; I'm tired. Well, it changes quite a lot, yeah. I would have the time… to read (laugh); I almost don't read anymore.
>
> (Sonia, 27)

As we have seen, the unemployment experience drains all of the energy one has and thus causes one to refrain from engaging in activities—either social or individual hobbies. Sometimes the unemployed say they force themselves to go out and see friends, but then these social activities appear to be a burden—almost something one has to do. This is done not only to please friends but also because they are conscious that they should not let themselves fall into a downward spiral of self-closure.

However, some long-term unemployed youth keep an active social life. In order to do so, they favor money-free social activities. For instance, Joana says:

> It's true that now, I, I watch out before… I cannot afford to do that; going out all the time, not to go to a restaurant because it's a bit just; that's why I prefer to have dinner at home with friends who say, 'OK, why not, we'll do something,' and everybody buys some, buys things to do a nice meal.
>
> (Joana, 32)

Consider Jude, who says:

> Well, I mainly go to see my friends; I do a lot of biking mainly, and a bit all over Geneva, to see a bit of everyone depending on the type of job they have. [I have] friends who finish [work] at different times, starting at three in the afternoon until six in the evening; so I zigzag between them to see them all and to do my share of sports, and then, I go, I go mainly to eat at my Dad's in the evening to see him.
>
> (Jude, 27)

They see friends and family according to their availability. Otherwise, they remain in touch through telephone and the Internet and find ways to participate in activities that do not demand a large investment in terms of money. Some search for cheaper or free activities, while others decide to invest in only one activity they enjoy.

Daily Structure

In their study of the unemployed in Marienthal, Jahoda et al. (2002 [1933]) pointed at the disruptive effect of unemployment for the structuring of time. This gave rise to the idea of a paradox of having so much time and so little to do with it. In fact, it is striking to note the importance that long-term unemployed youth give to a daily structure. In the interviews, we see that one important way for coping with unemployment is to have a structure for the day and for the week, a way to organize the amount of time one has. Unemployment time is often qualified as time for doing nothing. The perception of time is influenced by the unemployed person's experiences of unemployment. Time is either perceived as flying or as useless, sometimes simply because of a lack of interest in former hobbies, Sophie, for instance, mentions that she used to love reading, but now she has plenty of time to read she has no motivation to do so.

Maintaining a daily structure is seen as an important element of coping with unemployment. The strategy is not only to have a regular daily structure but more generally to have activities during the day or during the week that fill in the time. The interviewees mention some examples of activities that help with maintaining daily structures through routines, such as going out for a coffee and reading the newspaper: 'I go out and have a coffee at my parents' restaurant; I mean, yeah, well, I know it's a bit like the old lady who go[es] out to read the newspaper' (Karin, 33). The coffee routine is quite common; it not only helps to maintain a daily structure but also enables one to have social contacts, to see other people and eventually to look for job announcements.

> Rather than buying the newspaper for the job announcement, to go in a café, and to take advantage of… and um yeah, I go more than before, now, even alone sometimes in a small café near my house, just to go out, look at the newspapers, to keep contacts also with um, well, you know, sometimes, it's also something that helps in the morning, when you have no appointment,

to get up and tell oneself um, yeah, I get up, I go out; so it's true that it's a routine, I don't know, but something quite regular, that regulates the day, and then, yep, sometimes, when one really does not want to do anything, to force oneself to get up to go for a coffee, even if it's just that, that puts in the traditional regulation of people who work, because sometimes it's true that we are a bit out of step.

(Virginia, 32)

I go out for a coffee, I read the newspapers; so um, it's clear that one needs to see people moving, you know; so me, I go in a shopping mall um, shopping mall where you have a bit of bustle, so that one, you should not feel too isolated either; there you go, you have to see people; then um, maybe you also need to um, for instance, I don't know, discuss with um a waitress.

(Xenon, 34)

There are also other free time activities that help fill in the day, for instance, doing sports, playing an instrument, reading, becoming informed about specific issues and thinking about what one wants or would like to do. These coping mechanisms related to the daily structure are used by the unemployed in order to maintain set activities during the day or week that structure time and impede thinking too much about one's situation. In particular, the unemployed mention that this is a way to stop thinking about unemployment in a circular and unproductive manner that can only lead to discouragement, self-depreciation, and depression.

In this regard, the courses offered by the unemployment office are also useful: apart from the skills and knowledge they facilitate, they also serve as a way of keeping active and maintaining both a daily structure and social contacts. The interviewees link the questions of time and daily structure to the questions of motivation making a connection between remaining active and being in a positive psychological state. Motivations to do different things include social activities or hobbies and time dedicated to job search. In principle, the job search should take a large part of the day and be a means to occupy oneself, but the idea that there will be no new job offers, no new opportunities, and the anticipation of more refusals and turning down of curricula and motivation letters stops them from searching the Internet and newspapers for employment opportunities every day. Discouragement, as we have seen above, is part of the experience of long-term unemployment; it is related to an overall lack of motivation that also affects other activities.

Social Marginalization

As a result of the different elements we have addressed in this section, here we discuss the process of social marginalization that follows from the lived experience of unemployment in a context of low unemployment. More specifically, we ask to what extent young long-term unemployed suffer from social marginalization.

In general, we can say that unemployment leads to a reduction in social activities and social contacts. It varies greatly from one unemployed person to the next because all of them have very different lives, housing situations, networks of friends, family structures, and financial situations that can be more or less difficult. As we have seen, some say they have dropped their hobbies because they cannot afford them anymore, while others have chosen activities that demand limited amounts of money or keep only one activity they enjoy. Hence, depending on the choices a person makes, he or she has more or fewer regular contacts with friends, and some become quite solitary. It is important to note that this reduction in social activities is not only due to the lack of money, but also to the reduced personal well-being resulting from unemployment: the lack of motivation and of energy to do things. Thus, the marginalization process in a context of low youth unemployment depends on the extent to which unemployment reduces the personal well-being of the unemployed and affects their capacity to cope with the situation by engaging in free social activities and maintaining social contacts.

Moreover, we see that this process is at the same time individual and social; both dimensions interact and cut the unemployed from their social life. Two mechanisms take place: one related to the overall lack of motivation that is more at the individual level and the other linking the individual and the social dimensions, the shame and the perceived stigmatization of being unemployed. With regard to the lack of motivation, we have seen above that long-term unemployment reduces energy, leads to sleeping in for long periods, avoiding the daytime when everyone is busy and trying to remain active while having little money to invest in leisure activities. Moreover, on the individual level, they face reduced self-esteem and confidence; they even try to avoid saying they are unemployed or showing they are inactive because it is hard for them to assume this status, so it limits their social contacts:

> Well, friends, um, I have some but, nothing more; it's not the kind I would
> hang around with all day long um; it's also the fact, not, not to want to let

appear that one is um, that one is, that one is a lay about, well, that one is doing nothing; it's, it's hard; it's difficult to bear.

(Adeline, 27)

The lived experience of unemployment is not only a series of negative experiences. Although some have discussed the possibility that unemployment is lived as a break in a demanding employment context and used as an opportunity to engage in other activities than paid employment (Schnapper 1981), we did not encounter any long-term unemployed youth who lived their unemployment in this way. This may be due to social desirability, but most likely is related to the fact that we interviewed long-term unemployed youth—that is, youth who have been without a job for more than a year—and perhaps, after a first phase of rest, unemployment becomes more of a burden. Nonetheless, the unemployed strive to think about the positive sides of unemployment, and they explained how they also try to take advantage of this forced inactivity to think about their wishes, to build projects, to find out what drives them, and what they would like to do in their life. They mentioned that they have to be creative to handle their problems, to deal with unemployment, to cope with the situation. Each of them have their own means to do that: some invest in training, some find a new orientation for their career, some try to rebuild their self-esteem and to improve their skills for job interviews:

I don't think about it that much, in the end. I rather try to… to… to make sure I know what I want to do, rather than to… to do… that unemployment and others and all… that it becomes something that stops me from doing something else.

(James, 32)

Thus, the young unemployed try to find a personal equilibrium and try to compensate for some of the negative dimensions of unemployment that affect their lives with positive elements. For instance, investing in hobbies and free-time activities that are not too expensive, that they can afford, can help them to think about something else and engage in activities that they enjoy. The young unemployed mention that it is important to allow themselves little pleasures sometimes, either a rest—a break in the job search or sleeping in late one morning—or some activity that they enjoy—going to a restaurant, for instance: 'From time to time, um, I allow myself a little

treat, not often but I tell myself… that, it's true, that, that it is doing me good' (Ray, 30). This is important so as not to feel constrained all the time.

SUPPORTIVE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS: A TALE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT WITH SOME LIMITATIONS

In the previous section, we discussed the lived experience of long-term unemployment and the coping strategies of young unemployed. Although unemployment is often perceived as an individual problem, it affects not only the persons confronted by it, but also close peers and family members. The most significant others—partners, family, or friends who live the experience of unemployment together with the unemployed youth—can sometimes offer support but, to some extent, also share the unemployed's distress. In this section, we consider specifically the role of social support, defined as 'the functions performed for the individuals by significant others, such as family, friends, and co-workers' (Thoits 1995: 64). Such significant others provide instrumental, informational or emotional assistance and they can also offer opportunities for social activities (Herman et al. 2007). Previous studies have shown that social support is beneficial to physical and mental health while facing stressful events, although they cannot prevent all damaging effects (Gore 1978; Pearlin et al. 1981; Thoits 1995). We discuss three kinds of significant others: partner support, family support, and friend support. At the same time, we try to show the ambiguity that can stem from social support. Receiving help in its various forms is not as easy as one can imagine. Help entails reciprocity, and can turn into a burden when one is in the position of receiving but not able to give back.

Family Support

Since the unemployed persons we interviewed are young, some may be living with their parents while others live on their own. As we have seen, family support is important when it comes to financial assistance. During the interviews we asked the long-term unemployed to talk about their relationship with their parents, including what they share with them and what kind of help or support they receive from family members. Family members—in particular parents—share the worries of the unemployed with regard to the fact that they do not have paid employment (Lorenzini and Giugni 2012).

Family members, including mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, are there to provide help and support, especially with regard to the financial difficulties of young unemployed people. But their capacity to help also depends on their own financial situation. Some of the unemployed still live with their parents, in particular the youngest ones, and therefore benefit from housing and food. Those who live alone go to their parents' homes to share meals, or sometimes the parents shop for them and buy them groceries. This form of support is quite common and is a way of avoiding receiving money directly. Nevertheless, the young unemployed sometimes need to borrow money from their families in order to make ends meet. Occasionally, parents help when some investment in training is needed; some family members provide financial support to their relatives in order for them to start new training.

The unemployed are not isolated to the point that they would have no one to turn to in case they need something, and their families are usually not in a realm of poverty that would prevent them from having the means to help their children. Only one of the interviewees mentioned that both his mother and brother face financial difficulties and cannot help him financially. Nonetheless, restrictions regarding financial help appear for different reasons; because the unemployed feel ashamed to ask for help or fear it will change the relationships they have with their relatives. In this regard, age is also important to the question of independence. Receiving money leads to a situation of dependence that can be difficult to bear:

> I am fed up with this situation; I am fed up that my mother, um, pays for everything for me; I am fed up that when I want cigarettes, she buys me a box, and I am fed up to fight with her about that. I told her: 'the day I don't have money, then I won't smoke.' It's like that and that's it, and it's true that either directly or indirectly we benefit or we take advantage and, um, on the long run, it's, it's heavy, very heavy, because I have always been educated like that, that means that I must be able to pay for what I want with the money that I gained through hard work. That is always more pleasant than when Mom and Dad are behind giving money like that…
>
> (Norbert, 22)

Family members are also there to talk about the situation and to share worries or to help with the job search. But they can be quite unfamiliar with the unemployment problem—there can be a generational gap, they may have entered the labor market in a different economic situation and most of them have never experienced unemployment; so it's quite difficult

for them to understand what their children are going through.[4] Regarding brothers and sisters, they sometimes have their own problems. The young unemployed either exchange experiences when they are both unemployed, or they avoid adding problems to those their relatives already face. In this latter case, when they spend time together it is mostly a time to take their minds off things. There are different ways in which to support one another, depending to a great extent on one's personal life.

Sometimes the parents do not have the means to help their children; either they do not know what the labor market requirements are or they simply do not have the education level or language skills, in the case of migrants, that are needed to help their children search for a job. Moreover, parents are anxious about their children's future: 'for them it's always creating anxiety as long as I don't have a job' (Jude, 27). This anxiety and related problems of miscommunication or misunderstanding can lead to tensions within the familial realm—getting on each other's nerves—'it gets on my mother's nerves that I don't find anything'. (Theo, 18).'Yeah, in fact, this quite bothers, bothers my mother, she sees that I don't find a job, and she wants me to become independent' (Juliette, 20).

Friend Support

Secondly, we analyze the role played by friends for the young long-term unemployed. In the case of youth, friends may be especially important since they are often friends from childhood or school. For the older unemployed, friends may mainly be former colleagues, and the loss of employment may reduce more drastically their connection with their friends. Yet, in a context of low youth unemployment, contacts and the help offered by friends may be very specific as it is not related to a shared experience. Friend support is an important form of support that can be complementary to that received from family members. It takes different forms and helps the unemployed to deal with other aspects of unemployment:

> They have, um, always been there when I needed and, um, I find, it's important, you know, in situations like that, if one knows that there are friends to whom you can say everything, um, tell your problems and all that, and that they… One feels there is no judgment. I think it's important in periods like this one. Well, I tell myself, um, if a person, she, she lives alone, she is unemployed and, um, that she sees no one, and that a, um, the person is able to, to tell what is happening to her and all that. After a while, it's, I won't say

dangerous, but the person mopes, she does not know where, where she's at, and this, this leads to depression and then, I think, in those moments, it's not good to stay alone; one should be able to talk about it, because it helps feeling much better; and to have another vision, um, on life, um, and, um, and then the other can give advice, maybe helps also.

<div align="right">(Ray, 30)</div>

In this quote from Ray's interview, we see the importance of not being left alone and of having someone to turn to in those moments of depression, of psychological breakdown that one might face during unemployment. Ray highlights both the importance of having someone who will not judge the unemployed and who will provide advice or help, but most of all lend an attentive ear. Hence, we see the importance of simply talking to someone, the value of being able to share one's problems. Although we should make clear that talking about one's problems related to unemployment does not mean solving them, it is important not to hold on to them and to have the opportunity to share them with others and to put them in perspective. 'Well, we know the problem is still there, but, um, yes it helps to talk about it' (Juliette, 20).

Friends are also important in order to have someone to talk to outside the family realm. Jude says that your friends know you in a different way, and also that some of them might have experienced unemployment so they understand what it is like. When friends know about unemployment they can exchange their personal experiences, talk about the unemployment office, the measures they received, and also about their counselors. Sometimes they exchange tips about how to write letters, where to look for job announcements, write letters with the unemployed, or pass on information about job opportunities.

Friends also try to provide reassurance, saying that better times will come. But this can become annoying:

No I prefer not to talk, I prefer not to talk, because people do, people, they tell you: 'you know, it will work out fine, it will work out'; they always repeat the same thing, but it's, it's annoying to hear 'it will work out'.

<div align="right">(Kamelia, 31)</div>

There are many reasons for the unemployed to avoid talking about their situation, even with friends; either because they would rather think about something else when they are with friends or because there is nothing new

to say or because they don't want to be 'the one who always complains and mopes', or perhaps because they do not like to expose their inner life.

As with parents, the help friends can provide is limited. They do not always have the means to help. As we have seen above, they are not always able to find the right words to reassure the young unemployed and to provide moral support. Most of the psychological consequences have to be carried alone, although friends can help to some extent. When the unemployed have financial problems or are unable to find a job, friends cannot necessarily help. But as Romuald says, 'friends are always there for a good laugh'. In fact, most importantly, friends are there to allow one thinking about something else—cheering up the young unemployed, providing occasion to change what's on one's mind, having dinners or nights or a drink out.

Other limitations to friends' help can be linked to a lack of knowledge concerning how the Swiss system works; this is especially the case for those who have not lived in Geneva for a long time. In most cases, though, friends are very helpful with regard to circulating information about job opportunities and supporting job applications. Sometimes the unemployed youth do not want to ask for help in order to avoid embarrassing their friends; and some people are not willing to support somebody's application for a job or to pass on a CV.

Moreover, these different forms of help are not always easy to accept and can lead to psychological conflicts for the unemployed. It is difficult for them to be in the position of help receiver for a long time, and not be able to pay it back. It creates a feeling of dependency and shame. Even though friends are happy to help with small things, such as offering a drink, this is not always perceived as a solution for the young unemployed. Rather, they will prefer not going out than having the same friends pay for them over and over again. In the end, they do not even enjoy their time out, as they are not able to self-finance it.

> Because when I go out with friends, since they would like to, you know, it's not a big deal, we invite you, we have the means, we have money and all, but I get sick, but very uncomfortable, but very bad, but really too bad; I'm not willing to go with them anymore, to, to continue because it's not me, myself; I am not myself; I, I am telling myself, 'shit, she'll be paying again, oh shit, what a shame'; I am there, there, mo- moping myself, and then, it's not a good evening out.
>
> (Kamelia, 31)

Partner Support

The closest person in the life of an unemployed youth may be their partner, when they have one, especially if they live together. Living with a partner offers support in daily activities and allows the sharing of daily expenses. Furthermore, partners contribute to personal well-being. Research shows that married unemployed people display lower levels of mental distress (Clark and Oswald 1994) and higher life satisfaction (Myers 1999). However, others maintain that unemployment can also affect social support through its negative impact on significant others, especially partners who are directly and indirectly affected by the stressor (Atkinson et al. 1986). Therefore, those providers of support who live with the unemployed or who are closely related to them can also be negatively affected by the other's experience of unemployment, and this, in turn, may limit their capacity to provide support.

However, it is important to note, before we discuss the role of partners, that the young unemployed did not talk much about their partners and the role they played in their lives as unemployed. Some did not mention until the end of the interview that they had a partner, and this was quite surprising. Neither did they mention how their partner was helping, nor how the partner was affected by their unemployment. More emphasis was put on the family or on friends in general. Maybe it was more difficult to talk about this very private dimension of their lives.

There is another situation to consider: those who are divorced or separated from their former partner and have children with him or her. These unemployed, in addition to the unemployment benefits or the social aid and state allocation for children, receive a pension from the former partner. But this does not represent enough money to cover expenses for the child or children, and it is often difficult to cope.

Partners are very close people, sometimes living with the unemployed, and they share the problems with the unemployed—both the financial and the moral burden of being unemployed for a year or more also affects them. Partners can help in preparing motivational letters and the CV for an application; they can also support the unemployed in their career reorientation or in finding a job. In fact, it is very important that the partner agrees with the plan to start a new training or to invest in a new career plan. 'I thought I was right in doing that, I was not going the wrong direction, what was important is that my girlfriend thought it a good idea' (Sebastian, 35). But most of all, they share the financial difficulties

and help to deal with that through increasing the money they invest in the household. Hence after a long period of unemployment they are also affected psychologically and distressed by the unemployment:

> So, in fact, my partner, yes, he supports me because he helps write the letters, send the documents; he tells me: 'yeah, I have seen this', he is also searching, and all; but him, he's starting to be a bit… to tell himself: 'shit, um, why don't you find a job?' So even him, psychologically, well, we're in it together, I mean, we live together, financially we live, um, I mean, we are together, so, um, as much it disturbs me not to have money as much it disturbs him as well […] because in any case, me, it's me who, it's him who pays everything you know.
>
> (Nadia, 25)

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the social and personal consequences of long-term unemployment for young people in a country, Switzerland—and more specifically a city, Geneva—characterized by low unemployment rates. Our analysis was guided by two main questions: How is unemployment experienced by youth who are struck with it in a durable fashion? How does unemployment relate to social relations and processes of marginalization? This led us to address three main aspects on the basis of in-depth interviews with a small sample of young long-term unemployed: the understandings of the meaning of unemployment on the part of young unemployed, the process leading to marginalization relating to durable exclusion from the labor market and the coping strategies developed to deal with long-term unemployment, and the social support provided by significant others (family members, friends, and partners). In this conclusion, we will briefly come back to the most important findings of our analysis.

First, it appears to be important to stress the high value that youngsters attach to work and employment. Contrary to some social and political discourses on youth, and more generally on all unemployed, the persons we interviewed prize work and the chances of those who have a paid job. They wish they could have one as well, for they see it as a means of conforming to dominant norms in society and as a way of contributing their share in society. This finding is important in relation to public policies addressed at reducing unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular; taking

into account the fact that the main problem is not the fact that 'youngsters do not want to work' may avoid some misconceptions around both the problems and the solutions proposed to solve them.

Moreover, on this question of employment, youngsters are aware that having a job is a means of social integration. Being employed offers opportunities to have contacts with others, to share a daily structure with most people, and to have earnings that enable them to afford going out and having hobbies and leisure time activities. This awareness of the side value of employment increases their willingness to have a job. Nevertheless, after a lasting unemployment (a year or more), the young unemployed face discouragement. They have the idea that they will never find a job, and there are periods during which it is difficult to continue with the job search, for they believe they have tried everything and nothing works.

This discouragement affects their psychological well-being, as well as the financial difficulties related to their unemployment. Regarding discouragement and job searches, they affect especially the self-confidence of the individual and the motivation to remain active in their job search, but more generally they affect the individual's everyday life. The many refusals or rejections of their applications lead them into thinking that they are worthless. The lack of self-confidence, the feelings of worthlessness, and the inactivity can lead to depressive moods. Moreover, the limited amounts of money they have to cope with their everyday expenses create worries and anxiety. Additionally, they have even less money to maintain social activities that could help them to keep a positive moral state. Finally, the social images of unemployment are mainly negative. They are associated with a lack of motivation to work with people who are taking advantage of the system. Hence, they also have to cope with the idea that unemployment is a personal failure and not a social problem.

Our analysis has stressed the importance of social activities, family members, friends, and partners in supporting the young long-term unemployed through the difficulties they face. Family members can help with regard to the material situation of the youngsters; they loan money, they buy food, and they help with everyday expenses to reduce the financial strain on the youngsters. Friends help on a more moral level; they offer opportunities to go out, talk to someone, or to maintain social activities. These are especially important because they help youngsters go out of their daily routine, which includes few activities, and to think about something else than unemployment. Finally, a partner is there to help with both moral and material issues, sharing the problems of the young unemployed.

Yet the analysis has also brought to the fore the limitations both of the coping strategies developed by long-term unemployed youth to deal with their situation and of the social support provided by family members, friends, and partners. Having to deal with long-term unemployment and the processes of marginalization that may stem from it is not something one can face lightly. To be sure, youth—as any other people—make use of a number of coping strategies to deal with it. In addition, social support may come from different circles to help dealing with it. However, coping strategies and social support can only help to a certain extent; they are no panacea. This is perhaps all the more true when one lives in a place that is characterized by low levels of unemployment, such as Switzerland and more specifically Geneva. Stigmatization can only become stronger in such a context.

NOTES

1. Source: https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm#indicator-chart.
2. Source: https://data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm#indicator-chart.
3. In the interviews and analysis we also considered two further dimensions: one relating to their job search and another one concerning political exclusion. In this chapter, however, we do not address these two dimensions in order to focus on the social dimension.
4. See quote page 33–34 for an excerpt taken from Louis' interview.

Appendix 1

Table 4.1 List of interviews

Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Occupation according to training	Last occupation	Civil state	Household members	Brothers and Sisters	Nationality	Place of birth	Arrival in Switzerland
Theo	M	18	Compulsory school	Looking for an apprenticeship (cook or joinery)		Single	Mother Brother Sister	2	Thai	Thailand	9 years old
Norbert	M	22	Apprenticeship	Salesman in car industry		Single	Mother	2	French	Bourges, France	14 years old
Jude	M	27	Compulsory school	Unfinished apprenticeship in joinery	Searching work in jewelry field	Single		4	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Sam	M	28	Bachelor degree (pedagogy)			Single		1	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Ray	M	30	Apprenticeship	Horticulturist	Retraining as a truck driver	Single	Partner	2	Swiss	Colombia	1.5 years old (Adopted)
James	M	32	Apprenticeship	Electronics engineer	Winder electrician	Single		1	Swiss	Lausanne, CH	
Romuald	M	32	University degree (Economics, unfinished)		Executive	Single	Partner	2	Haitian	Haiti	18 years old
Louis	M	34	University diploma (in Arts)		Journalist	Single		1	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Xenon	M	34	Compulsory school		Computer helpdesk	Single		2	Swiss	Geneva, CH	

Table 4.1 (continued)

Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Occupation according to training	Last occupation	Civil state	Household members	Brothers and Sisters	Nationality	Place of birth	Arrival in Switzerland
Sebastian	M	35	Elementary vocational training	Projectionist	Security field / Retraining as ambulance driver	In a relationship	Partner	2	Swiss	Colombia	6 months (Adopted)
Juliette	F	20	Compulsory school	Looking for an apprenticeship (in jewelry)	Internship as jewelry setting	Single	Mother	1	Swiss	Haiti	6 years old (Adopted)
Nadia	F	25	Vocational baccalaureate	Commercial employee	Internship coordinator	In a relationship with 2 children	Partner/ 2 children	1	Portuguese	Geneva, CH	
Sonia	F	27	Compulsory school	Professional therapist	Part-time therapist	Single		1	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Adeline	F	27	Higher vocational training (Hostelry, unfinished) → apprenticeship.	Gouvernante (housekeeper in hotels)	Single with one son	Child	8	Swiss	Yaoundé, Cameroun	8 years old
Seni	F	30	Compulsory school	Secretary	Administrative assistant	Single	Mother Step father Sister	4	Portuguese	Portugal	24 years old
Kamelia	F	31	Compulsory school	Secretary assistant	Assembling in the clock-making field	Separated with two children	Daughter Son (11 and 8 years old)	5	Somali	Somali	17 years old (in 1997)

Name	Sex	Age	Education	Training	Occupation	Marital status	Household	N	Nationality	Origin	Notes
Virginia	F	32	University diploma (in Arts)	Socio-cultural host	Lighting director	Single		1	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Joana	F	32	Compulsory school		Sales woman	Divorced with two daughters	Daughters (12 and 8 years old)	2	Peruvian	Lima, Peru	16 years old (in 1994)
Karin	F	33	Elementary vocational training	Beautician	Dentist Receptionist	Single	Mother Father Brother	3	Swiss	Geneva, CH	
Ana	F	35	Compulsory school	Passing a diploma in Human Resources	Administrative assistant	Single with one son (not living with her)		2	Spanish	Sion, CH	Born in Switzerland, grown up in Spain, till 17

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The Everyday Life of Young Long-Term Unemployed in Sweden: Coping with Limited Participation and Feelings of Inferiority

Tuula Bergqvist

Introduction

In recent years the unemployment of young adults has risen to alarming figures in most European countries, and can be considered as one of many inequalities that are permanently reproduced in our societies. When work is central in people's lives, then being without work can become a bothersome situation. In January 2016, according to the Swedish public employment agency, the overall unemployment rate was 8.0 percent, meaning that there were approximately 386,000 persons registered as unemployed in Sweden.[1] Compared with many other European countries this number of unemployed people may not seem to be that high, yet related to the number of inhabitants it was quite high. Further, in Sweden there are large differences between unemployment among the young and unemployment among older people. For some years, youth unemployment

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(youth between 15 and 24 years) was as high as four times the overall unemployment rate. Yet lately youth unemployment has declined, and in January 2016 the rate was 13.1 percent, still substantially higher than the overall unemployment rate.

Even though the research field on issues related to unemployment has grown to be quite substantial, not enough attention has been paid to the everyday experiences of the group of long-term young adults. Whatever the cause of unemployment, the consequences for an individual tend to be quite evident. Young people are in a phase of their lives when they are aiming to establish themselves both in their social life and on the labor market, while most people in older age groups have already done that. Difficulties in terms of their financial, social and personal situation may enlarge their vulnerability and in the long run accelerate the process of social exclusion.

This chapter empirically investigates the mechanisms conditioning the everyday life of the young long-term unemployed youth that can be understood in terms of social exclusion. In Sweden a strong work ethic constitutes norms, practices and expectations by its citizens with regard to their entitlements (e.g., Björnberg and Latta 2007; Johansson and Hornemann Möller 2009). Work gives the Swedish people their identity, and not being able to live by socially accepted norms may lead to a loss of social status and marginalization. Thus, this chapter will investigate how the strong work ethic rooted in Swedish society influences the everyday lives of the young unemployed and what the consequences are. Do Swedish young adults suffer from stigmatization, and does the strong work norm have any impact on what they consider as a proper job?

It is also verified by earlier research that many problems derived from unemployment are related to the unemployed person's financial situation (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark and Strand 1999; Gallie et al. 2000). The Swedish welfare system is often referred to as the world's most generous general social welfare system and social services and various economic security systems are included, for example, unemployment benefits. Some of the benefits are income related, and since the background of unemployed young adults often consists of little or almost no work experience, many of them receive only the lowest basic (not income-based) unemployment benefit. Thus, being a long-term unemployed young adult commonly means that you have limited financial resources, no matter if you are single, living by yourself or with your parents, or if you have a family of your own. So this chapter will investigate how these limitations

influence the experience of being long-term unemployed and what the consequences are of these limitations. Are young adults able to manage their everyday lives financially or are they in need of additional support?

Earlier research (e.g., Kronauer 1998; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004) confirms that the circumstances described above, a loss of social status and marginalization together with financial hardship during unemployment, often lead to a reduction of social contacts and to a retreat from social life. Thus, access to social relations and social support is fundamental for the well-being of the unemployed person (e.g., Thoits 1995; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark 1999). This chapter investigates how the presence or the absence of social support from significant others conditions the everyday lives of the unemployed young adults. Sweden is sometimes considered to have a cultural legacy that fosters a young person's autonomy, encouraging early home leaving and non-traditional family constellations. Does the core family still play an important role in providing social support and in adding to well-being? If so, in what way? What about the role of friends? Finally, are there noticeable gender differences regarding any of the above? Do the Swedish long-term unemployed risk social exclusion?

This chapter uses data from 18 qualitative interviews with long-term unemployed young adults in the city of Karlstad, the seat of the county government of Värmland, and its surroundings. Karlstad, with its 84,000 inhabitants, is situated in south-west Sweden. Forestry, wood processing and paper manufacturing play a central role in the county's trade and industry, and these together with IT and services are the dominating branches in the Karlstad region, which has around 150,000 inhabitants. The interviews were conducted during 2010 and involved 13 men and seven women. The interviewees were unemployed persons aged between 20 and 35 years who have been looking for a job for one year or longer. The background of the interviewees varies as regards education, family relations and nationality. They represent a variety of different types of involvement in the labor market. Some have never worked, while others have had many full-time jobs, if only for limited times. Yet the interviewees represent a common definition of unemployment.

The interviews included questions about their unemployment situations, starting with the backgrounds of the interviewees, moving on to their financial situations and their relations with the employment office, before continuing with questions about their social lives and ending with questions about their plans for the future. All of the interviews were recorded and an average interview lasted between one and one and a half

hours. The interviews were then analyzed, using some of the techniques and procedures of established theory (Corbin and Strauss 2008) to identify central concepts and categories from the data. While working with the analysis, the emerging categories and concepts were related to each other to find out the factors that condition the everyday lives of long-term unemployed young adults.

The first section of this chapter will look into the influence of the strong work ethic rooted in Swedish society on the everyday life of young unemployed adults, and the possible consequences of this work norm. The association of work with full-time employment is also elucidated. The second section deals with the extent of financial hardship—the lack of money—during unemployment, as well as how the financial situation of the unemployed is conditioned by the instrumental support of significant others. In addition, how this financially burdensome situation limits the life experience of the young adults is illuminated. The third section focuses on the importance of the presence of significant others and the emotional support provided by them. Some noticeable gender differences regarding the experience of unemployment are also discussed. Finally, the section sheds some light on the influence of online-living during unemployment.

The Influence of the Swedish Work Norm: A Lack of Social Recognition and Feeling of Failure

The Swedish welfare state can be understood as an institutionalized moral economy that is constituted by norms, practices and expectations by its citizens in regard to their entitlements. This moral economy also presumes a substantial degree of collective solidarity of its citizens, since the social security system is mainly based on the principle of full-time employment financing the social security system (Björnberg and Latte 2007). Here citizenship is indistinguishable from duties such as working and paying taxes. This Swedish norm of work is due to the combination of a long history of influence by the working classes, a strong trade union movement and long-standing social-democratic politics (Johansson and Hornemann Möller 2009).

Work has never been accorded so much importance as in today's society. Children are socialized to understand the importance of paid work and are expected to educate themselves with the goal of getting a 'good job'. Work gives the Swedish people an identity. The first question often asked by a new social contact is 'what do you do for a living?'. The function of this question concerning one's profession can be understood as a

'reciprocal identification pattern through which we are able to evaluate the personal attributes and knowledge, as well as the economic and social standing which are associated with this profession' (Beck 1986: 224) Through this, the lack of work also means lack of social recognition (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971).

In line with earlier research, when work is the norm, being out of work tends to make the unemployed person into part of the societal periphery and a deviant (e.g., Starrin et al. 2001; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004). The lack of social recognition conditions how the unemployed regard themselves or are regarded by others. One of the interviewees describes this as follows:

> Every time you meet a person you haven't seen in a month, there is always the question of what are you doing these days? That's the greeting phrase. And every time it comes, you struggle to stand your back straight to answer that you are unemployed. Every time you read the newspaper and see someone being interviewed, it is still like in the beginning of the 1900s (laughs) … what you are working with, that defines who you are—besides your name. And if you do not have a job, then…. It's the job that makes who you are, so it is clear that in social meetings you shrink as a human being always. And this happens to you almost every week.
>
> (Owen, 32)

Even if it seems to be unusual to be directly confronted with prejudices or reproaches, a simple everyday event such as meeting people may cause feelings of inferiority or insufficiency for the unemployed. Not being able to introduce yourself as belonging to a certain profession can be experienced as shameful. Thus the normally enjoyable events like meeting someone around town tend to become strenuous and need to be avoided as far as possible. As one of the interviewees expresses it:

> It is the meetings with people and always explaining. What are you doing now? Everyone hates that question; it's a question of shame. It is such a shame to be unemployed. It's not that you're ashamed, but it's a shame, it's … you cast your eyes down when someone asks it. And then you have an explanation.
>
> (Owen, 32)

The above quotation illustrates how being unemployed is experienced as a shameful position in Swedish society. This also means that when

everyday meetings feel strenuous, you need to prepare yourself how to act in the situation. Further, this means that you are not acting on meeting the other person but on your situation as unemployed. The interviews reveal that the unemployed use special techniques to avoid talking about being out of work:

> I feel I have to find other things I can talk about instead. I mean that there are techniques for that. When a friend asks me what are you doing these days then? I reply that I'm working on my record of course. (Laughs.) And people reply—OK. And then the issue of what you work with is completely gone. There are many unemployed who uses this kind of techniques. And somehow this stops the issue of working and then you talk about the record. The question of what you do when you are not recording will not come.
>
> (Owen, 32)

Ultimately, these experiences may lead to avoidance of both old and new acquaintances, causing limitations in your social life. One of the respondents describes an incident when a new acquaintance acquired why he was unemployed even though he was both smart and social. This question reveals an underlying attitude that there must be something wrong with the person who is unemployed. The following quotation expresses a societal problematic as far as prejudices about unemployed people and the blame for unemployment is concerned:

> It's things like these people think about, which determine whether people get jobs … This is a sign of a lack of understanding and it's a sign that they in some way lay the blame at the door of the unemployed person, not at the workplace which had no space for him or her. I see it as a sign of where the blame lies. And a friend will never say this to me, but he may think it.
>
> (Michael, 30)

This idea that unemployment is the unemployed person's own fault may also lead to the person blaming him- or herself for his situation (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004; Mäkitalo 2006). These feelings of shame seem to be related to age, though. The younger respondents (considering that we have quite a wide range of age within the unemployed group) do not report the same kind of feelings of inferiority as described in the following quotation: 'Yes, absolutely there are a great number of unemployed so I mean it's so … it's so common now. It is sad to say but that's how it is' (Ed, 24).

The respondents who are just a couple of years out of secondary education seem to share this view. They are still on the threshold to adulthood, just learning to manage their adult lives and have very little if any work life experience. The present poor labor market situation for these young adults surely increases the societal acceptance of being out of work some years after finishing school.

Those who do not view their unemployment as purely negative but instead look upon it positively may experience contradictory feelings of guilt, as the Swedish welfare system is based on collective solidarity in paying income taxes. It is not socially acceptable to openly admit that one is partially enjoying this non-contributing. The media may also reinforce the feelings of shame, with the picture painted of the unemployed by the media not corresponding to how an unemployed person feels or how he/she wants to be perceived.

A Proper Job: Full-Time Employment Providing Social Recognition

Whether or not the experience of unemployment is related to feelings of shame, the strong work norm is influencing what the unemployed young adults consider to be a 'proper job'. According to the interviews a proper job equals full-time employment that gives you social recognition. As accounted for above, the strong work norm prevailing in Swedish society is related to the principle that full-time employment finances the social security system (Björnberg and Latte 2007). Temporary and on-call jobs—especially those with hourly remuneration—have at best a tenuous relationship with the social security system, and thus they do not provide the same social security as full-time employment. Temporary employment is related to an overall insecurity and to financial unpredictability; of not being able to know what will happen next week or next month. Two of the interviewees describe it as follows:

> Even if I'm employed by two businesses, I'm not guaranteed a job. Therefore I regard myself as being unemployed. I think it's hard not to know that I get a certain number of hours or a certain salary.
>
> (Caitlin, 21)

> You know, I don't know when you can say you're completely unemployed. That's a question of definition. I've had jobs, but they haven't called me in

to work for them. So on-call work, that's about the only job you can get today, it seems. Most of the time permanent, full-time jobs are out of the question. So to be unemployed … I have worked so much that I have managed financially. But I haven't been working full time.

(Owen, 32)

Even though many people working full time have limited social resources, full-time employment is associated with financial security and stability. Doing on-call work does not equate to a 'proper job'. It stands for insecurity; for not knowing your monthly income even though the working hours can be longer than usual full-time hours. Temporary employment, regardless of how many hours you work, is almost equal to unemployment since these jobs do not provide an income on which a budget can be based. An unwillingness to work part time may prolong the period of unemployment, since this sort of employment is all that is available for young people who are attempting to gain a foothold in the labor market and limits the possibilities of changing the life situation of unemployment. It can be seen as a bit of a paradox considering that temporary work also unburdens the feelings of shame and the lack of social recognition.

In addition to full-time employment, a proper job gives you social recognition. As expressed in the interviews, a desire to get a job in a specific occupation or profession is often present, although the type of job is not always the most important factor. Yet the interviews show how certain kind of jobs are not considered as good enough; partly because of the non-existent career development, possible promotions or improvement of income; partly because of a wish to avoid certain types of jobs that are associated with shame and humiliation owing to how they are regarded by others:

And it's funny because that shame exists also when you take a shitty job, as people say. Because when I had a cleaning job, people could feel sorry for me and say, yes, but it's a job at least. Yes, it is a job, or isn't it? And then if you are satisfied with the cleaning job, it shows that you are not a person who wants to move forward in your life … among girls you will be totally uninteresting if you are satisfied with a cleaning job and short of funds, it's surely not a merit.

(Owen, 32)

As an unemployed person it often happens that you find yourself in a situation where you have to accept the best possible option, and as a long-term unemployed person you probably do not have many options at all.

This may lead to a situation where there is no way out; whatever you do—if you work or you don't—it is not regarded as socially acceptable by others.

To conclude this section, it can be stated that the findings here confirm earlier research regarding the influence of unemployment on social recognition. When the norm in the society is to work, being out of work tends to make the unemployed person into part of the societal periphery and a deviant (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 2001; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004; Gallie 2005; Mäkitalo 2006). The lack of recognition tends to lead to feelings of inferiority in relation to those that are employed. The shame that comes with not belonging to a certain profession may lead to strenuous everyday meetings where the unemployed must prepare how to act. In the worst scenario, this may lead to the unemployed person avoiding daily contacts with both friends and new acquaintances and to the process of self-marginalization. However, the negative influence of not belonging to the world of work does not seem to apply to the younger group of unemployed. There seems to exist a time buffer for fully taking on the individual responsibilities of working.

Further, according to these findings the strong Swedish work norm influences what the unemployed consider as a 'proper job'. A proper job equals to full-time employment that gives you social recognition. As full-time employment is not that easy to find today, this view of employment may hinder young adults in accepting temporary and on-call jobs, and in the long run prolong their unemployment period. In addition, a proper job should provide social recognition of some kind. This may lead to avoiding certain types of jobs that are associated with shame and humiliation because of how they are regarded by others. This attempt to find a proper job may lead the unemployed into a blind alley, where it is not socially acceptable to be unemployed or to work.

The Influence of Financial Hardship: The Lack of Money During Unemployment

Many problems derived from unemployment are related to the unemployed person's financial situation, and the extent of financial hardship a person suffers will influence the experience of being unemployed (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark and Strand 1999; Gallie et al. 2000). The Swedish welfare system is based on an ideology that the state carries the main responsibility for economic provision for individuals when they are not able to provide for themselves (Björnberg and Latta 2007).

Unemployment benefits are mainly based on the income history of the person (benefits based on earlier gainful employment). Many young unemployed individuals receive only the basic unemployment benefit (not income based) as they have not yet managed to 'work themselves up' to receive higher, income-based benefits. It is also not uncommon that the period when they are entitled to receive unemployment benefit has expired and they are living on social allowances. Therefore, being unemployed commonly means that you have limited financial resources, no matter if you are single, living by yourself or with your parents, or if you have a family of your own. A mother of three children describes their situation like this:

> You have to prioritize. We have never ever been abroad with our children. We've never taken our children on a flight. We have not been on any holiday abroad at all with them. We have taken the train sometimes when we have been able to order train tickets three months in advance for a very cheap price. We are not engaged in activities that cost money. Everything is very limited to what we are in the greatest need of. We buy winter clothes on sale for the coming winter season and we buy sneakers on sale for future needs in order to make ends meet.
>
> (Rosemary, 34)

As demonstrated in this quotation, financial problems caused by low levels of income during unemployment have a tendency to restrict social activities and restrict acquisition of everyday necessities, even clothing. As earlier research has shown (e.g., Thoits 1995; Nordenmark 1999; Starrin et al. 2001), the significant others such as family and friends are of great importance in helping to cope with the restrictions included in everyday life as unemployed. Getting instrumental support—such as extra money or a loan, dinner every now and then or access to a car—reduces the everyday burdens. Björnberg and Latta (2007) demonstrate that in Sweden there appears to be a downward flow of financial support between generations within the nuclear family, and that the recipients of such support are indeed the younger, especially those who are still establishing their foothold in the labor market and starting families. Yet they also argue that the current normative principle in Sweden is that families should not provide financial help unless very specific circumstances prevail.

Specific circumstances, such as unplanned expenses, tend to be hard to cope with even if you are employed, and even harder when you are dealing with limited resources during unemployment. These unplanned

expenses may be an unexpectedly high bill or for a doctor's appointment. It may not be that important to get the car fixed if it breaks down (it is hardly possible to afford a car if you are unemployed anyway), but it can be crucial if illness occurs—whatever kind of illness it may be. One of the respondents describes a situation:

> Two months ago I couldn't go to the dentist. I had acute pain, I had a big, ugly boil on the roof of my mouth and … and I had no money to go there, so I had to wait for it to go away on its own.… And that cost, a dentist would've cost SEK 1000. Sure, my mum offered to loan me the money, but I already owe her money and I don't really want to get into more debts. It's smart not to get into debt when you are unemployed.
>
> (Owen, 32)

Despite his acute illness this respondent felt that he could not borrow more money. Owing to his financial situation it would not be possible for him to pay back the loan. He did not want to be sponging off his mother. Rantakeisu et al. (1999) point out that feelings of shame derive from the failure to possess enough money to manage essential expenses. Thus, financial support of any kind from family is important in enabling the unemployed to pay for day-to-day or unplanned expenses; yet in addition to the financial debt this support can also be associated with a moral burden.

However, even though the normative principle in Sweden may be that families should be restrictive in providing financial support, the interviews confirm the results of Björnberg and Latta (2007) that general economic needs during unemployment tend to motivate parents to provide financial support for their children. Björnberg and Latta (2007) suggest the most important motives behind giving gifts or loans to both risk and non-risk individuals alike is love and concern for the recipients. This is quite obvious in the interviews; support may be provided to give the unemployed person a break from their harsh daily economy, to enjoy some luxury of life. Celebrations such as birthdays and Christmas are occasions that tend to give family members an opportunity to both give and receive money. Receiving these kinds of gifts can enable the unemployed to buy something he or she would otherwise not be able to afford. This kind of support can 'turn a grey weekday into a feast', and help the unemployed to look a little more positively at their situation.

The interviews also imply that too many and too generous contributions from significant others may lead to the unemployed person taking

the support for granted and getting a bit too comfortable. One of the respondents describes the financial support he receives like this:

> No problem. There is always money somewhere (laughs) so it's absolutely no problem. No, that's the way it is. I have experienced that [referring to the lack of money] because I have not been able to buy anything extra. The hard part is not being able to buy new clothes and games ..... you have to choose (laughter) but at birthdays you get money and at Christmas you get money, and my mom can be a bit generous sometimes anyway. That's the way it is.
>
> (Ed, 24)

The quotation shows that even if the unemployed person has limited financial resources, he is not at all worried about his finances. The relief of not having to worry about money all the time is of course positive, yet there is a risk of normalization of everyday life; namely that the person gets too light-hearted about the situation and loses the urge to search for a job.

This parent to child provision also constitutes a relationship of dependency between the unemployed person and his/her parents. Even if we consider that parents have a certain responsibility to assist their adult children financially, especially in the case of young adults, this kind of dependency can impede the individuals gaining independence (Björnberg and Latta 2007).

Getting back to how the lack of money limits the everyday life of the unemployed, the interviews show that not having money beyond what is necessary to meet basic needs tends to cause problems in maintaining one's social connections. Money is often a prerequisite for participation in social activities, as for example joining one's friends or former colleagues for some drinks or a movie; in other words, the lack of money tends to limit social contacts. Free time activities and the money at the disposal of the unemployed individual are related. One of the interviewees describes the situation as follows:

> If you had money when being unemployed you could do so many things. Then you could do sports and travel and go to festivals and live concerts and exercise and you could do anything, which you can't do now! But those two usually don't go hand in hand.
>
> (Dale, 21)

Yet the financial limitations are also related to the norms and values of Swedish society. Comparing your own living conditions to what is

considered to be normal in the society around you can make you feel like an outsider. This feeling of not been able to do what others do appears distinctly in the interviews, regardless of the respondents' class background. The next quote describes pleasure trips, something which this respondent thinks most (employed) people take for granted: 'There are things we in Sweden actually take for granted: like being able to go to Liseberg [an amusement park] once a year or being able to go on a charter trip for a week or something' (Quincy, 34).

Here the orientation towards the middle class is clear and the discrepancy in living conditions is experienced negatively. In addition to the feeling that this male respondent cannot live like 'everyone else', the difference also generates a feeling of guilt towards close friends and family members who are indirectly affected by his financial limitations; friends may be indirectly affected by the absence of company in free time activities and family may be affected by not getting any extras such as a trip to an amusement park. Even though this is the situation for many low-income families, limited financial resources tend to add to the feelings of shame and failure for the unemployed family provider, especially when it comes to male providers, as the next quotation so strikingly describes:

> I think it's very, very interesting that in the male world, it can be a defeat to be unemployed and a real hell of defeat to be an unemployed man and not able to support himself, his wife and children. A man really decreases in his masculine value. Figuratively, he becomes impotent when he is incapable of handling it, whereas a woman can fall back a little more in the role of a victim.
>
> (Rosemary, 34)

Swedish society (as many other societies) is still today characterized as a patriarchal society (e.g., Jónasdóttir 1991, 2003; Jakobsen 1999; Bergqvist 2004). Men are seen as the breadwinners to a greater extent than women, and if you don't manage to live up to this role, you suffer from feelings of failure.

The financial situation during unemployment also influences concrete plans for future. If you are in a situation of not having enough money for day-to-day expenses, financing further education or perhaps gaining a driver's license tend to be unrealistic—even though those things most certainly would help with your entrance into the labor market. The interview material reveals a clear ambivalence, shifting between periods of hope and periods of hopelessness. During the periods of hope, feelings of

responsibility to act on and solve the situation themselves prevail. During the periods of hopelessness, a kind of apathy connected with the long period of unemployment and financial hardship predominates. The hopelessness is described by a male respondent like this:

> At the moment the future seems pretty dark, because it doesn't seem as if I'll get a job. Of course you hope, you look for a job, but you don't believe as much anymore that something will come up, when you've come this far.
> (Michael, 30)

To conclude this section, it can be stated that the findings regarding the financial situation of the unemployed also confirm earlier research. Many problems limiting the everyday experiences of the unemployed are related to lack of money and the extent of financial hardship a person suffers (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark and Strand 1999; Gallie et al. 2000). Even though financial support from the Swedish welfare state is in general quite substantial, it only potentially covers the basic needs of an unemployed person, leaving out the possibility of what is regarded as normal consumption or consumption just for pleasure. Instrumental support such as gifts (in any form) from parents may ease the financial burdens of the unemployed, but loans functioning as provisional solutions tend to intensify the burdens. Swedish parents give substantial financial support to their children, and in the worst case this may prolong the period of dependency between children and parents.

The next section will show that money is also a prerequisite for participation in social activities, as for example joining one's friends or former colleagues for drinks or a movie; in other words, the lack of money also limits social contacts.

The Influence of Social Support: The Quantity and Quality of Social Contacts

A large number of studies have shown that employment is central in our everyday lives not only for earning our living but also plays a central role with regard to our need for social contacts and our participation in achieving collective aims (Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971). The social situation of the unemployed is conditioned by the presence or the absence of social support from significant others such as family and friends. Family relations (parent–child, husband–wife and sister–brother) build up the core

of social network of the unemployed, and this access to social support and social relations is fundamental to a person's well-being (e.g., Thoits 1995; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark 1999).

In line with earlier research (e.g. Kronauer 1998; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004) the interview material clearly shows that losing a job automatically reduces social contacts. This is simply because of the loss of a workplace social network, and the absence of people to spend time with especially during weekdays, because all of them are working. A quite obvious result obtained from the interviews is that this reduction in quantity of social contacts quite often renders one homebound. However, the reduction of contacts is not the only factor to blame for this spatial limitation of everyday life. To get stuck inside the four walls of one's home can also be due to the constant lack of money; you don't have the money to join your friends in activities outside the home sphere. Thus, a reduced number of contacts and a lack of money limits everyday life spatially—you don't have reasons for or possibilities to relocate during a normal day.

Hence, when stuck at home, the unemployed are not only limited in terms of spatial relocation but also in terms of engagement. As earlier research (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971) has shown, losing a job often leads to a loss of the basic daily routines and time structure; one seldom has something planned and it is easy to get bored. The lack of routines is quite obvious in the everyday life of the interviewees, causing passivity to varying degrees. As many researchers have already concluded (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971; Mäkitalo 2006), this kind of passivity can lead to nothing appearing to have meaning. The interviews confirm that this passivity can, for example, find expression in having difficulties in getting up in the morning and in day–night reversal—sleeping during the day and being awake at night as well as postponing the few tasks you have on your agenda. Why should one get up early when one has nothing to get up for? The days pass without specific goals. At first this 'freedom' from routines may be experienced as a positive result of unemployment, but the longer the period of unemployment lasts the more difficult it gets. It seems that not having anything to do is one of the most stressful consequences of unemployment.

Although unemployed people are aware of the passiveness of their lives, it appears to be very difficult to take the initiative and make arrangements to (re)organize their present situation. As Mäkitalo (2006) concludes, unemployment is often associated with a feeling of failure to act. Staying at home doing nothing is common in the lives of the interviewees:

> It's things like sitting at home all the time. I've had periods, while I have been unemployed, when I've just felt, well, where am I sort of … felt that I'm not going anywhere, that I'm stagnating, that my development has stopped and that's extremely awful. I could spend eight hours doing nothing, sometimes you just sit and wait for time to pass.
>
> (Michael, 30)

The failure to act has a tendency to make everything function slower and to get tougher as time goes by. Planning—if you make any plans at all—tends to be about rationing out smaller tasks so that you have something to do each day. This could perhaps be compared with the life situation for many pensioners who lead a lonely life without that many social contacts outside the home sphere; a short walk to the mailbox to collect mail may constitute the highlight of the day.

As stated above, losing a job does not have to mean that your contacts with old colleagues are totally eliminated. Yet even if the contacts are not eliminated, they get sparser over time because you no longer share the common world of the workplace. However, even the sparser contacts fulfill other kind of social needs that the significant others are more rarely able to fulfill. As Maria Jahoda stated as early as the 1930s, through employment individuals are linked to goals that are anchored in a collective and in a collective identity (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971). With colleagues you talk about things which you do not discuss at home and you get to develop your work life identity. The mother of two discusses this as follows:

> It's sort of that you do not have colleagues that you meet every day in social events. The one you meet every day is your husband. You don't have the same social relationship with him as you have with colleagues. And the kids, you are the mother to. But of course there is the other part when you're only yourself. The person's part-time personality, if one can say so, gets no nutrition at all when you do not have meetings in social life as you do when you have a job. I don't have daily contact with my friends or my siblings who are unemployed; maybe I have contact with them once a week or so.
>
> (Rosemary, 34)

Thus, even though having a family of your own automatically protects you from losing all of your social contacts, a family cannot hinder the shrinking of those contacts. You don't get to develop your 'part-time personality' that belongs to working life, and as Nordenmark and Strand (1999) state it is harder to maintain a meaningful social identity

without work. Work is part of our identity, influencing our self-esteem. Nevertheless, the interviews confirm Jahoda's findings (1982) that household tasks and taking care of a family to some degree compensates for time structure and routines provided by work. Having a family, especially one with small children, 'forces' you to get up in the morning, get dressed, cook proper meals and eat at regular hours. Life still has a meaning and you cannot sink into passivity even though you are without a job. The following quotation describes a positive side of unemployment that is more seldom emphasized:

> There are many advantages being unemployed. As a parent of young children then, I've been unemployed on and off since I got my first son. It is ten years ago now. And I was unemployed six months before I had my last child, and it's six years ago now. At times like that it's great to be unemployed. I mean pregnant and growing like a hippopotamus and not having the strength to cope with work, then it's perfect to be unemployed. Then I was on maternity leave for a year and then I was unemployed for a year and it gives much, much more time for the children and more opportunity to get in control with things at home, more than you would get if you had a job.
>
> (Rosemary, 34)

Thus unemployment can be experienced positively for various reasons; it helps you to get things at home under control, gives more time with your children and lessens the physical strain of pregnancy. Yet enjoying unemployment is not socially acceptable, or, as Mäkitalo (2006) puts it, the unemployed have 'the right to suffer'. Mäkitalo means that since, according to the norm, unemployed persons are failures they need to feel worthless to be socially accepted. It requires strong confidence and self-esteem to be able to act against the norm and enjoy it. Furthermore, considering the Swedish patriarchal society, it is probably easier for a woman/mother than for a man/father to feel this way. As stated above, men are still seen as the breadwinners with financial responsibilities and it is women who have the primary responsibility for home and family (e.g., Jónasdóttir 1991, 2003; Jakobsen 1999; Hirdman 2001; Bergqvist 2004). Sainsbury (1999) argues that although the Swedish welfare state has made it possible for both men and women to be family breadwinners, the gender equality concerning family breadwinners is not implemented in real life. In line with this, the results of Bergqvist and Eriksson (2015) indicate that the gender philosophy of young adults hasn't changed—today it is still considered more important for men than for women to have a job.[2]

Thus, having a family of your own helps you to keep a time structure and routines during unemployment and may even help you see the positive side of not having a job. Keeping routines also counters the risk of experiencing difficulties in adapting to a busy work schedule compared with a person whose life has veered too far from a structured routine. Yet it needs to be emphasized that the lack of routines is not always negative. Instead, it can be seen as freedom from routines, as presenting a chance to be creative and to undertake personal development (Mäkitalo 2006), as described below by two of the respondents:

> Now that I have more time, you will find other things to throw it on. I feel better because I do not just sit in front of the computer, I have some creative chores. Playing the guitar occurs much more often now, and even a little picture painting. I also collect the little things like game figures and stuff for table top games. Strategic miniatures, we can say that.
>
> (Keith, 30)

> It's free time, you can be creative with personal development. You can live as if you were a financially independent unemployed.… If I had a job, then I had to prioritize other things. And it says nothing about the quality of life really. I can maintain the quality of life as unemployed, but not all have the recreational interests to do so. Its high quality of life, however, not economically.
>
> (Owen, 32)

Here the financial independence refers to the possibility of choice in your everyday activities. Since you don't have a schedule to keep to, different activities may be planned at home or with friends. If one manages to replace the functions of employment with something outside the workplace, unemployment does not have to be so problematic (Nordenmark 1999). However, if one is too satisfied with being unemployed, getting a job could mean losing family time, being unable to plan the day as you wish and losing the unstructured routine that was introduced during the period of unemployment. This could be a cause for not wanting to get a job.

Malfunction of Social Support

As already discussed, significant others play an important role in providing an unemployed person with the support needed—both instrumental and emotional. Access to social contacts during unemployment is quite crucial in order to not be excluded from society. Yet having access is not the only

matter of importance; it is more important that the support provided is the support needed by the unemployed individual. It is not the quantity of the contacts as much as the quality that matters. According to Thoits (1995), social support can also be turned into something demanding.

The importance of having someone to discuss one's situation with clearly emerged from the interviews. According to Thoits (1995), a person has access to emotional support when he/she has somebody who listens to what the person wants to say, somebody that the person can trust and somebody that cares about the person's well-being. Having the possibility to discuss everyday life may prevent unemployed people from shutting themselves off from their surroundings. A functioning social network can provide the unemployed with the emotional support to cope with negative episodes.

Even though family and friends have good intentions, they don't always manage to support successfully. For example, Swedish parents seem to have a tendency to constantly urge their children to look for employment. The appeals in themselves may not always be negative, and may just as well function as encouragement. Yet they can quite easily be experienced as pressure—a constant reminder that the unemployed fail to fulfill the expectations of their surroundings. This kind of malfunctioning may reinforce the already present feeling of shame the person experiences, as one of the respondents describes: 'I don't think my mother could treat me in a worse way. If we have a fight, she never forgets to mention that I'm unemployed … meaning like worthless' (Caitlin, 21).

It is quite apparent from this quotation that it is not socially acceptable to be without work, and daughters do not get any alleviation from that norm. Friends and family may encourage you to find a job, but it is also important to be aware of the negative influence they may exert. In addition to parents' expectations of their unemployed children, the Swedish Public Employment Service also has expectations of the job seekers. Sometimes these expectations are experienced as unreasonable—such as looking for a job eight hours a day—and this causes pressure. The following quotations describe the pressure to look for a job on a full-time basis:

Well it was like … as soon as I said I was not working eight hours a day to look for a job, it was like she [the official] was trying to discover if it was like that … that I was like not working fully. It was much negative focus. But okay, you do it, you try to do what you can as well, someday you might not make it.

(Keith, 30)

People think that you can sit at home and look for a job a whole day. Certainly you have a number of hours, but you cannot take a whole day for it. You may sit for two hours and then you must do something else, something completely different to disconnect.

(Felicia, 25)

Thus the unemployed person risks falling into a circle of guilt and shame for not behaving as significant others or society expects them to. In addition, this kind of pressure together with repeatedly receiving 'sorry, not this time' replies to job applications may easily result in a lack of self-confidence. If you are not confident in yourself and your abilities, it is almost impossible to show others who you are and what you can do. One of the unemployed expresses this as follows: 'The feeling of not being capable of anything makes me feel worthless.… And I can't expect other people to like me if I don't like myself first' (Michael, 30).

Cullberg (2007) argues that unemployed persons sometimes unconsciously punish themselves through thinking negative and destructive things about themselves, their abilities and their future. Therefore, as Augner (2009) argues, it is important to surround yourself with people who can give you positive energy to be able to experience the feeling of meaningfulness in life. Socializing with other unemployed persons may have suppressive effects, as one of the respondents looking for the opposite—uplifting effects—describes it:

You do not socialize with other unemployed just because you are there too. Or I do not do it anyway. For those I have known who are unemployed, they have totally isolated themselves. And it was a strange situation. I saw it as an opportunity to encourage one another to seek out each other's interests and what would be fitting for everybody. But it was the opposite effect, I felt so down … and once they socialize, they do not want to talk about things that are boring (laugh).

(Owen, 32)

Thus, unemployed friends may not be able to provide you with the kind of company you are looking for. If they have lost their self-confidence and have feelings of shame about their situation, these circumstances will get you to give up rather than do something about the situation. To socialize with these friends probably will not give you positive energy.

On the other hand, there may be many advantages in keeping company with others who are unemployed or have friends in a similar situation

(e.g., Nordenmark 1999). Friends who have been unemployed themselves may appear to be more understanding of the problems that an unemployed person encounters. Amongst unemployed friends you are just like everybody else, which may diminish the feelings of shame that are caused by being unemployed (e.g., Kessler et al. 1988; Nordenmark 1999).

However, if an unemployed friend succeeds in finding a job it may result in feelings of pressure for the still unemployed person—pressure to succeed in finding a job as the friend did. This pressure can also include things such as taking part in different activities or travelling, which many employed people can afford to do. This kind of pressure may intensify the feelings of shame experienced by the unemployed and may even lead the unemployed person to experience envy.

The Role of 'Living Online' During Unemployment

As already stated, unemployment almost automatically reduces the number of social contacts and renders the individual homebound. This is true regarding contacts in real life—face-to-face contacts. The reduction in contacts does not apply to the new kind of social relationships that are acquired through Internet and social media usage. These new contacts are not limited in time or space like face-to-face contacts (Zhao 2006).

Today, an essential part of our lives is dedicated to gather information, communicate, interact and even build up our identities on the Internet. Seven out of ten Internet users visit social networks sometimes and almost all of those that are members of a social network are also a member of Facebook. According to Findahl (2014), 91 percent of the Swedish population over 18 years of age had access to both a computer and Internet in 2014. Frequent Internet use and communication through social media has become integrated with daily activities. Even though the statistics for the development of the Internet and its usage in Sweden are quite extensive, there is very little to be found regarding the unemployed. Some results (Findahl 2014) show that 94 percent of the unemployed in Sweden have at least sometimes used the Internet to search for jobs, while 49 percent do so daily.

The findings of this study indicate that there are many positive effects of being connected to the Internet while unemployed. The Internet may reduce the negative consequences of unemployment such as limited social contacts, passivity and well-being. Today, it is a common strategy for unemployed people to look for jobs online. Prior research on Internet use

and unemployment has mostly dealt with the use of Internet methods to look for work and how to incorporate the Internet into job search strategies (Kuhn and Skuterud 2004). Initially, the Internet was developed to provide people with access to information, but today it is also considered to be a social technology that provides its users with human support and a sense of belonging (Amichai-Hamburger and Furnham 2007). Being connected to the Internet and communicating through social media may compensate for the loss of social contacts during unemployment and it may reduce feelings of isolation, since it provides one with more opportunities to communicate with other people. According to Lee and Lee (2010), social media applications allow members to participate online to obtain mutual benefits among group members, and they may be distinguished from other digital media because of their social function.

People who are unavailable in real life on working days are still available online for parts of these days. Internet usage also provides opportunities to communicate with new contacts, including those who are geographically remote. Zhao (2006) argues that in the online sphere complete strangers can get acquainted even though they have never met face to face, and online acquaintances may even have more intimate knowledge of each other than offline friends do. Less active effort is required for online communication than when keeping in touch in a 'traditional way', where two parties call each other, decide on a time and place to meet and have to keep these arrangements. One of the interviewees tells about his daily routine as follows:

> Then you go up to check the computer if there are any new shows or movies that you might be interested in, then you check on chat programs and stuff if something has happened, read the news, go out maybe in one and a half two hours or something, come home to fix something to eat, and then sit down to the computer again.
>
> (Ed, 24)

Another aspect of Internet use is that virtual contact allows for the modification of the self. Positive aspects may be emphasized, while those which are seen as negative may be hidden in a manner which is impossible in direct contact. By getting involved in online role-playing games, for example, several functions are simultaneously fulfilled. The possibility to develop skills and knowledge which are respected in these circles is experienced very positively, not least because the unemployed seldom meet with respect in the outside world. Furthermore, playing games keeps

one occupied and provides one with positive experiences. One of the interviewees, a male in his early twenties, says: 'I play *World of Warcraft* in my spare time. It's quite nice when you don't have anything else to do. It sort of fills your day quite well and then you've got something to look forward to and so on' (Baines, 21).

Several studies emphasize the social role of the Internet as the provider of communication channels between like-minded others, its potential being to increase the feeling of safety and to help individuals from stigmatized groups to build up a sense of community (McKenna and Bargh 1998). The results of a recent study by Suphan, Feuls and Fieseler (2012) indicate that belonging to a social media group is helpful in real social life activities and may compensate for a disadvantaged situation such as unemployment. They note that using social media can lead to an increase in the well-being of the unemployed if they can transfer their contacts into real social life activities. Thus, 'sitting at the computer' does not necessarily result from laziness and 'only' playing games.

In addition to this, the computer can be used to maintain social contacts; it can also provide the unemployed youth with information and tutoring for occupations which may contribute to personal development and improvement of skills and abilities. One of the respondents describes that he uses several hours a day to search literature and data on the Internet to refresh his knowledge in the subjects that could help him to get a job. However, as Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2003) point out, the Internet and its users are not homogeneous units, and therefore the Internet's potential to improve well-being will vary between the individual users and between the different services online. For some individuals, if used in the right way, the Internet has the potential to enhance well-being.

Yet several other studies emphasize the opposite; that Internet use is likely to interfere with other activities, decrease communication with family members, increase depression and loneliness, and result in social isolation (Turkle 1996; Brenner 1997; Kraut et al. 1998) The interview results indicate that playing games in particular may have unwelcome consequences when there are no external timeframes to limit the time spent at the computer—as during unemployment. In some cases this can lead to game addiction, or to transforming an originally fun occupation into a demanding duty. In this context, one of the interviewees experienced giving up playing games as a relief: 'There was a lot less pressure, I had much less ... pressure on me. Because you feel that you had, that you were expected to perform in front of your online friends' (Baines, 21).

So as so many other factors in everyday life, social media and Internet usage can have both positive and negative effects for the individual concerned. With regard to unemployment, more research is needed to be able to conclude whether the positive or negative effects are the rule or whether the effects are simply dependent on the individual.

To conclude this section, we can state that the findings confirm earlier research (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971; Thoits 1995; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark 1999; Kronauer 1998; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004; Mäkitalo). Unemployment does not have to cause the total elimination of contacts nor does it necessarily influence the quality of these contacts. Further, significant others are very important in providing the support needed, yet the support provided has to conform to the support needed; otherwise the support may have destructive effects. The strong work norm prevailing in Swedish society may be the cause of avoiding contacts with other people. A family of your own may protect you from losing all social contacts, yet a family cannot prevent the contact net from shrinking. Finally, social media and Internet usage can have both positive and negative effects during unemployment. The findings also show that there are positive effects of unemployment too: freedom from routines and possibilities to enhance creative self-development.

Conclusions

The most salient pattern characteristic to Sweden shows that long-term unemployment regarding the group of young adults does not lead to total exclusion from society—total collapse of finances or total loss of social contacts—yet limitations of some kind seem to be the rule. The findings also confirm an existing risk of social exclusion.

In line with earlier research, the unemployed young adults find themselves not being able to live as expected by Swedish society (e.g., Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 2001; Mäkitalo 2006). Owing to the strong work norm, being unemployed causes the person to lose social recognition. Ordinary everyday meetings in the street may become grueling encounters for which the unemployed has to be prepared how to act and how to excuse the lack of employment. The consequence of this can be avoidance of social contacts in order not to be confronted with prejudices about their situation. In the worst scenario, this may lead to self-marginalization; the person starts to regard him-/herself as a deviant who does not possess the qualities required to change the situation (e.g., Kronauer 1998; Starrin

et al. 2001; Gallie 2005; Mäkitalo 2006). It is interesting to note, though, that the negative influence of not belonging to the world of work doesn't seem to apply to the younger group of unemployed adults. The younger respondents did not raise the issue of shaming processes. There seems to exist a time buffer allowing those unemployed who only recently finished school to not fully take on the individual responsibilities of working life; that is, accepting not working tends to be higher among the unemployed young adults just out of school.

It is also interesting how the Swedish work norm seems to have an influence on how the young adults, no matter their age, regard a proper job. A proper job equals to full-time employment that gives you financial security and social recognition. The importance of getting full-time employment is related to the fact that it gives you access to the privileges provided by the system. The problem with this view of work is that full-time employment is not that easy to come by today, especially for the younger person with none or very little work experience. This view of employment may prevent young adults from accepting temporary and on-call jobs and in the long run prolong their unemployment period. In addition, this view of what constitutes a proper job also includes gaining some kind of social recognition. This may lead to avoiding certain types of jobs that are associated with shame and humiliation because of how they are regarded by others. This pursuit of a proper job may lead the unemployed into a blind alley where it is not socially accepted to be unemployed or to work. How these young adults regard work could indicate that the value of work is changing from the more traditional values of contributing to society to more materialistic values of fulfillment of needs, such as security, sustenance and material luxuries.

This shifting of values may be the explanation for their unwillingness to work part time. It may depend on younger and more unexperienced unemployed adults' lack of work identity, and full-time employment appears to be the only way of gaining the advantages they see as most desirable. It may seem surprising that nothing was found to indicate that the societal strong work norm has inspired the young unemployed to do something about their situation; the effect is rather demoralizing negatively influencing identity formation.

In line with earlier research, the findings show that being unemployed commonly means that you have limited financial resources (e.g., Nordenmark and Strand 1999; Kronauer 1998; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Gallie et al. 2000; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004), no matter if you are

single, living by yourself or with your parents, or if you have a family of your own. Many problems limiting the everyday experiences of the unemployed are related to lack of money and the extent of financial hardship a person suffers. Money is a prerequisite for participation in social activities, such as joining one's friends or former colleagues for drinks or a movie; that is, the lack of money also limits social contacts. Even though financial support from the Swedish welfare state is in general quite substantial, it only potentially covers the basic needs of an unemployed person, leaving out what would be regarded by the unemployed and others as normal consumption or consumption for pleasure. Instrumental support such as gifts (in any form) from parents is important in order to cope with the situation and ease the financial burden. This kind of support can 'turn a grey weekday into a feast' and help the unemployed to view their situation a bit more positively. However, loans functioning as provisional solutions have a tendency to intensify financial burdens, because of the unemployed person's lack of ability to pay back this kind of loan.

The importance of family relations in providing instrumental support for unemployed young adults is almost more significant that was expected. However, the interviews also imply that too generous and repeated contributions from significant others may cause a normalization of the everyday life of unemployment, and may lead to the unemployed young adult getting too comfortable with the situation. In the long run this could lead to a loss of motivation to search for a job. This parent to children provision—not only considering the more generous contributions—constitutes a relationship of dependency between the unemployed person and his/her parents, which, also in the long run, may impede the individuals reaching independency, as Björnberg and Latte (2007) argue.

As expected, based on earlier research (e.g., Jahoda et al. [1933] 1971; Thoits 1995; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Kronauer 1998; Nordenmark 1999; Kieselbach and Traiser 2004; Mäkitalo 2006), unemployment does not have to be the cause for total elimination of social contacts, although some kind of reduction seems to be the rule. Losing a job automatically reduces social contacts owing to the loss of a workplace social network and the loss of people to socialize with. This quantitative reduction of social contacts quite often renders an unemployed person homebound. To get stuck inside those four walls can also be caused by a constant lack of money: you don't have the money to join your friends in activities outside the home sphere. Therefore, a reduced number of contacts and lack of money limits everyday life spatially— you don't have reasons for or possibilities to relocate during a normal day.

Unemployment does not necessarily influence the quality of these contacts, even though the contacts may be subjected to testing. It is important that the support provided through these contacts, is the support needed by the unemployed individual. The social support may be turned into something demanding and harmful, even though family and friends have good intentions. The constant urge to search for employment that comes from Swedish parents, usually meant as encouragement, can quite easily transform into a feeling of pressure—as a constant reminder that the unemployed fail to fulfill the expectations of their surroundings.

A very interesting and more seldom discussed finding is that unemployment can be experienced positively for various reasons. From the perspective of a parent of small children, and quite understandably, this 'free time' can be used to get take control of domestic tasks and it gives more time with children. From the perspective of a single unemployed young adult this 'free time' can be used to fortify creativity and self-development. Being free of employment time stands for freedom from routines, which is not possible when working. Yet, since it is not socially accepted not to work, enjoying unemployment becomes something of a secret not to be shared with others. As already stated by Mäkitalo (2006), to be able to go against societal norms and enjoy it at the same time requires strong confidence and self-esteem that many of the long-term unemployed are lacking.

The finding also reveals that—even today—there are noticeable gender differences regarding the experience of unemployment. Motherhood may function as a mitigating factor for not working and make it easier and more legitimate to enjoy the extra time home that unemployment provides. Taking care of children may be seen to be more meaningful than work—from the point of view of the unemployed person as well as from the point of view of others—and may modify feelings of shame for not working. However, the view of fatherhood does not work the same way, even today. Although Sweden is generally regarded as a country of high gender equality, and as Sainsbury (1999) argues, the Swedish welfare state has made it possible for both men and women to be family breadwinners, gender equality concerning family breadwinners is not implemented in real life. The findings reveal and confirm the result of Bergqvist and Eriksson (2015) that men are still considered today to be the main providers for their family, and it is still considered more important for men than for women to have a job.

Also in line with earlier research (e.g., Zhao 2006; Amichai-Hamburger and Furnham 2007; Suphan et al. 2012), the findings here indicate that

there are many positive effects of being connected to the Internet while been unemployed. As unemployment almost automatically reduces the quantity of social contacts in real life, being connected to the Internet and communicating through social media may compensate for the loss of these contacts and may reduce feelings of isolation. Internet usage also provides opportunities to communicate with new contacts, as well as with those contacts that are geographically remote. Playing games may have positive influences on the everyday life of young unemployed adults through keeping them occupied and providing them with positive experiences. So far, the research in this part of the field of unemployment is quite limited and more research is needed.

Kronauer (1998) argues that social exclusion arises from the sum and interaction of different types of exclusion: labor market exclusion, economic exclusion, institutional exclusion, social exclusion, cultural exclusion and spatial exclusion. Related to the Swedish conditions, all types of exclusion but one—spatial exclusion—totally or partly applies to the unemployed young adult's situation. The spatial limitation here applies to individuals' personal day-to-day experiences, where they do not have reasons for or possibilities to relocate during a normal day, not to spatial segregation in society where special areas tend to be inhabited by the unemployed and those with low financial resources. Thus it can be concluded that Swedish long-term unemployed youth are at substantial risk of social exclusion.

Yet it should be emphasized that what happens in the everyday life of the unemployed young adults in Sweden, and what the consequences of these events are, is always dependent on the individuals involved and cannot be determined beforehand.

Notes

1. The summary of the Swedish labor market in January 2016 comes from http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se. Arbetsförmedlingen is a national public agency with 320 local employment offices across the whole country. Their mission, long-term objectives and tasks are given to Arbetsförmedlingen by the Swedish Parliament and the Government. The overall goal is to facilitate matching between jobseekers and employers, with special priority given to jobseekers who, for various reasons, experience extra challenges in being able to find employment. It is also their responsibility to ensure that the unemployment insurance scheme is effectively used as a transition insurance between jobs.

2. The Bergqvist and Eriksson (2015) article is based on data collected in the same project as the interviews for this chapter: 'Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding the Conditions and Prospects for Social and Political Integration of Young Unemployed' (YOUNEX). The countries included in the study were France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. The article is based on work package 3 in this project, which is an individual survey conducted in 2009–2010 with three categories of young people (18–34 years old) in each country; long-term unemployed, those in precarious employments and those regularly employed.

Appendix 1

Table 5.1   List of interviews

Name	Age	Sex	Education	Household	Migration background
Archie	20	Male	Secondary	Father	No
Baines	21	Male	Secondary	Parents	No
Caitlin	21	Female	Secondary	A partner	No
Dale	21	Male	Secondary	Sister	No
Ed	24	Male	Secondary	A partner	No
Felicia	25	Female	Secondary	A partner	No
Gabriel	26	Male	Tertiary	A partner	Yes
Hannah	26	Female	Tertiary	A partner	Yes
Ilona	26	Female	Tertiary	A partner	Yes
Jacob	29	Male	Compulsory	Wife and two children	Yes
Keith	30	Male	Secondary (not finished tertiary)	Single	No
Lindsay	30	Female	Tertiary	A partner	Yes
Michael	30	Male	Secondary	Single	No
Nicky	30	Male	Tertiary		Yes
Owen	32	Male	Secondary (not finished tertiary)	Single	No
Peirce	33	Male	Tertiary	A partner	Yes
Quincy	34	Male	Secondary	A daughter	No
Marie-Rosemary	34	Female	Tertiary	Husband and three children	No

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Youth Long-Term Unemployment and Its Social Consequences in Italy: 'In a World That Does Not Belong to Me'

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Introduction

In a path-defining study about life at a time of unemployment in the late 1970s in France, sociologist Dominique Schnapper ([1981] 1994) argued that individuals did not univocally experience unemployment; rather, the way in which an unemployed person perceived and experienced his/her status depended on his/her social, economic and educational capital. Put simply, Schnapper argued that social class could be considered a reliable predictor of the capacity that a person had to deal with unemployment. People belonging to the upper classes obviously suffered less material

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deprivation by virtue of their family's fortune, although—less obviously—they also had higher chances of preserving their social identity than the working classes. In fact, according to Schnapper, overcoming unemployment also depended on the capacity of the unemployed to find a 'social replacement status' (*statut de substitution*) to compensate the social status lost with the job.

While upper and middle classes could mobilize their social and educational capital to occupy their time and elaborate a new status, the working-class unemployed could not. They faced the hardship of economic deprivations, as well as struggling to find a replacement social status. In fact, their position in society, as well as a relevant part of their individual and social identity, relied on their job. The working environment provides working-class people with most of the opportunities of socialization, fun and engagement that everyone needs. Hence, Schnapper highlighted that in France those unemployed with fewer resources were those experiencing the *chômage total*, the 'total unemployment': not having a job turned life into one not worth living.

Therefore, a study like Schnapper's unveiled the differentiated effects of unemployment on those experiencing it, as well as strengthening the appreciation of non-material aspects among the consequences brought into people's lives by losing their job. In this sense, the work of the French sociologist recalled Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel's (1972) seminal study of the Austrian city of Marienthal in the 1930s. In that case, the disbanding of the local factory employing (directly or indirectly) an entire community brought the material and psychological decline of its inhabitants. In the Marienthal study, Jahoda and her colleagues reported in even more depth the 'human costs' of unemployment (Fleck 2002). In particular, they focused on how unemployment affects human needs in relation to shared experiences, structured time and regular activity, collective purpose, status, circumstances and identity (Cole 2007). The ethnographic analysis in Marienthal showed that once they lost their job at the factory, men and women suffered from being trapped into a series of ordinary activities such as taking children to school, going for a walk, preparing lunch and dinner and doing some work at home. These activities were appreciated during 'ordinary time', but under unemployment they became a series of atomized, segmented and—as such—meaningless activities. These routines entailed a dynamic of self-exclusion. People lost interest in getting together, they spoke less among themselves and avoided opportunities of interaction. Resignation was a common characteristic among inhabitants,

while all regretted the 'beautiful old times' when they could go to the factory and work (Jahoda et al. 1972).

In this chapter, we propose a descriptive and exploratory overview of the breadth of consequences provoked by unemployment among a small sample of contemporary young Italian unemployed people living in Turin. We investigate the perception that unemployed persons have concerning their quality of life, and scrutinize how contemporary social relations may be affected by the loss of a job despite all the support that an unemployed person may receive from the welfare state provisions that were not available in 1930s Marienthal. As in the case of Schnapper and Jahoda and their colleagues, we focus on social exclusion dynamics generated by joblessness, as this remains a rather neglected aspect in current scholarship. In fact, since such classic sociological works very few studies have analyzed the social consequences of unemployment from a micro-sociological perspective (Marsden and Duff 1975; Maurer 2001; Remondino 1998; Seabrook 1983). Indeed, within such studies—as in recent research on youth unemployment - issues of political activation have been the most analyzed topics. However, individual perceptions of unemployment are rarely taken into account in this literature, given the focus on the triggering factors of the collective action of those with limited economic resources. In other words, this strand of research focuses on the circumstances and actors that facilitate or obstruct unemployed people's mobilization in the public sphere (Baglioni et al. 2008a; Chabanet 2008; Chabanet and Faniel 2012; della Porta 2008; Demazière and Pignoni 1998; Fillieule 1993). In such studies, individual perceptions are not always at the center of the analysis; consequently, almost a century after Jahoda's study, and almost 30 years after Schnapper's book, it remains meaningful to enquiry about individual perceptions and experiences of unemployment as a widespread feature of Western contemporary societies, especially among young people.

Moreover, despite the persistence of unemployment as an important social and political issue, societal characteristics have deeply changed with respect to the times described by Jahoda and Schnapper. For this reason, we decided to develop our analysis taking inspiration from recent theoretical contributions that attempt to tie social exclusion to a combination of lacking material resources and denied experiences of consumption (Alwitt and Donley 1996; Bauman 2005, 2007; Gordon et al. 2000; Hamilton 2009; Levitas 1998; O'Boyle 1998). From this perspective, by preventing people from both primary and leisure lifestyle consumption, unemployment leads not only to material but also to *social* deprivation and stigmatization

(Dovidio et al. 2000; Miller and Kaiser 2001; Townsend 1987; Thompson et al. 1994). Recent empirical studies have been conducted—mainly in the United Kingdom or the United States—by business or marketing scholars focusing on the failed act of consumption *per se* rather than its social consequences (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Cohen 2004; De Graaf et al. 2005; Henry 2005; Hill 2002).

In this chapter, we will focus on the social consequences of denied access to consumption and leisure activities led by a situation of unemployment and scarce economic resources. We aim at providing a contribution to fill the existing gap in the aforementioned literature by presenting an account of how young people portray and express their experiences of unemployment in Turin, an Italian city that has been the setting of the largest national automotive industry (FIAT, now FCA) across the twentieth century. The findings discussed here are the result of a grounded theory-led analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967) of 19 in-depth interviews conducted with young long-term unemployed persons. The research is part of a larger project funded by European Union's 7th Framework Programme (YOUNEX—Youth, unemployment and social exclusion) concerning unemployment policies and life experiences.

We interviewed seven women and twelve men aged from 19 to 34 years (see Appendix). All interviews were carried out in a face-to-face format between April and May 2010 and lasted around 90 minutes on average. Most of the interviewees were recruited at the job desk of a local social enterprise—the Consorzio Sociale Abele Lavoro—while a few others were reached through a snowballing technique (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

Our interviewees share some background characteristics: they all have a working-class or petit bourgeoisie background; some of their parents arrived in Turin during the 1960s and 1970s from the less-developed South to work in the automotive industry sector, which prospered around FIAT; those with previous working experience were mainly employed in the informal or irregular market and in low-qualified jobs (mainly retail or restaurant services), even for long periods, and their educational capital was limited to compulsory education (only two interviewees held a university degree). Having adopted an idiographic approach, our sample does not aim at being representative of the entire population of young unemployed people in Italy, which cuts across social classes and educational levels (the overall youth unemployment rate in Italy was close to 28 percent in 2010).[1] However, our sample is able to portray a variety of unemployment

experiences among young people living in a large Italian post-industrial city: an iconic image of a multifaceted social phenomenon (Copans 1996).

The interviews are based upon a semi-structured questionnaire and, although most of the interviewees were happy with the questions, there were a few situations of reluctance to provide articulated answers. The difficulty in receiving 'meaningful' answers in such cases can be considered a result itself: a mix of self-disclosure difficulties—typically encountered when investigating sensitive subjects—could also be influenced by the lack of a proper public discourse on unemployment issues (see Baglioni et al. 2008b; Baglioni 2010).

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section presents the research context (the city of Turin), before we proceed to discuss the effects of unemployment as perceived by our interviewees in terms of material and psychological deprivation. Subsequently, we analyze their coping strategies, before finally summarizing our discussion and presenting some concluding remarks.

Young People Coping with Unemployment: When Material Deprivation Leads to Social Exclusion

In the YOUNEX project,[2] the city of Turin was selected as a case study as it represents a paradigmatic case of a heavily industrialized area that has experienced a dramatic phenomenon of deindustrialization in the last two decades, resulting in a large number of dismissed workers, as well as a strong 'tertiarization' of its economic infrastructure (Berta 2006; Gallino 2003). Such a change has created some new opportunities of employment targeting the most educated segments of the young population, although it has been unable to reallocate low-skilled workers who lost their jobs during the deindustrialization process. This has generated a consistent unemployment that has primarily affected the youth. Along with Rome, Naples and Milan, Turin is one of the most important economic and cultural centers in Italy. It has over one million inhabitants and is one of the wealthiest cities in the country. In terms of the service sector's size, it ranks first in the Piedmont region and twenty-fourth in Italy (Comune di Torino 2006). The city represents an opportunity for foreign investors, although the areas of industrial specialization and production have undergone a great shift in the past decade. Despite being heavily weakened by waves of economic crisis in 1993, at the beginning of 2000 and after 2008, Turin's automotive industry continues to represent a main pillar in Italy's industry. On the other hand, a number of different sectors have emerged, offering

greater differentiation and subsequently playing a much more central role in Turin's current economy: ICT, design, strategic aerospace research, audiovisual production and—above all—the service sector (characterized by a large number of small and medium-sized companies).

Overall, Turin is changing its development model, leaving behind its industrial past and becoming much more similar to other northern Italian cities, in particular Milan. In a sense, this means that Turin's identity is also changing. 'It is no longer the capital of FIAT, which is now part of a global group', but rather home to a 'vast amount of small new companies' active in strategic sectors for the country's future (Berta 2006).[3] However, these changes come with some risks, even in the expanding sectors. In fact, during the economic crisis started in 2008, firms in the industrial sector relied heavily on traditional 'social shock absorbers' (forms of public intervention to maintain workers' wage levels in case of collective dismissals) such as the CIG (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni), whereas in the service sector many temporary contracts were not renewed once they expired. In the latter case, workers could not even rely on public welfare measures, thus affecting the living condition of young first entrants into the labor market. Workers with low or medium qualifications (high school diploma or less) are actually experiencing great hardship, and it appears that it will be very difficult to integrate such workers given Turin's current economic situation. This has resulted in the formation of a group of medium- to low-qualified young unemployed persons facing difficulties in finding a job, a group already representing 50 percent of the youth in Turin compared with 30–40 percent in other northern regions such as Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Lombardy. In addition, the rate of inactivity among young people (i.e., the number of people below 34 years old who are not actively looking for a job, also labeled as 'discouraged' or 'unoccupied') peaked 38.4 percent in one year (2008–2009) in the Province of Turin, while the average for Northern Italy was 35 percent (Provincia di Torino 2009). In sum, interviews were conducted during a period of generalized economic crisis and downturn, characterized by a widespread feeling of discouragement and mistrust towards the future, especially among young unemployed persons.

Approaching the issue of unemployment from a micro-sociological perspective some decades after Schnapper and almost a century after Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel, we may think that the concept of *chômage total* or the descriptions of the Austrian town of Marienthal are dated, despite representing impressive ethnographic accounts. On the one hand, we have been

lured by philosophical arguing about the relevance of non-work-related dimensions to understand dynamics of personal fulfillment, such as the thoughts of Simone Weil, Hannah Arendt and André Gorz (Abdelnour 2012). On the other hand, we have been taught that in a post-industrial, globalized society, not only the factory—conceived as a 'social' environment—has lost its anchorage with local communities and its role of social cohesion propeller, but also that other spheres such as leisure, consumption, volunteering or social networking have replaced the working experience and provided individuals with opportunities for socialization and identity building (Meda 1995; Rifkin 1995). Moreover, from the end of World War II, welfare states have consistently developed in Europe to create safety nets capable of protecting citizens from the economic consequences of unemployment. Despite their different scale across countries, welfare measures provide jobless people with income support and re-employment opportunities, protecting them from destitution and poverty (see in particular Clasen and Clegg 2011; Gallie and Paugam 2000; and for a broader picture Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1993).

At the beginning of our fieldwork, by interviewing young long-term unemployed persons in the northern Italian city of Turin, we expected to find a slightly different situation from the reality portrayed by Schnapper in 1970s France or her predecessors in Marienthal at the beginning of the past century. Unexpectedly, we found several cases of reported *chômage total*. This may also be related to the fact that our selection implicitly created a bias towards less wealthy young unemployed people for a series of reasons. The difficulty in the sampling process pushed towards an outreach approach through the support of Consorzio Sociale Abele Lavoro. However, this implicit bias is not relevant for our analysis for two reasons: first, despite unemployment spreading across classes, it still more consistently affects individuals with fewer material, educational and relational resources; and secondly, we want to discuss our findings in the light of previous research, pointing out the dramatic combination of adolescence/early adulthood and unemployment at a time of mass consumption (Andreasen 1975; Bauman 2007; Campbell 2004; Seabrook 1983; Williams and Winderbank 2002).

In order to fully understand the persistence of *chômage total* in contemporary Italy, we need to disentangle the variety of effects that joblessness has on everyday life. Unemployment affects several aspects of life, including income, everyday life organization, self-esteem and future planning (Bambra and Eikemo 2009; Bartley and Plewis 2002; Jahoda et al. 1972;

Montgomery et al. 1999). Although some of these effects (e.g., reduced income and material resources) are observable and important for the general population of the unemployed, others—such as lower self-esteem or the scarce possibility of planning for the future—become particularly relevant for younger people; indeed both material and symbolic issues are at stake.

A critical review of classical unemployment studies argues that they excessively stress 'material' aspects at the detriment of symbolic dimensions of unemployment (Cole 2007). Nonetheless, the role of material deprivation emerges as a key issue among our interviewees. The majority come from low- to very low-income families (i.e., family monthly income lower than €1000); hence, not having a job has the immediate and tangible effect of severely diminishing their 'spending capacity'. Indeed, it is undeniable that unemployment directly affects income, especially in a country such as Italy where a minimum income scheme does not yet exist (Jessoula et al. 2014) and unemployment benefits are limited to the unemployed who have already worked for a specific amount of time (Graziano and Jessoula 2011). Moreover, when analyzing Southern European countries, it is important to keep in mind that, on average, youth tend to leave their household in their thirties (partly because of the aforementioned reasons) and that the expenses linked to primary spheres of consumption—such as food, housing and medical care—are mainly sustained by parents, if they are in a more stable job condition than their children. In the case of parental support for satisfying basic needs, the young unemployed are forced to sacrifice other spheres of consumption such as leisure, lifestyle and secondary goods in general.

Following an in-depth analysis of the interviews, we developed a synthetic interpretive framework characterized by 'layers' of material and social deprivation, each of which leads to diversified coping strategies.

Starting our analysis from cases in which deprivation mainly relates to denied access to leisure activities or superfluous consumption—and thus from the interviewees reporting less extreme situations of poverty—we have to agree with the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman that post-modern young generations have been socialized at the time of the '*homo consumens*' (Bauman 2007), when social development has become a market function (Seabrook 1983: 6). In most cases, deprivations are primarily deciphered as denied purchases or experiences of consumption, and as such—as predicted by Bauman (2007)—they generate not only frustration and a sense of dependence but also feelings of social isolation and stigma. Socialization itself is mediated by consumption. Interestingly, according to Bauman's interpretation, a denied experience of consumption could also represent

a trigger for protest and collective mobilization as Slavoj Žižek argues in relation to the recent riots in London (2011). However, our interviewees do not seem to belong to this category of 'failed consumer' rioters, although they express a strong sense of exclusion from what is considered a 'normal' life, a '*life of consumers*' (Bauman 2007). In other words, they perceive themselves as 'flawed consumers' destined to social degradation/denigration and 'internal exile' (Bauman 2007).[4]

> You know there is always this situation where I have to ask my mother for buying a pair of jeans, or shoes. […] I would like to go swimming, to go to the gym but obviously these are things you need money for and I cannot afford them.
>
> (Elena, 25)

> No, I don't go in places like pubs, clubs, because I don't have the money for it. My friends used to go in these clubs and found a girlfriend there…but you know, I don't have these [gesture for money] and so cannot afford going there. […] I don't practice any sport, I don't have the money for that neither.
>
> (Marco, 34)

Similar perceptions of social exclusion were also found among young unemployed whose partner is unemployed too:

> *Since you became unemployed, have you changed your way of life?*
> I would not say we are able to live the same life as before. Before unemployment we could afford going out in the evening or we used to have a pizza on Saturday night, now we never go out and to have a pizza, we bake it ourselves or we eat a pre-cooked frozen one. Moreover, I used to buy clothes at the market, which was not a luxury habit, now I cannot afford doing that anymore…even buying knickknacks at the market as I did sometimes has become unaffordable, so for sure we have to cut these expenses.
>
> (Paola, 35)

> *Please give me some more information about your daily routine, do you have any preferred hobbies or activities?*
> When I was able to do some work here and there I used to go to the gym because there you can release your tensions. […]. In those moments, I was feeling truly free, since in those moments all negative thoughts fade away. It was my outburst, but now I can't afford it anymore. My contract expired and they did not renew it. I feel very sorry. I did it with passion.
>
> (Sara, 21)

A lack of a job and consequently a lack of financial resources to be spent on leisure and secondary goods inevitably becomes a source of isolation and social exclusion. Unemployed youth feel unable to socialize with their peers since they cannot afford to share experiences of consumption with them. Embarking on new friendships or relationships proves to be perceived as psychologically and financially unbearable (Daly and Leonard 2002).

> *If I may ask…are you in a relationship?*
> Mmm, no, at the moment no. I broke one year ago with my ex-girlfriend. Nowadays even relationships are precarious […]. At the moment, I could not offer anything but a chat since if I can't afford to pay fuel for the car, even my car insurance expired… At the end of the day a situation of someone living in an underdeveloped country! Everything becomes so complicated.
> (Marco, 34)

> I can't live as I used to live before. Now I live in a different way […] since people don't call me anymore to hang out. Since I've lost my job friends called by one, two, three times…I said 'No I can't come with you, no I can't do this', no I can't do that and… at the end, you end up giving up your friendships. It is useless that they call me if I can't afford even to have a pizza with them.
> (Paola, 35)

The sphere of socialization is limited to family members or close friends, who are often also unemployed. Our interviewees not only feel socially excluded and stigmatized, but—as in the unemployed community of Marienthal—in some cases they even tend to deliberately avoid situations in which they could potentially feel embarrassed or defective, in other words 'different', and end up shutting themselves up at home or within a 'safe' circle of relatives and close friends.

The perception of young unemployed people whose parents are themselves in difficult financial situations is different (some are also unemployed, while others are ill or disabled and thus depend on a meager public subsidy or on their children's help). In these cases, not having an income as a consequence of joblessness affects a wider spectrum of everyday life, aspects extending well beyond the consumption of leisure activities or shopping. In this type of household, young unemployed have difficulties in paying rents and bills, as well as purchasing basic goods such as food and medicines. Hence, unemployment drags the serenity of the entire family further down and away from happiness and ordinary life.

In situations where close family members are also unemployed or precarious workers, family ties no longer represent an emergency 'life vest' but rather become a source of anxiety and stress. The phenomenon of prolonged adolescence at parents' expenses—which is typical in Southern European countries (Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1993)—does not work in these circumstances. Young people feel struck in endless vicious circles where they cannot afford to leave their parents' place and gain independence. Moreover, if the parents are unemployed themselves, all the money earned through occasional jobs goes to help the family, and thus it becomes arduous to save money and aspire towards emancipation.

> Each time I find a little job or I have the opportunity to earn 100 euros, I save them. But then my father comes and asks me if I can lend him 10 euros as he needs fuel for his car. The following day my mother is asking me for 5 euros to recharge her mobile phone. At the end of the day I don't keep anything of this money that I saved for myself. When I see that the fridge is empty, with the money left I buy food. And afterwards they tell me: 'You could have kept your money'… such a depressing comment… but the worst thing is that my father does not recognize what I do… at least [he could] say: 'Thank you, I acknowledge your good action'. It is depressing [not to hear this].
>
> (Sara, 21)

For young unemployed youth who live alone and are unable to rely on their family, relatives or partner for support, the financial dimension becomes the key aspect of experiencing unemployment since they are unable to afford the most basic purchases. Their basic needs are only satisfied insofar that they receive charitable help, as a young single mother says:

> I cannot count on my parents' support as my mother is the only one working at home, and it is already difficult for them to live in two with her salary. Having two more people to feed [herself and her son] would make the situation even harder…. Three to four times per month I look for my food at the church or in various associations [charities] and I eat something with that. […] I don't eat meat, I eat mainly pasta. Luckily my son eats at school, he can eat meat there and for dinner having a dish of pasta is OK for him. I always manage to get something [to eat] from somewhere… an acquaintance, someone of the San Vincenzo charity that calls me as she cooked some stewed meat and she can give me some of it… eventually she can give me a couple steaks […] sometimes they also have five or ten Euros for me. […] I am nine months behind with my rent.

You said you have four brothers, you have a boyfriend, couldn't you borrow some money from them?
Oh my God, you are asking me something… it would be like taking the bread out of their mouth! Absolutely no!

So…

It's out of the question, they cannot give me money.

(Dolores, 35)

Thus, in these cases, unemployment also unveils the difficulty in unlocking mechanisms of solidarity within families where every member is in need. Moreover, economic difficulties exacerbate misunderstandings and frictions between generations and family roles, as the previous witness suggested.

However, the general overview of social life emerging from our study endorses class theories about social capital. Social life depends on social status habits (Bianco 1996; Bourdieu 1980, 1983) and working-class socialization patterns will tend to primarily rely on family ties, whereas individuals with higher cultural and educational capital will be able to count upon a broader range of connections and acquaintances. To sum up, while having a job is relevant for social life, it is not the most relevant factor to predict individuals' social capital. The majority of our interviewees' socialization depends on family or partners, replicating a rather typical pattern of intra-family exclusive socialization in classes with fewer cultural and relational resources:

My friends are all gone, my school friends, my university friends, we don't see each other anymore. I go out with my boyfriend and his family members, his sister, his brother in law, they are more or less of our age, I like them.

(Elena, 25)

On Sundays I go to see my brother, yesterday I've spent the whole day there, his wife used to be my best friend when we were kids. Actually, [she still is] my best friend, we are like sisters… my sister in law is my life, I've named my son after her name.

(Dolores, 35)

We don't have friends [she refers to herself and her husband] apart from my two brothers, that are more or less of our age, with their girlfriends, so we

used to go out with them and their friends but those were not 'my friends', and I did not like them. Basically now we are alone, we spend our evenings together, you and me, me and you, always like that, and at 35 years old you feel like an old person.

(Paola, 35)

Finally, our interviews allow us to analyze the social consequences of long-term unemployment in their full complexity. In this sense, it is useful to recall the multilayered model sketched in the first part of this paragraph (Fig. 6.1). When the parents or the partners are also in a condition of unemployment, the household lies in a condition of deep deprivation, social ties retrench to the familial sphere and the young interviewees appear to be stuck in a situation characterized by a vicious circle of mutual help, whereby every last bit of the money earned is used to pay for the family's basic needs. For young people living with their parents, the constant precarious balance—for which the presence and help of every member is essential to subsistence—heavily limits the possibilities of emancipation and ultimately a better future. In these cases, material deprivation gradually leads to social exclusion. By contrast, when the closest family members are able to be economically supportive, the consequences of unemployment are 'milder' and mostly influence the sphere of so-called 'secondary goods', namely leisure, hobbies and 'lifestyle' goods (cellphones, clothes, cars). Despite constituting non-essential goods, they play a crucial role in young people's socialization process with their peers. In these cases, unemployment results in social exclusion through the lack of shared experiences of consumption such as going out for a drink, going on holiday with friends or subscribing to a gym.

Unstructured Rhythms, Boring Hours and Low Self-Esteem: The Psychological Dimension of Unemployment

In addition to financial issues or material concerns, previous research on unemployment has stressed the *use of time* as another dimension through which people define and perceive social exclusion. A lack of work affects daily routines and rhythms as well as ultimately self-esteem and future planning: from this perspective, the psychological dimension of unemployment can be seen as another layer through which to interpret social exclusion deriving from material deprivation.
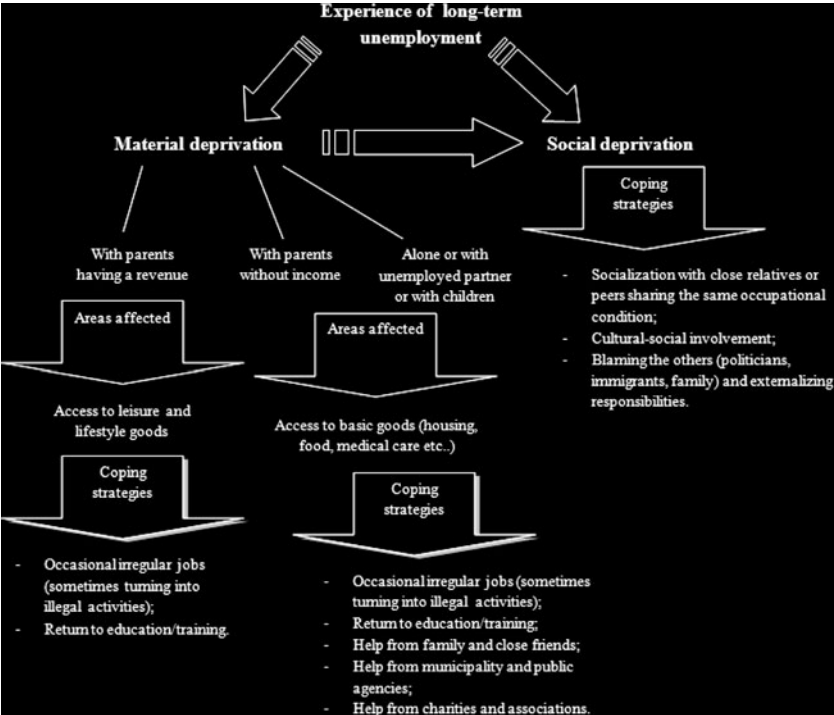
Fig. 6.1   Material deprivation and social exclusion: a 'multi-layered' model

Industrial and post-industrial societies have been organized around the rotation between working and non-working time; hence, all unemployed persons recognize the perturbation of their life rhythms together with the incapacity to manage their time according to precise planning or intentions (Schnapper 1994: 71; Seabrook 1983). As stated by Kelvin and Jarrett's path-breaking study on psycho-social consequences of unemployment in the age of consumerism (Kelvin and Jarrett 1985: 67–69), having a 'seemingly unending' amount of spare time without being able to make use of it causes irritability, frustration and—above all—a profound sense of boredom. In open contradiction with 'end of work' theories (Rifkin 1995), we observe that life's organizational model between public and private spheres, between working and non-working time still maintains its social meaning. In our research, we found evidence that the perturbation

of life rhythms among the young unemployed in Turin is astonishingly similar to what is described in earlier studies. When asked about how they spend their average day, they solely refer to a series of activities such as buying fresh bread (when affordable), going for a walk or passing by the post office, activities that are not perceived as necessary in the everyday life of an ordinary individual but rather as repetitive, meaningless ways to spend the time. All of this is regardless of whether they are single or married with children.

> I do some shopping, my mother sends me to buy food, then I go for a walk, that's it. Sometime I drop my CV around… that's it, the usual things.
>
> (Marco, 34)

> I miss my job, now once I have accompanied my child at the kindergarten at nine o'clock if I have a job interview or something do to it is OK, but otherwise I don't have a busy day. I miss my job. I feel meaningless, I would like to do something, but I can't. I am born to manage or to organize things […] *So without a job you found yourself in a new world?* Yes, you feel like [in a world] that does not belong to you, it does not belong to you.
>
> (Paola, 35)

> It is terrible, it is terrible, as I was used to work since I was in my early twenties… I get used to wake up early to go to work… at least I could enjoy that: to be alive in the morning and not to sleep over… now I miss that.
>
> (Dolores, 35)

It seems like the impossibility of structuring the daily routine according to a 'work–leisure' or 'earning–spending' sequence can lead to a sense of depression, *self-insufficiency* and *invisibility* with respect to peers and society in general, in some extreme cases. Boredom becomes the 'psychological dimension of stratification' (Bauman 2007:39–40; Hutchens 1994).

> *Are there some positive aspects to being unemployed?*
> No, you even can't dedicate more time to your hobbies, unless you earn a salary. In my situation, I don't have any money. Without a job, a man is nothing… How can you go on without a work, you are not recognized as a human being.
>
> (Sara, 21)

Do you ever dedicate some time for yourself? You talked about your partner, about your child, but you did not tell me anything about yourself. You seem to be constantly waiting for something…

There is little left to say. I don't even want to… Honestly, when you are broke, you can't say: I go shopping […]. There aren't things for me, thus I end up doing nothing. […]. I came out from a depression, it was a bad depression, I went to the hospital.

(Dolores, 35)

Even the interviewees declaring to be more active in job search activities (through electronic job hunting or distributing their CV across several institutions and organizations) describe their days as being characterized by a boring routine. Actively looking for a job is certainly considered a necessary activity, although the possibility of actually finding a new job is seen as very low. Interestingly, the functioning and structure of employment (and unemployment) policies in Italy do not help in this sense: the resources dedicated to activation policies are among the lowest in Europe (Graziano 2012) and their implementation at the local level often involves paradoxical cream-skimming mechanisms (Trivellato et al. 2015), resulting in exclusion from the activation process of the most vulnerable job-seekers (for a comparative analysis between Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom, see Monticelli et al. 2015). A deep sense of mistrust and disillusion is found in our interviewees' recounts of how they spend their days.

Now I spend most of my time at home, or I go out looking for a job. It has happened several times that I went downtown to drop my CV, I don't like to do it but I go…. *At job placement agencies?* Yes, I enrolled with these agencies but never managed to get a job through them. I send my CV and even if shops or factories do not recruit when I visit them I leave my CV anyway… that is the worst of the phases […] I hope they would need me one day.

(Federica, 20)

I spend my days on Facebook, they have invented this damn computer, what should I do? I drop my CV around, or take documents to my solicitor or to the tribunal.

(Francesca, 23)

Only one among our interviewees coped with the amount of undesired free time by using social and cultural resources. In our sample, he is the only young unemployed person with a medium–high human capital background (both parents have a high school diploma, the father was an employee at a local newspaper, the mother—a housewife—had received accounting training) and has some cultural capital (he has a high school diploma and attended a couple of IT trainings). He devotes a consistent part of his spare time to his hobby, which occasionally also generates some income:

> We [my friends and I] organize public representations of civil and military life of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We make our clothes on the basis of iconographic original sources like paintings, frescos and other images and we replicate, in a credible manner, the role of a popular man or of a noble.
>
> *Do you do this through an association or organization*?
> Yes, a cultural association.
>
> *Are you called for walk-on parts*?
> Yes, very often, as people enjoy this type of activities.
>
> *How many members does your association have?*
> We are ten.
>
> *Did you set up this association?*
> Yes, I am a founding member [of the association], it was founded two and half years ago we have all different backgrounds but each of us had a previous similar experience. […] It is unemployment that has pushed me to do other things, we can say that although the association was born when I was working, now that I cannot find an employment—because in the last times I cannot manage to find a job—I devote most of my time to it, to volunteering, to this type of activities, just to employ my time in a useful manner'.
>
> <div align="right">(Diego, 25)</div>

In the condition of unemployment, identity and self-esteem are also at stake. There are no gender, civil status or age differences in this regard. All our interviewees live their status as a really problematic situation. Occupational status seems to remain a crucial element for the definition of young people's societal role and identity.

Not having a job is something psychologically hard to bear, it is not a good situation, I feel like a host in my parents' house, not because I don't like them, but because I think that the time for [leaving the parents] has come. I cannot bear this situation, I am stressed and my parents are stressed too as they are worried about my future, I would not say there is a constant conflict among us but there is tension, I can feel some tension. […] Moreover, having a girlfriend things get worst when you are unemployed: when you have a job you can afford a different social life. I try to say this better: having a job makes you more confident, it gives you esteem, you trust yourself further […] being 25 years old and having a partner for four years, and still not being able to move to live together is a strong constraint on a relationship.

(Antonio, 26)

I miss the most important part of someone's life, a job. Actually, the most relevant thing in our life is good health, and I have that. I miss the second most relevant thing in life: a job. We need a job to understand what to make of our life, [to elaborate] a minimal capacity of planning, a future, a way out.

(Marco, 34)

The negative effect of unemployment on individuals' experiences also emerges when asked if they perceive a change in the way people approach them compared to the past:

[Until I was a student] each time I met someone the question was 'What do you do in your life?' and the answer 'Well, I study, actually I am going to graduate soon' and the reply 'Oh nice, interesting'… now when they ask me 'What do you do in your life? Do you work?' and I say 'No, I am looking for a job' 'Ah'. That is all, the conversation stops there.

(Elena, 25)

There are also perceptions of discrimination due to joblessness through lacking the economic resources necessary to meet the current conventional dress code, as stated by this young woman, who has felt mistreated because of her appearance:

When you are in your twenties, it is normal to desire buying a nice shirt when you see it on a shop window, but I cannot afford it, I cannot afford even spending fifteen euros… but then, when you go for a job interview, you meet these women like 'The Devil wears Prada' and they look at you in such a way… they humiliate you.

(Federica, 20)

The majority of the young unemployed we met in Turin spoke about their status with a tone of resignation. Following Sennett's claim about changes in the organization of work (Sennet 1998), namely flexibility corroding the character of individuals, we could say that unemployment also deteriorates the character and identity. Thirty years ago, when portraying the unemployed in Britain, Seabrook (1983) referred to their tone of resignation, of surrender. Similarly, despite the decades that have passed, in Turin we encountered the same resignation among the young unemployed.

Only one out of twenty-one interviewees showed some anger while describing her status and life:

> *How do you feel being unemployed?*
> Bad, can I say that? I am deadly furious [she uses indeed a very strong phrase: 'incazzata nera'] with the municipality of Turin, with the state, with funding agencies, with the authorities, with all and everyone because it is impossible to find a job.
>
> (Sara, 21)

Unemployment affects the capacity of young people to plan and sometimes even to imagine their future. Without an income and deprived of long-term perspectives, our interviewees are trapped in a sort of 'grey area' where the immanent dimension of the 'here and now' is the only one that matters and can be possibly conceived, thus obstructing their transition to adulthood. Irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, all of our interviewees express this perception. For young unemployed whose families live in extremely difficult situations—as many in our sample do—the lack of opportunities to build their own life perpetuates a status of deprivation, which is thus transmitted across generations. All projects of social mobility and fulfillment are postponed to an unpredictable moment in the future. Having a job or not represents a watershed between those who succeed in their passage to adulthood and those who fail. Being in employment—at least for those who are out of it—is considered to be a factor that is able to enhance a virtuous mechanism where all the typical steps of an adult life become affordable: leaving the parents' house, adopting a satisfying social status, finding a partner, building his/her own household:

> For me, it is imperative, we can say vital, having reached a certain age to be able to be self-reliable from the economic point of view. I do

not want to escape from my family, but I think that when you are 25 years old it is time to have an autonomous flat, an independent life, and because I am unemployed I cannot do it and this is something that makes me suffer.

(Diego, 25)

Indeed, even for those who are more advanced in their process of emancipation from the family—through being married and/or having children—the fact of being unemployed has implications in terms of self-esteem, identity and career:

I wish myself to find a job that I like. This is what I miss to be fully satisfied. I feel realized in my sentimental life, I found the person of my life with whom I made a child, hence I miss a job and with a job other projects that go with, like a new flat. I miss a job to be satisfied, it would be enough to be satisfied.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
Where? I hope not here in the same situation (laughs) because then [I would be] 40 years old and it would be an even more critical situation to bear. At that age one will have to content oneself with an ordinary job of cleaner, and anyway you would do it, but with which satisfaction or enthusiasm would you keep going? And maybe you would find yourself crying and saying 'I don't feel fulfilled in my life' and wishing you could go backward.

(Dolores, 35)

How do you imagine your future?
Eh, I see a very bad future, I have the impression we do not make progress but rather we are regressing to war time […] because there is no work, workers are made redundant and so they have to become thieves.

(Marco, 34)

Despite these common trends, by carefully analyzing the content of our interviews, it is also possible to disentangle some country- and gender-related specificities. In particular, it seems that younger people's (18–25 years old) main concern is being able to leave the household and become economically fully independent from their parents. By contrast, older people talk about career prospects, professional fulfillment and the possibility of raising children in a financially comfortable environment.

Moreover, it seems that unemployed men perceive the hardship of not being able to incarnate a 'bread-winning' figure. In fact, we have to remember that in Italy the labor market remains characterized by a gender gap concerning the rate of employment, wages and family care roles. Recent data (Istat 2015) show that about 18 percent of Italian women leave or lose their job after having children and that they spend a large amount of their time at home for childcare (72 percent of the total number of hours per week). It seems that the existing societal model has been unconsciously assimilated by young, less educated men, and this is affecting their prospects and expectations. On the other hand, the women we interviewed seem quite conscious of their disadvantaged position and—especially the youngest among them—perceive enrollment in higher education as an effective coping strategy against social exclusion and discrimination.

A Trouble Shared Is A Trouble Halved : Externalizing Responsibilities for Unemployment

A final dimension describing how unemployment is defined and conceived by the youth in Turin focuses on *whom* or *what* they consider responsible for their situation. As has been reported in this chapter, long-term unemployment leads to social exclusion through various direct and indirect channels, whether more or less severe material deprivation, psychological discomfort, a lack of trust and/or self-esteem. Nonetheless, who is considered responsible for their situation? In general, the majority of the interviewees have a rather weak perception of the causes of their unemployment at the systemic, macro-political level. However, there is very often someone to be generally blamed. It might be employers, public institutions (local and national levels of government), the state or even migrants. We found a tendency to *externalize* responsibility and blame others: individual weaknesses are seldom indicated even as one of the possible causes of unemployment. Even those showing a certain capability of critical self-evaluation confine their reflections to their family members or their social background rather than their own flaws:

> [Those responsible for the situation] are Berlusconi and rich people. The crisis exists but it is the state that does not provide funding, who's otherwise responsible for the lack of funding to social enterprises and cooperatives that

help people in need? The state that does not allow them [social enterprises and cooperatives] to develop their structures, or to buy a minivan and then go for public procurements.

(Francesca, 23).

All these immigrants [she calls them 'extracomunitari', that is foreigners from outside the EU] haven stolen a lot of jobs, eh? Not to be arrogant, but if we accept to work for eight or seven euros per hour, immigrants go for three euros… you see a lot of foreigners not only in cleaning but also in care for elderly people, in the manufacturing industry, in the building sector. It is not that the Italians are not willing to take those jobs but rather that they [the immigrants] are too cheap. They have stolen many things, for example when you go to a job placement agency you'll find more immigrants than Italians, there [you'll find] Romanians, Moroccans and so on. They steal always the best jobs. Let's go on like this, what can we do? […] The public social assistance schemes should introduce a nationality criterion, I am an Italian citizen so you put me in place first and only after that, you'll take care of the [the immigrants].

(Dolores, 35)

Migrants are very often considered a part of the problem, albeit as part of a larger and more complex scheme of responsibilities:

We can say that immigrants steal jobs but the employers are those making this possible, what I want to say is that immigrants come from very different situations than Italians, so we cannot compare them with the [behavior of the] Italians. When a person is desperate, he is available to do no matter which job, he will not claim workers' rights or so. If the employer can pay someone two euros per hour instead of five and can make this person work for a longer time [than usual contractual hours], of course he will hire the immigrant. In this sense they steal jobs but it is a consequence of choices made well above them.

(Diego, 25)

While it would be methodologically risky to derive some generalizable conclusions from an exploratory qualitative case study such as this one, it is undoubtedly stimulating to try to broaden the reflection about the almost entire absence of discerned 'group identity' among the young unemployed. Despite living in a city like Turin—which has a very long history of collective

mobilizations among workers—the young people we interviewed do not seem at all politically engaged and willing to mobilize or stand up collectively for the cause. This phenomenon is mirrored at the national level: Italy has one of the lowest levels of trade union membership among young people (Baccaro and Pulignano 2010; Gumbrell-McCormick 2011) and a very low rate of participation in local and national elections (Istat 2013). An in-depth analysis of unemployed youngsters' political participation in Italy exceeds the scope of this contribution, although it is certainly topical (Cuzzocrea and Mandich 2015; Leccardi 2005; Nota et al. 2007; Saraceno 2000).

Concluding Thoughts

Previous studies have argued that a few specific individual-level variables affect the way in which people experience unemployment: age, cultural capital and the relation between economic needs and personal–family income (Pugliese 1993; Schnapper 1994; Demazière and Pignoni 1998). Our research contributes new evidence in support of these analyses. We decided to frame the descriptive analysis using recent theoretical contributions linking material deprivation to social exclusion. In addition, for young people, unemployment is also perceived as it prevents from consumption and purchasing, as well as obstructing leisure activities. Our research has also allowed differentiation between young unemployed who live with their parents or a partner with income and those who live alone, without benefits or income. To approach this complexity, we framed a 'multilayer' interpretive model at the beginning of the chapter. This scheme attempts to shed light on the relationship existing between unemployment, material deprivation, social exclusion and respective coping strategies.

Our interviews show that social class indicators such as cultural, social and economic capital have an impact on the way in which young individuals live and cope with unemployment, and perhaps explain their life better than other indicators. Young unemployed people in Turin present a relevant degree of social isolation, anxiety and a sense of personal inadequacy that puts them in a similar situation to the *chômage total* described by Schnapper (1994). Interestingly, even if unemployment is perceived as a generational problem, a sort of 'unemployed community' awareness *à la* Jahoda is missing (Jahoda et al. 1972).

The most relevant aspect characterizing young people's unemployment is its deterrent effect on their transition to adulthood in terms of a person's capacity to live an autonomous life. Unemployment drastically limits a person's opportunities to afford paying a rent or a mortgage, thus reducing the chances for young working-class people to become independent adults.

In the attempt to cope with such constraining conditions, young unemployed develop coping strategies in which families provide the only support, although such families themselves are in need and as such are unable to prospect their offspring a better future. Nonetheless, most of the time experiencing unemployment does not push young people to critical introspection. Responsibilities are often externalized: the 'others', the 'diverse'—such as migrants—are usually blamed and accused by the Italian interviewees for stealing jobs by accepting lower wages and oppressive working hours.

Long-term unemployment—as we have encountered in Turin—can be described as a 'selective' phenomenon; in fact, it is perhaps the strongest reproducer of social inequalities as it prevents the fulfillment of the collective and individual goal of social mobility affecting especially people with a poorer socio-economic familial background. Despite the interviews' significance, our contribution aspires to foster a theoretical debate about social exclusion rather than being a mere description of a case study. In fact, social exclusion is a broad concept, difficult to characterize, as it is multifaceted and multidimensional. In this chapter, we demonstrate that social exclusion could result from a long-lasting, gradual process marked by intertwined layers of deprivation, where even the denied consumption of secondary, lifestyle goods can lead—especially in the case of young people—to similar exclusionary social effects than the deprivation of basic goods. In this direction and from a sociological perspective, it would be of foremost interest to deepen the study of the role of consumption (or the lack of it) on the mechanisms of social inclusion and socialization among young people.

Notes

1. Data concerning employment and unemployment rates in 2010 Italy are available at: http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/21875

2. 'Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding the Conditions and Prospects for Social and Political Integration of Young Unemployed' (YOUNEX). This project was funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (grant agreement no. 216122).

3. During the YOUNEX project in 2010, we interviewed Prof. Giuseppe Berta on Turin's changing industrial model. The excerpt is part of the interview.

4. 'In a consumer society, a 'normal life' is the life of consumers, preoccupied with making their choices among the panoply of publicly displayed opportunities for pleasurable sensations and lively experiences. A 'happy life' is defined by catching many opportunities and letting slip but few or none at all, by catching the opportunities most talked about and thus most desired, and catching them no later than others, and preferably before others. As in all other kinds of society, the poor of a consumer society are people with no access to a normal life, let alone to a happy one. In a consumer society however, having no access to a happy or merely a normal life means to be consumers *manqués*, or flawed consumers' (Bauman 2007: 37-38).

APPENDIX 1

Table 6.1   List of interviewees in alphabetical order

	Name[a]	Age	Sex	Education	Household[b]	Partner	Place of birth	Additional info
1	Antonio	26	M	Compulsory	He lives between Turin and his hometown	Yes	Italy	
2	Cesare	19	M	Compulsory	5) Mother (housewife), younger brothers (student), partner	Yes	Italy	The father lives on his own
3	Claudio	32	M	Secondary	2) Wife (employed)	Yes	Romania	
4	Diego	25	M	Secondary	3) Parents (housewife, pensioner), younger sister (student)	Yes	Italy	Private house

Table 6.1   (continued)

	Name[a]	Age	Sex	Education	Household[b]	Partner	Place of birth	Additional info
5	Dolores	35	F	Compulsory	2) Single mother	Yes	Italy	Social housing
6	Elena	25	F	Secondary	3) Partner, his parents	Yes	Italy	
7	Emilio	19	M	Tertiary	4) Parents (employed), partner	Yes	Romania	
8	Federica	20	F	Tertiary	4) Parents (both employed), younger sister (student)	Yes	Italy	Mortgage
9	Francesca	23	F	Primary	3) Husband (unemployed), son (toddler)	Yes	Italy	
10	Franco	21	M	Compulsory	8) Parents (employed), two older sisters (single unemployed mother, employed), two younger brother (student), one nephew (toddler)	Yes	Italy	
11	Joy	30	F	Compulsory	3) Living with friends	No	Nigeria	Precarious housing conditions
12	Lorenzo	n.a.	M	Secondary	5) Parents (housewife, social assistance), older brother (part-time employed), younger sister (unemployed)	No	Italy	Rented flat
13	Luigi	20	M	Compulsory + professional training	4) Parents, (housewife, employed), older sister (unemployed)	No	Italy	
14	Marco	34	M	Secondary	3) Parents (pensioners)	No	Italy	
15	Massimo	29	M	n.a.	Living with his cousin	Yes	Romania	None
16	Paola	35	F	Secondary	3) Partner (employed), son (student)	Yes	Italy	Rented flat
17	Renato	24	M	Compulsory	2) Brother	No	Italy	Rented flat

Table 6.1   (continued)

	Name[a]	Age	Sex	Education	Household[b]	Partner	Place of birth	Additional info
18	Sara	21	F	Secondary	4) Parents, (housewife, on unemployment benefit), older brother(unemployed)	Yes	Italy	Mortgage
19	Stefano	19	M	Compulsory + professional training	3) Divorced mother (employed), older brother (unemployed)	Yes	Italy	Private house

[a]All the names used in this chapter are fictitious.

[b]The number in parenthesis refers to the number of household members

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Coping with Long-Term Unemployment in Poland: Faces of Joblessness in a Regional Centre

Piotr Binder

INTRODUCTION

The consequences of the world financial crisis remain a serious challenge to the European Union (EU), and have caused also a new wave of interest in the issue of unemployment. The age group of those who are in the process of transition between adolescence and adulthood seems to be of particular importance. In this chapter attention will be focused on the process of coping with the situation of long-term unemployment by young people in a middle-sized Polish town, Kielce, a regional center with a population not exceeding 200,000 people that in many respects is an average town. It is located in southern Poland at a significant distance from metropolises and surrounded mostly by rural areas. The level of unemployment in the town during the time of the research as well as in the following years was stable, and similar to that of the country as a

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whole, namely approximately 10 percent (Dmochowska 2015). Similarly, as in the rest of the country, one-third of the jobless have been in search of employment for over a year.

Since Poland as a country represents an unusual example of an economy affected by the recent recession only to a very limited extent, while at the same time still suffering the consequences of following the Soviet path of development throughout the communist period, the chapter will start with a broader presentation of the historical context of the study, including that of research on unemployment within social sciences in Poland. This will be followed by an analysis of the difficulties faced by the young jobless from Kielce in coping with their situation, the support they receive and the impact of the experience of long-term unemployment on their networks of social relations. The noticeable similarities and shared tendencies observed within the plurality of experiences of the young research participants formed a basis for three broad nevertheless distinct types of the situation of unemployment.

The chapter is based on 23 face-to-face in-depth interviews with young long-term unemployed (18–35 years of age) conducted in 2010. All of the participants initially took part in a survey conducted in Kielce and agreed to be contacted regarding the follow-up study. All of the interviews took place in the homes of research participants. Since most of them had rather poor housing situation and lived in small flats, other family members occasionally interfered. In terms of sex and age the composition of the group of participants in the qualitative study to a large extent reflected the structure of the database of young long-term unemployed from Kielce, where females and the older cohort were overrepresented. Ultimately among research participants there were 14 females and 9 males; 8 participants belonged to a younger subgroup (18–24 years of age) and the remaining 15 to the older subgroup (25–35 years of age). The details including marital status, their level of education and profession together with other social characteristics are included in the Appendix at the end of the chapter.

Social and Historical Context of Research on Unemployment

In Poland reflection within the field of social sciences on the social as well as psychological consequences of unemployment has a well-grounded tradition and dates back to the period of the Great Depression of the 1930s, when unemployment became one of the critical social problems. Approximately

at the same time as Marie Jahoda, Paul Lazarsfeld and Hans Zeisel were studying the situation in Austria's Marienthal, the Polish Institute for Social Economy in Warsaw initiated one of the first Polish research projects on unemployment, based on a public competition 'Memoirs of the Unemployed' (Krzywicki 1933).

The initiators of this project had no intention of conducting any kind of in-depth analysis. In their opinion their main task was to document and share collected life stories with a broader audience (Sułek 2007: 249). However, soon afterwards the same material was studied by a Polish sociologist who was visiting the United States, Bogdan Zawadzki, together with Paul Lazarsfeld (and with the assistance of Marie Jahoda). The results of their cooperation were published in 1935 in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. As stressed by Antoni Sułek (2007: 243), the similarity of findings and conclusions of the studies of Jahoda, Lazarsfels and Zeisel (1933) are striking.

Research based on autobiographical data and personal documents is certainly the best known of this period, but Polish researchers active in the 1930s also used standardized tools.[1] Despite their differences in methodological standards and research practices, the conclusions of the authors with respect to the experience of unemployment converged in the findings of Jahoda, Lasarsfeld and Zeisel. However they also shared other qualities. The research of this period on unemployment was mostly descriptive, deprived of theoretical underpinnings and based on a methodology still in its infancy.

After 1945 and for nearly half a century the social aspects of unemployment were for a number of reasons a neglected area in Polish social sciences. Officially unemployment (like poverty) did not exist (Palska 2002: 27–28; Tarkowska 2000: 9–11). This by definition made any research on unemployment needless, and the academic experiences of the 1930s, although not entirely forgotten, were mostly referred to as a basis for a critique of the capitalist system (Sułek 2007: 274).

Immediately after World War Two the key problems of the country included reconstruction after war damage and a shortage of manpower. The demographic boom of the late 1940s and 1950s gradually started to solve the latter problem (Okólski 2004: 133–134). However, the political aspects of this issue are important. The Polish economy, as well as the Polish state in general, located on the periphery of the Soviet Union and to a large extent separated from the world beyond Comecon and the Warsaw Pact, had no choice but to follow the so-called 'socialist path of development'. Nominally this was a planned economy managed in a

centralized manner to which the notion of *market* simply did not apply (Kozek 2013: 7). Nonetheless, contrary to the propaganda image, the system was not stable. In fact the only constant was that the system was continually evolving in an unpredictable way, and times of relative stability were interwoven with periods of social protest on various scales (Gumuła 2008: 64–69).

The major work-related projects of communist Poland were either only partially successful (e.g., forced industrialization) (Okólski 2004) or total failures (e.g., attempts at collectivization) (Bukraba-Rylska 2008). Both examples were related to a crucial feature of the system, which was the policy of full employment that was supposed to show the system's superiority. Nevertheless, by the 1970s the same policy led the communist system to create a new phenomenon, namely *over-employment* on a mass scale (Kozek 2009: 141). Within many state-owned enterprises, part of the workforce, although formally employed and paid, only symbolically contributed to the gross domestic product (GDP).

The same inefficient system also supported the development of other phenomena important for the labor market. Constant shortages of various kinds of goods and services promoted informal networks, contacts and exchange, where demand could be met by supply (Marody and Antoni 1987; Pawlik 1992). Systems of favors, informal agreements and other types of 'dealing' with official regulations are a popular component of coping strategies up to the present day (Tarkowska 2012).

The overall assessment of this period should be rather negative. In many ways the period between 1945 and 1989 was time irretrievably lost, and the Polish economy entered the new reality in a worse condition than those of many countries of the region (Kozek 2013: 7–8). However, there were also some positive aspects. One of them was most definitely the increase (within traditional Polish society) of the professional activity of women in general. Although for the communist authorities this was not a goal in itself, and the phenomenon could be mostly observed in the area of manual work, light industry and services, it resulted in the creation of necessary infrastructure (especially nurseries and preschools) that allowed many women to leave their households and enter the labor market (Krzyżanowska, Stec 2012: 550). This is very important in the Polish context where gender-based asymmetry of unemployment has been a long-lasting phenomenon (Sztanderska and Grotkowska 2009: 80).

Unemployment in Poland gradually started to 'reappear' at the end of the 1980s. The liberal reforms of that time were a last attempt to improve

the previous system, and introduced a significant level of deregulation in the area of economics. However, the real difference could be observed after the collapse of the system. As a direct result of the 'shock therapy' and mass dismissals of the early 1990s, within just three years the level of unemployment exceeded 15 percent. According to the data collected by the Central Statistical Office of Poland, after a period of decline in the second half of the 1990s, it increased again to nearly 20 percent in 2002 (Dmochowska 2015: 27). A significant drop in the unemployment rate to under 9 percent could be observed only in 2008. It was a direct effect of the constant outflow of the professionally active population to various countries of the EU after its enlargement in 2004.[2] The situation has changed only to a limited extent since 2008. The global financial crisis affected Poland in a very limited way (National Bank of Poland 2009). The level of unemployment has increased, but 'only' to a stable level of around 10 percent which, compared with the rest of the EU countries, is an average result (Dmochowska 2015: 27).

Although this phenomenon could be expected after 1989, Polish society was not ready for such a dramatic level of unemployment (Kozek 2013: 8). In a country where the right to work and the duty to work constitute strong social norms, a social problem on this scale met with strong disapproval. Significance of work was reflected in the surveys. Throughout the last decade *work* was regularly in the top three values next to *family life* and *good health* (Boguszewski 2013). The important role of the informal economy and illicit employment is not in the Polish context in contradiction to this, just the opposite. Many of those who lost their employment were determined (or even desperate) to remain professionally active, even at the price of breaking formal regulations. This is reflected in data collected by the Central Statistical Office of Poland, where 'inability to find a registered employment' and 'insufficient income' remain the two most important reasons for engaging in illicit forms of work (Zgierska 2015: 11).

A radical increase in the rate of unemployment also revealed and intensified other old/new phenomena, namely the problem of poverty and gender-based asymmetry of unemployment. As a universal phenomenon poverty also existed in Poland under the communist regime; the only difference was that its existence was officially denied (Tarkowska 2000: 9–11). Gender-based asymmetry in the rate of unemployment was a different question, since—as already mentioned—one of the consequences of the state-controlled economy was at least partial neutralization of this problem. After 1989 no improvement was noticeable. Cultural determinants

(asymmetry of household duties, popularity of the breadwinner model, duty of caring for children, family and household) combined with systemic characteristics have resulted in the situation where women constitute a stable and long-lasting majority of the unemployed, and this despite their higher and growing qualifications (Kotowska et al. 2009: 234).

Reflection on the labor market and its deficiencies re-emerged on the landscape of social sciences in Poland together with the phenomenon of unemployment. Representatives of various branches, especially sociologists, from the very beginning of the systemic change were interested in its mechanisms. However, after the period of communism, with its very limited freedom of academic debate, the set of analytical categories had to be redeveloped (Kolasa-Nowak 2010).

Throughout the 1990s the metaphor of 'winners and losers' of the process of transformation dominated the academic discourse within the field of sociology (Tarkowska 2007a: 560). This simple and popular dichotomy had many, sometimes slightly extended, versions. Initially it was used exclusively in the context of the economic aspects of social life, but it rapidly spread over a broader spectrum of phenomena, including professional and regional aspects, political choices, norms and values (e.g., Jarosz 2005; Jałowiecki and Szczepański 2007).

Those who were dissatisfied with this analytical tool searched for more complex solutions that would allow them to address multidimensional social problems such as those of unemployment and poverty. However, the period of absence of academic debate in this area and the limited circulation of ideas until the end of the 1980s resulted in a situation where many theoretical categories and notions were absorbed uncritically at roughly the same time and sometimes without much elaboration. Owing to the lack of experience with them, very often notions of *culture of poverty*, *marginalization*, *underclass or social exclusion* and *poverty* were used interchangeably, in spite of the differences in their meanings and origins.

Several categories, especially *civilizational incompetence* (Sztompka 1993), *homo sovieticus* (Zinowiew 1981/1984) or *learned helplessness* (Marody and Antoni 1987) were successfully popularized, and were present almost exclusively within Polish sociology. All of them had at least three elements in common: (1) they had no or rather poor definitions and were mostly used as labels, not analytical units; (2) they were rarely operationalized; and (3) their application often had stigmatizing consequences for the groups under study (Aronoff and Kubik 2012; Binder 2014; Tyszka 2009).

Similar problems also figure in more narrowly oriented research on adaptation to experiences of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion

hidden under the term *coping strategies*. There is no stable convention in the scholarly writing regarding its use in Polish sociology. The most popular division into *active* and *passive* strategies is based on a liberal understanding of the *market*, where *active* means what is beneficial for the growth of the economy. As such it is of limited analytical use in studies on unemployment (and/or poverty) since many actions (such as favors or mutual help) are categorized as 'passive'; the issues related to the informal economy are ignored; and this division also stigmatizes those who are unable to participate in the market game (Binder 2014: 43).

Research on unemployment in Poland has a rather long, although not a linear history. Its characteristics are important for the contextualization of the analysis of the data collected within this qualitative study. In Poland (as in any of the European transition countries) the period of several decades of communist regime should be taken into account while interpreting broad phenomena such as unemployment in general or its particular aspects, including informal economy or the position of women on the employment market, which were strongly manifested in the analysis presented below.

Coping with the Experience of Long-Term Unemployment

One of the two aims of this analysis was to understand the ways in which jobless of different social backgrounds and life situations learn to live with long-term unemployment, if they are able to compensate for the loss of work and how they do this, as well as if they develop any stable patterns of behavior. In order to do this, attention was focused on four areas: (1) how the young unemployed manage their time and organize their everyday life; (2) how they manage their resources in the constraining situation of lack of employment; (3) the implications of the experience of joblessness for the individual well-being of the research participants; (4) the impact of unemployment on their social relations.

Faces of Unemployment: Three Types of Unemployment

In the Polish case young people who fulfilled the formal criteria to be categorized as long-term unemployed presented a set of very diversified life situations. However, within the plurality of their experiences it was possible also to observe common tendencies and significant similarities. Three broad but nevertheless distinct types of situation were distinguished, and these are discussed below.

The first type of situation applied to the young people who continued to live with their parents and could be described as *overwhelmed by the experience of unemployment* and by their life situation in general. They were still in the process of prolonged transition between adolescence and adulthood. Although their work-related experiences were rather limited they presented themselves as less active in this area than the other research participants. At the time of the research, after a series of negative employment-related experiences they seemed to have less determination to make further attempts. Their basic needs were secured through the support of their parents and only to a very limited extent by institutional assistance. Another element in common for most of them was a recurrent reference to a particular element of their biography that could be interpreted as a *turning point*, usually an event or a decision that in their opinion to at least some extent explained their situation at the time. Examples include consequences of a car accident (Anna, 29), discontinuation of education (Pawel, 33), committing of an offence (Jan, 28) or early pregnancy (Karolina, 31).

It was characteristic of this group that life was concentrated around their home and close relatives. Simultaneously their stories exemplified reduction of their social networks outside their families of origin. In some of the cases, particularly when their experience of unemployment was combined with a difficult situation for other family members (e.g., also unemployed or with serious health issues) apart from various dimensions of social exclusion they also—at least temporarily—experienced poverty.

The second type of situation applied to the young people who could be briefly characterized as those who *actively struggled against unemployment*. They also remained a part of their parents' households and were being supported by them, but the life situation that they presented within the interviews was significantly different. These young adults were considerably more active in all respects within as well as outside the household of their family of origin.

A distinctive feature of them as a group of individuals was that their status as an unemployed person was of a rather administrative/formal character. In fact most of these young adults were part of the informal economy and performed paid work based on various types of arrangements: from accidental, through periodical, to fairly stable agreements. What distinguished them from the situation of a regular employed person was that their work was not registered, and was without social security, taxes and a pension plan. Although some of them received some income

quite regularly, they did not perceive their situation as stable enough for them to move out and start an independent life.

They also presented a different picture of social relations. Their proactive orientation allowed them to a larger extent to maintain and develop also their social networks outside the family of origin, which might help them to find legal employment later on. Nevertheless, in cases where a difficult financial situation was a characteristic of the household as a whole (e.g., Jan, 28, Sylwia, 28, Szymon, 35), they were still prone to material deprivation.

The third and final situation was represented by *stay-at-home moms*. This is based on six cases of married women, all mothers in a very similar situation: they moved out of their parents' homes, established an independent life, got married and had children. As a rule, around the time that they were expecting a baby, they decided to concentrate on family life. Most of them also shared some similarities regarding their plans for the future. After spending several years working within their household they started searching for employment outside it. Among the research participants there were no stay-at-home dads and only one single mom. It seemed that all the male participants represented either the first or the second type of situation.

According to the collected interviews, throughout the period of being registered as unemployed the material situation of stay-at-home moms was rather stable. Their lives and activities were concentrated around their children and family, with their parents and parents-in-law (depending on the situation) playing a visible role. It seemed quite common that throughout the period of maternity and 'staying at home' the network of their social relations gradually eroded, and as a result they experienced elements of social exclusion in various areas of their lives (social activities, professional activities, self-development). To some of them this very fact was an important element when making the decision regarding their return to the employment market. Furthermore, within the interviews young mothers also admitted that over the course of time they experienced growing dissatisfaction with the traditional breadwinner model, since in the longer perspective they considered the reliance of the home budget on one salary as a risky strategy that does not provide sufficient stability.

Managing Time

Having extra time at one's disposal seems to be the first and immediate effect of unemployment. Experience of joblessness over a long period

of time multiplies this condition and requires some kind of solution. Therefore it was important to analyze this and to see whether, within the limited number of accounts collected from a rather diversified group of research participants, it was possible to observe similarities or common tendencies within this area. Examination of the collected stories resulted in the observation that virtually all research participants developed rather stable (although not necessarily regular) patterns of managing their time. Their distinct characteristics helped to form the three types of situations of unemployment and ways of coping with it.

As mentioned above, one of the key characteristics of the young people who could be considered as overwhelmed by the experience of unemployment was that they were considerably less active than the other research participants both within and outside their households. The persistence of unemployment did not result in a clear structure for their normal day. When directly asked about positive aspects of their unemployment, as a rule they immediately referred to the mythical blessing of the unlimited budget of time: 'I have plenty of time, really, for my family, for my boyfriend. Because you know, when you go to work, you do not have this time' (Monika, 23). However, these were usually just initial and sometimes ironic remarks. This illusory advantage seemed rather to be a serious burden: 'How can unemployment can be a positive thing? You just sit doing nothing' (Milena, 21). Therefore dealing with time also usually meant the necessity of coping with the feelings of boredom and loneliness:

> My regular day, over winter? I wake up in the morning, I switch the computer on, I go through all the sport sections, and, I don't know, I guess I wait for my mates to come back from work, and then we go out and talk, things like that. I visit my girlfriend sometimes. And over summer, we play football. Those are normal things, you know.
>
> (Adam, 24.)

Days without work were long and lacked a certain goal. The young unemployed overwhelmed by their situation did not reflect in the interviews on any creative approaches to the amount of time they had; therefore suffering through it was inevitable. It seemed that over the course of that experience the perception of time was changing for some of the participants, and as a result even small-scale home obligations could become problematic:

> So, there are things to do, around the house, you know, like cleaning. But I don't do that necessarily every week, but sometimes. And there is the dog,

it's an obligation. The fact that you have to walk it every day for an hour or so it's enough.

(Katarzyna, 30)

The research participants characterized as actively struggling against unemployment also shared homes with their parents, but they presented a very different attitude to dealing with their time budget. The simple fact that these people were at least periodically employed radically changed their perception of the situation. Therefore they were able to present a balanced picture of their regular day, where the division between work and leisure time was quite clear. In extreme cases they were able to present themselves as hyperactive people without access to free time. A good example is Jan, who was not only informally employed in a pawn shop but also participated in training organized by the Employment Office, leading to an excavator operator certificate:

You know, during the week after work I practically do not have time, because I finish at 6 pm, sometimes at 8 pm, so after I come back, I have only time to clean a little bit around, because you know, everything is happening at the same time. On Saturdays I work only until 2 pm, so the only thing I have time for is the vegetable garden if I have a day off.

(Jan, 28)

As a rule they do not see positive aspects of unemployment. What is more, they also experience periods 'between jobs', when they have to cope with additional spare time and the negative consequences of having it. Nevertheless the important difference is that in their case those periods, even if regular, are considerably shorter.

A radically different and to a great extent palpable approach to time management was reflected in the interviews with stay-at-home mothers. Their regular weekdays were clearly and regularly structured. All the major activities were concentrated around their home and family duties:

A typical day, well with a baby there are a lot of things to do. You know, we wake up in the morning, we have breakfast, then we go for a walk. Sometimes when the baby is sleeping I have some time to work on the computer. Then there is dinner. Later on we go with my husband to do some shopping, or we visit his or my parents. And in the evening we watch some movies together or TV serials.

(Klara, 29)

The arrangement in which the mothers focus on family matters and upbringing of children was usually voluntarily introduced by the couples. The aspect of being able to spend a significant amount of time (counted in years) with their children was assessed by the research participants as clearly positive: 'I have time for my children. I think they gain a lot. Above all, they feel safe, I'm always with them, they can count on this' (Agnieszka, 34). However, concentration on purely family matters also had disadvantages for other aspects of their lives; these will be discussed in the sections devoted to managing resources as well as personal well-being.

Managing Resources

In this part of the chapter attention will be focused on understanding the meaning of unemployment for a very diversified group of research participants. It was crucial to comprehend how they cope with the persistence of this experience; how they cope with the situation of material deprivation related to a lack of, or limited, income; how they try to solve their problems related to this; the role of their families, circles of friends or institutional support. An important part of this analysis takes into account—very widespread in the Polish context—the role of illicit forms of employment, therefore respondents were asked why they become involved in them, and also why young participants in general do not consider them to be real employment.

Most of the young research participants were able to share information about their previous professional experiences of various kinds, even if those were not based on a regular arrangement. The first and most evident meaning of not having employment was absence of income. Within the interviews lack of money or very limited resources at their disposal usually appeared as the first, the most obvious and the most pronounced consequence of unemployment. Quite understandably a consequence of this situation was rationalization of expenses: 'There is no way around this. You either buy less or you buy cheaper' (Katarzyna, 30). However, shrinking resources also led to more radical reactions:

> By now I'm trying not spend money at all. I'm fully dependent on my parents. When I go anywhere and I have choice, e.g. if I can go there by bike, I take my bicycle, or even walk. I'm trying to reduce my expenditures as much as I can.

> (Sylwia, 28)

One of the participants (Jakub, 25) revealed that in order to reduce his utility bills he decided to sell his TV set and limit himself to the Internet, where he also has access to TV channels.

However, a lack of financial sources seemed to be very much the surface aspect of a deeper problem, which was the lack of financial security. Not having money did not only mean not being able to spend it; it also meant not being able to save for a rainy day, for a crisis, or for any unexpected, extraordinary expenses related for example to health issues, whether their own or family members'. Financial insecurity often also resulted in a reluctance to make plans, or in postponing them for the foreseeable future. This constraint extended over various aspects of life for the research participants.

Based on the interviews, it is possible to assume that the financial condition of the households of the stay-at-home mothers was better and more stable, but an element of financial insecurity was present in their accounts as well. However, the accent was shifted, and what seemed to be problematic was the household budget based just on one salary, which did not provide sufficient financial confidence:

> Our future, although I should rather say 'my future' is rather uncertain. Time goes so fast and I don't have any permanent employment. It worries me big time. Our children grow up, so do our expenses. Since the second baby, it is only my husband who is taking care of us financially. And me, I cannot do anything, I feel that my hands are tied. With children of this age and lack of any real job offer, I cannot do anything.
>
> (Maria, 35)

In most cases basic needs were fulfilled first and foremost thanks to the support of close relatives. For those who had not left the nest these were primarily their parents; for young mothers these were their spouses and partners. Especially in the case of young adults overwhelmed by the experience of unemployment this created a persistent situation of dependence: 'Whether I like it or not, I am still being supported by my parents. They still cover my bills, so… It is not good' (Tomasz, 29) Some of the research participants assured us during the interviews that they can rely on their family as a source of support not only financially, but over a broad spectrum of experiences: 'My parents always supported me, I have to give them that, no matter what the situation was, they were there for me' (Klara, 29).

Understandably, while financial resources were short loans of money seemed to be a popular strategy, or something that *happened* to the research participants. Only in selected cases they stated that they avoid borrowing money and would prefer to refrain from this: 'Rather not, I prefer not to' (Jacek, 22); 'No, I prefer to plan well, so I don't have to borrow money' (Jakub, 25); 'No, not yet' (Magda, 28). Likewise, none of the stay-at-home mothers mentioned borrowing money, which could indicate a fairly stable financial situation for their households.

The frequency of taking loans varied between the young people depending on their individual situations. As for the source of loans, participants mostly indicated either family members or friends. Loans from institutions (e.g., banks) were not mentioned by any of the research participants (except for mortgages). However, owing to the intensive and complicated nature of family relations for some of the research participants, it was difficult to distinguish between a cash loan and non-refundable support:

> I don't really have problems with borrowing money. I live somehow with it. See, with my brother, if I don't have money, he will for example give me some. These are sort of loans, but I never return them, you know.
>
> (Jan, 28)

Some of the participants stressed that the cash loans work on a reciprocal basis: 'I do borrow money, yes, and I also lend money to other people, it's how it works' (Natalia, 26). Being involved in this type of relations could be an indicator of the condition of one's social networks. The young unemployed were not asked about the size of their usual loans, but from the context it was rather clear that as a pattern they borrow small sums in cash and 'never larger sums' (Milena, 21). What was also characteristic was that even without being asked about this, some of the research participants had a need to stress that they always return the loans they receive: 'It does happen to me, but I always return on time' (Darek, 24); 'And I always return the money. I don't like to do it, so I try not to borrow money' (Iga, 31).

While discussing the issue of solving financial problems, various forms of available institutional assistance were mentioned, including those provided by the state and state-funded institutions (unemployment benefits, subsidies, meal vouchers, housing assistance) but also non-governmental organizations such as Caritas (meals, material support around Christmas time).

What was intriguing was the fact that although various forms of social benefits, social security and welfare were mentioned in the interviews with the research participants, they played a rather limited role in their budgets.

Most of the younger adults were not even entitled to receive unemployment benefit. According to official regulations, in order to receive this form of assistance for a period of six months they would have to be have been legally employed for at least a year. Since many of the research participants gained their professional experience in an unregistered way and avoided paying taxes, unemployment benefit was not available to them. Exceptions could be observed only among the older participants (over 30), who according to the previous regulations could register as unemployed and receive unemployment benefit (for a period of 12 months) after the completion of their education or after serving in the army:

> I was receiving unemployment benefit like three times. The first time was just after school. The second was after working for SHL [local factory], at the time it was enough to work for six months in order to get it. And the third time, I can't remember now.
>
> (Szymon, 35)

Unemployment benefit was available not only to a limited group for a limited time, but was also of a limited amount. During the time of the research those with documented work experience of up to five years could receive only slightly above 50 percent of the minimum wage in Poland. As such, it could only play a supplementary role in solving financial problems.

Much more intensively discussed by the young jobless were the internships and professional trainings organized as a form of support by the Unemployment Office. Despite the fact that in most of the cases they did not lead to employment, they were rather popular among the interviewees. The fact that they were paid and put people in a quasi-work situation made some of the young jobless apply for these as often as possible. In fact, for some of the younger participants the internships were the only professional experiences they had had. However, their popularity also caused them to be a scarce opportunity, therefore some of the young unemployed were critical about their availability and in some cases even suspicious about how they were distributed among applicants. From the point of view of the young unemployed in general, disadvantages of the internships included the narrow specialization of available openings or limited payment (comparable to unemployment benefits). Probably the

biggest weakness of this arrangement was—as already mentioned—that as a rule it did not lead to employment. Therefore after two or three months the trainee was left with a feeling of pointless effort and unfulfilled hopes:

> I did an internship once. Nothing was guaranteed, I mean employment. Just the internship for three months. The owner of the car repair shop needed an extra pair of hands over the summer, so he made that arrangement with the Employment Office and I went there for three months. But after that I was back again, an unemployed person […] I know for them it is a busy period, but I was hoping it was going to be different.
>
> (Marcin, 23)

One of the most widespread coping strategies within the Polish context is to engage in various forms of illicit employment. This is a very broad category of events, from short periods of paid work to regular arrangements that function over an extensive timescale:

> Just after school I started working in a [beauty] salon. Obviously illegally, so no papers, no social. I was there for three years. There was no salary, just 30 percent cut. Then I changed the salon for another one. Same story, also for 30 percent, for twelve hours a day, so you can imagine. It lasted for another six months. And only then I got my first registered job.
>
> (Karolina, 31)

It is worth stressing that within the interviews there is no basis for stating that the young unemployed were particularly interested in this type of work arrangement, that they were intentionally searching for it or that they preferred it over regular employment. It was just the opposite: for many of them it was the only available option at the time. What is more, since the informal economy constitutes a significant share of the Polish economy in general, it is not uncommon for these positions to be advertised as if they are regular work offers, so the applicants only realize the true nature of the arrangement towards the end of the recruitment process.

As a paid activity, unregistered employment partly and temporarily solves some of the most urgent financial needs of the unemployed. It might be seen as a positive aspect as it keeps some of the research participants active and exposed to new contacts in a situation that very much resembles regular employment. However, apart from the legal aspects (e.g., taxes) it also extends the young jobless' CV of unregistered employment, with negative consequences for both their current situation (lack of insurance)

as well as their future (lack of a pension plan). Therefore, in the mid- and long-term perspective, participation in illicit employment creates a feeling of being trapped in a vicious circle of low-paid unregistered jobs:

> Sometimes I feel like I'm never going to find a normal job, that this way or another I will have to keep working without registration, without social security, counting that this time they will keep me there for longer.
>
> (Katarzyna, 31)

Despite their diversified life situation, young jobless from Kielce were quite unanimous in their opinions regarding this type of employment. Many of them associated it with a significant risk of uncertainty, both of a financial and a psychological nature. Almost all of them were able to share an example, from their own experience or the experience of someone they knew, of unfair treatment related to unregistered employment:

> A friend of mine, also a cook, for a while was taking anything, any jobs, despite the fact that it was paid under the table. And then he moved to this quite popular place, and after a month the owner did not want to pay him. So he went there with his entire family. So suddenly everything has changed. The owner started explaining that it was a misunderstanding and that he will pay. He did, almost everything, so my friend kept working there. And just next month they had the same story […] they just want to use you and not to pay you.
>
> (Jakub, 25)

Financial disagreements, situations where young people did not get paid or were paid less than had been initially agreed, were psychologically challenging. They were discouraging for the young jobless, undermining their hopes, and in this way probably also prevented some of them from reaching for further opportunities.

The interviewees also agreed that in their assessment illicit employment could not be considered *a real job*. To them unregistered, illegal jobs were the opposite of the real employment that they were missing very much—'a normal, stable employment with social security' (Jacek, 22). It does not provide the much-desired sense of stability and predictability. In the opinion of many young participants only *a real job* was a panacea for an uncertain future and could effectively address the problem of financial insecurity. For those who were still living with their parents it was considered to be the only route leading to establishment of an independent life, and pursuit of long-term future projects such as having a family.

Personal Well-Being

Long-term unemployment affected the well-being of the research participants despite the financial condition of their households. An emotional component played an important role throughout most of the interviews. Conversations about the experience of unemployment caused mostly negative and sometimes very intensive emotions of fear about the future, of fear about what might happen, of shame about being different from those who managed to find employment: 'I have this feeling that those people over there treat me as if I was, well, maybe not worse, but definitely in a worse situation' (Maria, 35). The inescapable necessity of accepting support and/or borrowing money during crises generated an uncomfortable feeling of dependence. In several cases the interviewees were very open about their sense of guilt about being a burden to their relatives: 'I would so much like not to be dependent on my parents, to be able to cover my rent and pay bills, pay for the food and incidentals. I would love to be able to do this by myself' (Anna, 29).

The experience of long-term unemployment also caused feelings of anger and frustration, related to the inability to decide about their lives and being stuck in the moment:

> What I can say is that I'm terribly stressed right now. And I'm angry. You know I'm still young, I could really use extra money, so I still hope, and I search and there is nothing […] On the other hand there is boredom. You know, Mom goes to work, so I clean, I wash the dishes, or something like this, but how long you can do this? I will not be cleaning windows every day.
>
> (Pawel, 33)

Accumulation of negative emotions might be one of the causes of the relatively passive attitude of some of the research participants and their partial withdrawal from social activities, as was the case for those who presented themselves as overwhelmed by the experience.

The majority of the research participants admitted that they had been exposed to at least some forms of prejudice towards the unemployed. However, only in selected cases did the interviewees confirm that they were confronted by other people in this regard: 'It was more like suggested, that maybe I should intensify my efforts' (Jakub, 25). The pressure they felt was rather of an indirect character in the form of judgmental comments behind their backs that were being passed on to them by other people. They also referred to a generalized picture of the jobless people on the media:

Me personally, no, it has never happened in my life, so personally no. But on the TV—yes. I mean, I know this stereotype of the unemployed exists, like, I don't know, like that they will not accept a position because they simply don't like it, or it doesn't correspond with their academic training, or interests. So they assume that the unemployed must be lazy people, loafers. They might even exist, but I did not meet them.

(Tomasz, 29)

What was intriguing was that despite a fair share of negative experiences, the participants in the research generally maintained a positive attitude and declared that they were *rather satisfied* with their lives. They were able to distance themselves from the situation of unemployment and refer to their situation in general, to being a part of this world: 'Yes, I am satisfied with my life. There is my better half, I mean my girlfriend, there are my friends, it is not bad, don't you think?' (Adam, 24). Despite the fact that the group was very diversified their attitude towards life in general was to a large extent similar: 'I would like to change many things, things like our sweet unemployment, but look, I'm healthy, I've got two children, a family, so I don't really have reasons to complain' (Magda, 28).

Managing Social Relations

The second aim of this analysis was to understand the impact of unemployment on social relations of various kinds. A lack of employment over a long period of time is a factor leading to reorganization of social contacts. When jobless people start to focus on family matters and to limit their contacts with other people, it affects the balance in this area. In such situations contacts with colleagues, acquaintances or even members of the local community might erode and deteriorate, which could indicate experience of social exclusion. Therefore it was important to take a close look at social relations of the young unemployed in order to see what relations are presented as weak or strong; how young people maintain their networks of social relations; or if lack of income is of importance in such contexts.

Discussion of social relations was a difficult part of the interviews with the young unemployed. Elements of this area were touched upon over several parts of each conversation: from general questions regarding their family, close friends and places where they grew up to lived experiences of unemployment and better or worse periods in their life. Once again, the diversity of life situations combined with a limited number of cases prevented generalization, but some patterns could be observed.

Immediate Family

In the interviews with those research participants who still lived with their parents (both those who were overwhelmed with the experience of unemployment and those who actively struggled against it) it was possible to notice the central role of family relations in their everyday lives. A combination of limited mobility and large amounts of time at their disposal in many cases resulted in a very intensive experience of 'being together', especially in the families where more than one person was unemployed. What intensified this experience even more was the fact that research participants in general lived in rather small apartments. In spite of this, it did not result in longer accounts describing family relations. In fact, most of these interviewees were rather reticent about relations with their family. Those who were willing to share any information usually assured us that they maintain generally good relations: 'Mmm, I guess good, we don't fight' (Darek, 24); 'They're good' (Sylwia, 28); 'Very good' (Adam, 24)

Based on the interviews it would be difficult to generalize about how the young people who still live with their parents deal on their home ground with their experiences of unemployment, as their accounts regarding this matter were very diversified, from 'no, we rather don't talk about it' (Adam, 24) and 'we do talk about it sometimes' (Alicja, 22) to 'Yes, we do, and they understand what the situation's like out there' (Agnieszka, 34).

Although, as discussed earlier, the interviewees were generally convinced that they can count on their family for support in all problematic situations, it was possible to assume that avoidance of the topic of unemployment could be—at least in some cases—intentional, as discussing it could lead to disagreements and stressful situations:

> I mean I do fight with mom, everybody does. And the reason, it's obvious. She says that I should put myself together and find a job, and so on… But where, how?
>
> (Pawel, 33)

> My mom tells me not to give up and so on. And my brother is constantly laughing at me, that I still take money from our parents, that I cannot find a job. It is devastating, this pressure from every direction.
>
> (Milena, 21)

The most difficult situation was experienced by those who lived with parents who were also unemployed or had serious health problems, as those families were especially prone to experiencing various aspects of social exclusion and poverty:

> We live here all together. My parents are pensioners, although my mom does cleaning jobs on the side. My brother who recently moved back in with us works at nights. He sleeps in the other room. Luckily my sister got married and moved out. And my father, as you can see, he's very sick. He's got Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, severe diabetes, all of it. He loses contact with reality, so he requires a lot of care.
>
> (Szymon, 35)

A different pattern of family relations was presented by those who had established their own families (stay-at-home mothers). When asked about their family and family relations, they mostly shared details about their own families, namely their spouses/partners and especially children: 'My family? We have been married for the past four years. We have a son, who is a year and three months old and in December we expect a baby daughter' (Klara, 29).

They were also rather brief about relations with their parents or parents-in-law. According to the interviews, in most cases parents were not only supporting the young families when necessary (especially organizationally), but also occasionally engaged in discussions about experiences related to unemployment. Nevertheless it is possible to state that although they were not excluded from the picture, their role was not particularly emphasized either.

As discussed earlier, stay-at-home mothers emphasized the very regular structure of their days, focused on their family and home duties. Despite the fact that they were happy to be able to devote a lot of their attention to their children, they also pointed to the negative aspects of this arrangement, which were the difficulty of maintaining social contacts and a growing feeling of separation from the world outside their family: 'I feel this lack of contacts with other people. I just sit home. In fact sometimes I simply miss talking to other people, like even strangers' (Magda, 28).

Friends

Most of the research participants declared that they have at least one close person outside their family that they can talk to. The size and the

role of those networks varied significantly between research participants. Conventionally, maintaining social life requires at least limited financial resources. It was challenging especially for those interviewees who were overwhelmed with the situation of unemployment, who lived with their parents in households experiencing a difficult financial situation without support in the form of, for example, unemployment benefit. A simple visit to a pub or café was problematic for those with no financial resources at their disposal, who were trying to avoid any expenses: 'Going out costs money, so as for now I gave it up' (Marcin, 23); 'I need to save money, so I can't go every Friday to the pub for a beer, I will not cut down on food, so I have to save the money somehow ' (Pawel, 33).

Inability to participate in group events or gatherings is a significant constraint that prevents young people from maintaining relations with a broader circle of friends. As a result they are being gradually excluded from those circles: 'well, this relationship [with friends] is not that close anymore, it's almost artificial […] I still know what is going on with them, but we do not necessarily meet up' (Pawel, 30).

Deprivation of this kind also influences close, personal relationships, and as such is a source of stress and discomfort:

> Sometimes I was so depressed, you know, I so wanted just to go somewhere with my girlfriend and I felt so bad, because I would have to borrow money, again. I would so much want to be able to do this on my own, without any support, to be independent.
>
> (Jan, 28)

In the Polish context the custom of inviting friends to one's place as a cheaper alternative to going out is still widely practiced. However, in the extreme cases where research participants were experiencing poverty and living in very poor conditions even this option was not available. The situation of Tomasz could serve as an example here: he was living under rather poor conditions in a studio flat together with his parents, his adult brother and two pets. Inviting friends over and having any privacy under such conditions is virtually impossible. For those struggling with this type of experience the only available form of entertainment was to spend time outside their apartment:

> I've got time, so I do hang out, sometimes around our block, sometimes I go to the center. Sometimes I also look for a job, but also just for fun, we,

me and a friend of mine, just go and walk around the city center, you know looking at the shop windows, things like that.

(Monika, 23)

As a result, people exposed to this type of experience gradually move towards the outskirts of the social networks of their former groups of friends, acquaintances and colleagues, something that could be considered to be a form of social exclusion.

A very different picture was presented by those research participants who could be described as actively struggling against unemployment. These young people shared stories that indicated more balance was preserved in social relations. The fact that they were receiving limited income from illicit employment (even if not regularly), combined with the support of their parents (if available), positively contributed not only to their financial situation that was less dramatic but also to the maintenance of their social networks. Therefore, in their stories they were able to refer to numerous contacts with friends:

I must admit, I'm very lucky with friends and everything, I mean real friends. What can I say about them? We do spend a lot of time together. If it's possible, we also travel together. We really like that. Next week we are going to Prague, so I'm very excited about that.

(Natalia, 26)

Sure, it depends on the money. I was short recently, so it's different […] but normally on the weekends we go out, we go to the pub, we party […] but when you are short, you just have to give it up.

(Szymon, 35)

Research participants who represented the third type of unemployment (stay-at-home moms) manifested their specificity also in the area of contacts with friends. Since home and family obligations consumed most of their time, quite understandably the role of social contacts in their life was to a great extent reduced. As a consequence, when asked to describe their social networks they mostly referred to people in a similar life situation: 'Friends, well, there are those couples that we've known for long a time, so we meet every now and then. But those are like families, with children and everything' (Maria, 35). Some of the interviewees referred also to the relations that were formed quite early in their life as examples of the few

that they managed to maintain: 'Those are the people I know back from high school, we still stick together' (Agnieszka, 34).

However, the conventional role of young mother was not comfortable for some of the interviewees, and as a result they signaled that apart from professional activities they miss broader social relations outside the usual circles:

It lasts for so long. I'm still young, you know. I would like to, I need to go out sometimes, just leave the house, get dressed and meet other people […] And after that I can come back, take care of the children and our home.

(Maria, 35)

Local Communities

The neighborhoods of the Polish interviewees were usually formed at the level of estates where people typically lived in flats in apartment buildings. They constituted the immediate surroundings of the research participants and the broader social context outside their households. Although the young people came from various neighborhoods in Kielce, some symptoms of social exclusion could be observed in the collected material at this level.

The importance of the housing situation of young participants was reflected in this dimension of social relations as well. For the interviewees who still shared an apartment with their parents (both those overwhelmed with their situation and actively struggling against unemployment) this immediate surrounding played a visible and important role. For them their neighborhood was *their place*, especially for those who had lived there for their entire lives or at least for a very long time. These were the places where they had spent their school years, a period of their life usually associated with memories of a happy and untroubled time. Therefore despite their many imperfections (e.g., distant location of the estate from the city center, a low standard of building, bad reputation of the area) they generally liked those places: 'I've lived here all my life. It would be awkward if I didn't like it. I grew up here, so, you now, I like it here' (Adam, 24). These were the places that were familiar: 'It's a small estate. We've all known each other here since the time we were kids. By now, even if don't know somebody, they still say hello, I mean the younger ones' (Szymon, 35). Although they notice how much those places are changing over the

course of time, and how many people have left (including their peers), they still declare that they are very attached to them.

A different perspective was reflected in the interviews with the stay-at-home moms. The young couples in general had to move out of their parents' homes and usually lived in a different part of town. Some of the young mothers grew up outside the town and moved to Kielce later in their lives, therefore they were not particularly attached to any of the neighborhoods. As a result, their homes were located in places where they had spent a relatively short period of time. Since this was a period of their lives when they were preoccupied with other matters, they generally were not developing strong bonds with the local community:

> Over the past four years we moved three times. So we have been here only for the past two. So we don't really have many friends here. I'm not from here, neither is my husband. You know how it is, everybody has their obligations […] The only way I get to know new people here is via my daughters' school. You know, it's this phase. I simply meet other parents over there.
>
> (Magda, 28)

Most of the research participants, representing all three types of unemployment, lived in estates located outside the city center or in some cases even on the outskirts of town. The opposition between the places *where they lived* and the city center was very clear in the collected accounts, and the factor of physical location also seemed to play a role in partial exclusion of some of the research participants from broader social networks. As reflected in the interviews, the center of Kielce was the area that the inhabitants were proud of and recommended as worth visiting. It was where most of the public institutions were located, where people liked to go out and where most of the public events took place.

Those interviewees who lived closer to the city center perceived it as an advantage: 'It's one of the best estates in Kielce. It's very close to like everywhere, to Tesco, even to the city centre. You don't even have to take a bus, you can walk there' (Szymon, 35). However, for those young jobless who lived further away, the physical distance was a considerable obstacle. The remote location of their estate was also challenging for the young parents, who could not imagine functioning as a family in Kielce without access to a car. Since their households in general were in a stable financial condition, they could afford this simple solution. The remaining

research participants living a considerable distance from the center had to deal with various inconveniences:

> If I had a choice, I would prefer to live in the center, or closer to the center. For all the possible reasons. People say it's quiet here. Well, it's problematic with the buses, and we don't even have a bigger store around here.
>
> (Natalia, 26)

Nevertheless the most significant distance was not of a physical nature but of a social one. Young participants living with their parents in the estates located on the outskirts of the city, especially those overwhelmed with the situation of unemployment, referred to the city center as part of the town that they visited rather rarely, only on special or official occasions. The factor of physical location in some cases combined with the experience of material deprivation played a reinforcing role in their exclusion from various aspects of social life.

Conclusions

The focus of this chapter is the issue of coping with the experience of long-term unemployment by young adults in Kielce. As a regional center with an unemployment rate of approximately 10 percent, Kielce in many respects represents the average characteristics of urban areas in Poland, including a significant share of persistent unemployment and a developed informal economy.

The key elements of the analysis are the perception of unemployment to those who experience it and various dimensions of social exclusion experienced by young jobless people. Therefore, questions regarding the problems faced by the young unemployed while coping with their situation, the support they receive while coping with their situation and the impact of the experience of long-term unemployment on their networks of social relations were brought to bear on the collected interviews.

Within the Polish context the formal category of the long-term unemployed, defined as those who are registered as such, remain without employment for over 12 months and actively seek it, appeared to be a source of diversified life situations of the research participants. Nevertheless a conjunction of common elements observed within the plurality of their experiences (including time management, their resources and networks of social relations) formed the basis of three quite distinct

types of unemployment situation: the first was represented by young people overwhelmed by the experience of long-term unemployment; the second represented by the young people actively struggling against their employment situation; and the third represented by the stay-at-home mothers determined to rejoin the employment market.

While coping with the experience of unemployment, young research participants received significant support from their immediate families (parents, spouses/partners) and to a lesser extent from friends. Broadly defined, family is considered to be a main source of support especially when joblessness is combined with material deprivation and poverty (Lister 2007; Tarkowska 2012), which is also reflected in the systematic quantitative data (Czapiński and Panek 2009; Grotowska-Leder 2011).

It is worth noting that institutional assistance played only a limited role in the coping strategies of the young research participants. The dominating explanation concludes that people in general tend to apply for institutional assistance only when their situation is becoming very difficult (Milic-Czerniak 1999;Tarkowska 2012). This interpretation of qualitatively oriented researchers is also supported by survey data, where institutional support is at the bottom of the list of strategies applied by households experiencing financial hardships (CBOS 2007). It is worth noting, however, that because of the lack of documented work experience many of the young jobless from Kielce were not eligible for unemployment benefit, for example.

What seemed to be striking was the popularity of illicit forms of labor and various types of unregistered arrangements that are part of the informal economy, especially among young research participants described as actively struggling against their unemployment situation. In the Polish context, the application of this type of coping strategy is not typical, but should not be surprising either, particularly among the long-term unemployed. According to various estimations over the past years the informal economy covered up to 20 percent of the Polish GDP (Fundowicz et al. 2016). This places Poland among the EU leaders of the shadow economy (together with the Baltic states, Romania and Bulgaria). The proportion of those involved with unregistered employment is significantly smaller. According to the estimations of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, since 2010 this phenomenon has been stable at up to 5 percent of the total number of employed (Zgierska 2015). In order to last, a phenomenon of this volume requires a certain level of social acceptance. Therefore it

needs to be stressed again that informal practices of 'dealing' with the 'uncomfortable' legal regulations had blossomed on a large scale during the communist period. This flexibility towards formal regulations has strong cultural foundations within Polish society (Kojder 2001). This can be illustrated by the fact that throughout the last 50 years of research on the social perception of law roughly only 50 percent agreed with a statement that 'people should always strictly obey the law even if they consider it unjust' (Podgórecki 1966; Kurczewski 2011).

Young jobless from Kielce also noticed the fundamental disadvantages of unregistered employment. Such arrangements were not perceived as 'real jobs'. Illicit forms of work not only involved the risk of fraud and potential disappointments but also, by definition, did not provide social insurance and documented professional experience. Hence it could be said that for the research participants this strategy was considered to be rather unattractive but necessary at the same time, particularly in the context of material deprivation and lack of employment alternatives. This opinion was shared by the general public in Poland when survey participants were asked about their reasons for involvement in unregistered employment (Zgierska 2015). In other words, Poles in general understand why those who do not have other options decide to involve themselves with unregistered employment, which is another aspect of the widespread social acceptance of this phenomenon.

What was most important, in the opinion of the young jobless from Kielce, was that illicit forms of labor could not be considered to be stable solutions, especially for those who would like to progress with their prolonged transition from adolescence to adulthood and enter new social roles. The desire for stable employment based on permanent contracts providing financial security is reflected in other qualitative studies (Binder 2014; Róg-Ilnicka 2013; White 2011) as well as in the research on representative samples (CBOS 2014). It is generally a strong preference of professionally active Poles. Therefore it is possible to claim that this attitude to employment will contribute to the growing tension between employers who prefer flexible forms of employment (even if registered) and the potential employees, who consider these flexible forms to be 'junk contracts' (Marody 2000; Marody and Lewicki 2010; Mę cina 2009).

Undoubtedly the experience of long-term joblessness is a factor that increases the risk of being exposed to various dimensions of social exclusion (Poławski 2007; Tarkowska 2012) as well as stigmatization (Lepianka 2002; Lister 2007; Kudlińska 2012), even if experienced in an indirect

manner. The young research participants from Kielce described as overwhelmed by the experience of unemployment, who presented themselves as less active in general, followed a path of gradual reconfiguration of social contacts, closing to the circle of family relations, with the deterioration of broader social networks outside their immediate social surroundings. This phenomenon of isolation from broader circles related—among other things—to a lack of financial sources (Kozek 2009), which has also been described in the literature as 'a hypertrophy of the family relations' (Tarkowska 2000, 2007b). This process seemed to be more advanced in situations where unemployment was a common problem of family members and material deprivation was a serious issue, resulting even in elements of spatial exclusion. Unfortunately a limited exposure to broader social contacts might consolidate the unfavorable position of those overwhelmed by being unemployed. Job searches based on 'weak ties' (acquaintance, colleagues) prove to be more successful than those based on strong ties with family members and friends (Granovetter 1973, 1995), something that also holds to be true in the Polish context (Pawlak and Kotnarowski 2016).

A different perspective was presented by the stay-at-home mothers from Kielce, who wished to find employment outside their household. Although the financial situation of their families was presented in the collected interviews as more stable, after a significant period of working at home they were dissatisfied with the traditional division of responsibilities. In their opinion a home budget based on one salary did not provide sufficient financial security. After several years of concentration on their family life and literal exclusion from the outside world, they were also striving for reconstruction of their network of social contacts. As the data of the Central Statistical Office documents, since system transition has been taking place in Poland the rate of women's professional activity has been systematically dropping, and this has been the case for over 15 years. Despite the improvement of the situation after EU enlargement in 2004, it is still less than 50 percent and less than during the communist period (Dmochowska 2015). In the Polish context women also experience significant difficulties while re-entering the employment market after a period of absence related to maternity (Gardawski 2009; Krzyżanowska and Stec 2012). It could be said that on the one hand their attempts indicate their dissatisfaction with the traditional breadwinner model of the family; on the other the complications they experience echo the fact that they are more prone to long-term unemployment.

Lastly, the experience of long-term unemployment affected the well-being of all research participants regardless of their housing situation and marital status. The necessity of accepting external assistance, the feeling of dependence, financial insecurity as well as the lack of material stability that would allow them to focus on other aspects of their life were all sources of significant emotional distress for the research participants. However, despite their negative experiences young jobless people in general preserved their positive attitude and declared themselves as rather satisfied with their lives. This optimism, typical for the age group, in some cases remains the only asset of those facing persistent unemployment.

NOTES

1. For example see: Balsigerowa (1932), Krahelska and Pruss (1933), Minkowska (1935) and Landau (1936).
2. According to the estimations of the Central Statistical Office in Poland, at the end of 2014 over 2.3 million Poles remained outside the country (at the end of 2010 it was already 2 million), mostly in the countries of the EU (Kostrzewa 2015: 3). In their systematic and in-depth analysis of this phenomenon Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski conclude that owing to their diversified character and certain unpredictability it is difficult to determine to what extent migrations of this period are permanent (2009: 229–233).

APPENDIX 1

Table 7.1 Interviewees' profiles

No	Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Acquired or learned profession	Last occupation	Marital status	No of household members	Siblings	Nationality	Place of birth
1.	Anna	F	29	Compulsory school	None	Seasonal worker	Single	4	1	Polish	Kielce
2.	Tomasz	M	29	University degree (political sciences)	None	None	Single	4	1	Polish	Kielce
3.	Agnieszka	F	34	University degree	Economist	Logistics	Married, mother of 2	4	1	Polish	small town, south of Poland
4.	Marcin	M	23	High school (unfinished)	Driver	Construction works	Single	4	1	Polish	Kielce
5.	Adam	M	24	Compulsory school	None	Dealer	In relationship	3	1	Polish	Kielce
6.	Magda	F	28	High school vocational training	Trader, seller	None	Married, mother of two	4	1	Polish	village near Kielce
7.	Monika	F	23	High school, vocational training	Seller	None	In relationship	4	1	Polish	Kielce
8.	Pawel	M	33	Vocational school	Welder	Upholsterer	Single	2	1	Polish	Kielce

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

No	Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Acquired or learned profession	Last occupation	Marital status	No of household members	Siblings	Nationality	Place of birth
9.	Katarzyna	F	30	University degree	Economist	Seasonal worker	Single	4	3	Polish	Kielce
10.	Jan	M	28	Bachelor degree (unfinished)	Excavator operator	Shop assistant	In relationship	2	3	Polish	Kielce
11.	Karolina	F	31	High school, vocational training	Beautician	Beautician	Single mother of one, expecting two	2	1	Polish	Kielce
12.	Darek	M	24	Vocational school	Floor-layer	Seasonal worker (constructions)	In relationship	3	1	Polish	Kielce
13.	Alicja	F	22	Vocational school	Cook	Kitchen porter	In relationship	5	3	Polish	Kielce
14.	Maria	F	35	University degree (unfinished)	German teacher	Language testing	married, mother of two	4	1	Polish	Kielce
15.	Sylwia	F	28	Vocational training, university degree (unfinished)	IT technician	Pastry shop	In relationship	4	1	Polish	Kielce
16.	Klara	F	29	University degree	Computer graphic designer	Computer graphic designer	Married, mother of one, expecting two	3	1	Polish	Kielce

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Education		Marital status			Nationality	City
17.	Iga	F	31	University degree (unfinished)	English teacher	English teacher	In separation, mother of one	3	-	Polish	Kielce
18.	Natalia	F	26	University degree	Journalist	Librarian	Single	3	1	Polish	Kielce
19.	Milena	F	21	High school, vocational training	Hotel guest service agent	Hotel guest service agent	In relationship	4	2	Polish	Kielce
20.	Jacek	M	22	Middle school	None	Construction works	Living-in partner	2	2	Polish	Kielce
21.	Szymon	M	35	High school, vocational training	Mechanic	Construction works (seasonal)	Single	4	2	Polish	Kielce
22.	Jakub	M	25	High school, vocational training	Cook	Security guard	Single	1	-	Polish	Kielce
23.	Patrycja	F	30	Bachelor degree, vocational training	Education studies, tailor	Seller (green market)	Married, mother of two	4	1	Polish	Kielce

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Experiencing Long-Term Unemployment in Europe: A Conclusion

Marco Giugni and Christian Lahusen

This book, as well as the research from which it originates, started with a number of questions: How far does social support attenuate the detrimental effects of unemployment, and which kind of social relations are of particular importance? Do social support networks suffer in case of extended exposure to unemployment, and how do the young jobless cope with shrinking webs of social relations? Are networks of social support equally important in different countries, and are they exposed to similar challenges everywhere? And are all young jobless adults in a similar position, or can we identify differences between various groups, when considering gender, class, household structure and other features? Further: How do jobless young adults experience their living situation? How do they organize their lives within the external limitations imposed by their unemployment,

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and which forms of coping or problem-solving do they develop? Do they develop stable forms of living within a precarious condition? How strongly can they shape their living conditions at all? And do these patterns of everyday life diverge considerably between various groups of jobless people?

Given the qualitative and inductive design of our research, the answers to these questions were not at all evident at the outset, even though previous research has helped to spell out expectations and assumptions. Differences between the cities under analysis and within each of the samples were expected to emerge—and they did materialize, in spite of considerable similarities across cities and samples. In the following, we wish to briefly highlight some of these empirical findings, both by identifying core issues, important similarities and the main differences between our national case studies. To this purpose, we address three main aspects: the interplay between unemployment as a social condition and the web of social relations; the key comparative findings; and the social categories or grouping that tend to generate variation within and between the national samples. We will then spell out the broader implications of our study and stress a few potential avenues for further research in this field.

Unemployment and Social Relations

The analyses and findings presented in this book corroborate the assumption that unemployment impinges negatively on informal networks (Jackson 1988; Kieselbach 2000; Morris and Irwin 1992; Russell 1999). Young adults report recurrently that they have a reduced number of contacts or at least problems in sustaining them. Some of them even testify that they suffer social marginalization and isolation. At the same time, however, our findings support the observation that social relations are an important potential resource of problem-solving (Beck et al. 2005; Huffman et al. 2015; Lorenzini and Giugni 2011). In both respects, our interviews highlight the importance of two mediating factors or mechanisms: material hardship and stigma.

On the one hand, our empirical data shows that the destructive impact of long-term unemployment is based on the lack of income and material goods across all cities. Our respondents testified that social networking relies on funds, because sociability at some point requires money (for going out, meeting friends and so on) or some sort of material reciprocity (e.g., gifts, the exchange of goods). This is particularly true for networking among peers. Within these limitations, however, young adults manage to

work their webs of social relations in order to alleviate monetary or material hardship to a certain extent. For instance, the jobless youth borrow money or receive donations, ask for jobs and engage in cashless exchange of goods. Parents provide unilateral help in forms of donations or gifts more often than other relatives and friends. Still, it is obvious that the availability of monetary and material support is strongly determined by the financial situation of the jobless' informal networks. The possibilities of coping with financial hardship are much more limited if the young jobless' parents are affected by joblessness or poor retirement benefits themselves.

On the other hand, the destructive impact of extended joblessness on social relations is associated with the stigma of unemployment and the related feelings of shame amongst the unemployed. Young adults retreat from certain contacts because of a loss of commonalities and a lack of empathy. This seems to affect friends and acquaintances more strongly, as the family of origin is more loyal, even if reproaches are voiced by close family members. However, these informal networks are also an important antidote to self-victimization. Even though our respondents acknowledged the erosion of social contacts, they all highlighted at least some relatives or friends who remained supportive against all odds.

In both regards, our data corroborate the importance of reliable contacts and social support. A few respondents even developed more extensive forms of social relations to provide new experiences, purposes, sources of social recognition and identification, such as leisure activities and civic and political participation. However, it is interesting to see that social networking basically remains limited to the private sphere. It is remarkable that only a very few interviewees reported support from civil society organizations; while some refer to the Internet and social media as a source of information, contacts and help; and sometimes the neighborhood is also an arena of sociability. Very seldom are references made to public activities (membership in associations, participation in street protests, etc.) and the potential contacts these might entail. Hence, unemployment seems to determine a retreat into the private sphere of sociability everywhere.

The Role of the Context

Significant differences between the six cities emerge when disentangling the previous observations (see also Gallie and Paugam 2000; Engbersen et al. 2006; Hammer 2003; Kieselbach et al. 2001). As the chapters in this book have shown, financial and symbolic deprivation diverge to some

extent. In regard to material means, the problems associated with financial hardship seem to be more pronounced in Kielce, Turin and partly Lyon than in the other three cities. Respondents in the previous three cities mention the severity of the problem of material deprivation in a more explicit and drastic manner, while young adults in Cologne, Geneva and Karlstad tend to be more often more confident; in some cases they even report that they get along quite well with their money. As a consequence, deprived youth in the French, Italian and Polish cities report more explicitly about a stronger dependence on the family, illicit forms of labor and in a few cases charities. Hence, the use of social relations increases the dependence on families, and also the need to invest more time and energy into networking within families. The role of friendships and other weak ties is less obvious in these cities, while young jobless people in the German, Swedish and Swiss cities also report that they engage in monetary and material exchanges with friends or acquaintances.

On the other hand, stigmatization is an issue associated with the experience of unemployment in all the cities. Between countries, the feeling of shame is voiced more explicitly in the Germany, Swedish and Swiss cities than in the other three. If we distinguish between different sources of stigmatization, we see that respondents in all the cities experience the stigma of unemployment primarily in the public domain. In the French, Swedish and Swiss cities respondents report that the stigma is also voiced by their personal relations, particularly by their parents and relatives. In the other cities, the pressures are less pronounced and generalized. These experiences of stigmatization are associated with the attribution of blame everywhere. In the French, Polish, Swedish and Swiss cities respondents seem to put the blame primarily on themselves, while in the German and Italian cities there is more anger and externalization of responsibility. Even though in all the countries the young unemployed are dissatisfied with the performance of the employment agencies, only in the French and German cities is a more demanding approach towards the state voiced at all. In these few cases, jobless young adults argue that politicians and employment agencies are responsible and should do something to relieve their situation.

Overall, the comparative findings attest that the family (i.e., partners, children and parents) is the nucleus of informal networks and the primary source of financial, material and emotional support in all the cities. Friends are important too, but less in terms of financial support. Hence, a division of labor seems to be at work. In other words, young jobless adults in all

cities organize their social networks around a privatized sphere of material support and social recognition (family first, then friends). Only very few respondents reported that they maintained relations with politically active friends and civic or political associations. Only these individuals define their private problems more explicitly in public terms, thus qualifying feelings of blame and stressing alternative forms of personal affirmation and identification.

Differences Across Groups

Our data corroborates the assumption that young adults experience unemployment quite differently, depending on their specific socio-demographic profile. The chance of overcoming joblessness is very different for individuals of different age, gender, ethnic and social background (Clark 2003; Payne 1987; Russell and O'Connell 2001). Moreover, the possibility that the hardship associated with unemployment will be handled well seems to depend on the same attributes. Finally, the interplay between unemployment and informal networks varies between groups. For instance, the chapters in this book converge in the observation that the informal networks and social support are different for women and men, parents and singles, members of small and large households, people from a middle-class background and underprivileged classes, between migrants and nationals, just to name the most visible differences.

These observations are not surprising given the broad evidence generated by previous research on social support. The six case studies have contributed to this knowledge by digging deeper into the dynamic interplay between unemployment and informal networks. Their main contribution is to highlight that the experiences of unemployment and social support diverge considerably according to socio-demographic traits and social profiles. We can illustrate this diversity of experiences in regard to a couple of crucial classifications and groupings.

First, gender and household type make a considerable difference when looking at the structure of social relations and the potential use that young adults make of them. Women seem to be less exposed to processes of social isolation, particularly if they have children. Children provide an important asset in terms of structuring the day, maintaining contacts, engaging in exchange relations, securing funds from families or agencies, providing self-assurance and recognition. They reduce the material, social and emotional impact of joblessness considerably, because motherhood

is not perceived as worklessness. Interestingly enough, fatherhood does not necessarily have the same effect. Here, we see that role models and social expectations from the immediate environment tend to hinder men from organizing and stabilizing their everyday life around parenthood and children, and from maintaining kinship-oriented relations with their own parents and their wider family. Family networking and social support thus seem to be highly gendered.

Secondly, informal networks and social support tend to be patterned by social background, in particular national origin and social class. Migrants often rely very strongly on familiar networks of support, and they socialize within the migrant community. In some cases, young jobless adults make use of members of their families who live abroad in order to secure funds, mobilize further contacts, engage in forms of socializing and generate feelings of belongingness. Here again, gender differences are relevant when looking at the support that single mothers mobilize.

At the same time, the social class background of the respondents has a palpable effect on the structure of their social relations and the chances they have of capitalizing upon them. Most obviously, the ability of unemployed youth to mobilize material support depends on the number and the social composition of their contacts: the young unemployed from middle-class families have greater possibilities for securing material support than respondents from families where unemployment and precariousness is widespread and inherited. However, we are only speaking about possibilities and thus not necessarily about a freely available source of material and emotional support. A middle-class background entails the risk that respondents are confronted much more forcefully with a work-related habitus within their families or peer groups. Material or emotional support might be more conditional in these circles, and the fear of being stigmatized as 'lazy', 'useless', 'underclass' or 'poor' by their families or peer groups is more diffused. Conversely, our data suggests that young people living in a deprived environment tend to feel less stigma, and are thus more likely to receive support if available.

In sum, gender, household composition, migration and social background are four social categories that pattern the lived experiences of unemployment and the potential compensatory value of social networks. Again, we need to remind ourselves that these observations do not apply uniformly to all countries. Indeed, kinship networks seem to play a bigger role in some cities (Kielce, Lyon and Turin), while the weaker ties to friends and peers are more notable in the others (Karlstad, in part Geneva

and Cologne). The pressures of parents on their jobless children to take up work and secure financial independence is most visible in the Swedish city and less outspoken in the Italian city. While financial hardship is more pressing in the Italian and Polish cities, the stigma of unemployment seems more palpable in the Germany, Swedish and Swiss cities.

At the same time, however, these differences are always relative. The destructive force of long-term unemployment on informal networks and social support is experienced everywhere, and the limitations of coping through informal networks of social support are prevalent everywhere too. Even with regard to most of the social classifications and groupings discussed here, the differences are less marked than expected. Indeed, it is remarkable that traditional role models are still prevalent even in countries such as Sweden. Men do not develop child-centered webs of social relations and support, and are still firmly tied to the expectation that they should become breadwinners. Moreover, the stigma of unemployment is associated with an outspoken work ethic and identity in all countries. Men and most women report that they struggle to convince their relatives that they are not 'lazy' and still worth support. In some of the conversations we find references to a generational experience that distances the young unemployed from their parents. Expectations voiced within their families and the public domain are still tied to a labor market that builds on full-time and life-long employment. Our respondents feel unrightfully criticized, given the fact that today's situation is marked by liberalization, flexibilization and precariousness, thus exposing them to constraints and limitation unprecedented until now.

Policy Implications

Scholarly work often has relevant policy implications. This is certainly true for research on unemployment, and the analyses presented in this book are no exception. We would like to spell out four such implications, which are more or less directly related to the findings presented in the previous chapters. Firstly, the chapters in this book have shown that long-term unemployment and its consequences on the personal lives of those struck by it continue to be a pressing topic requiring a rapid and effective response from the actors concerned. This is all the most true as the problem affects a particularly vulnerable group, namely young adults. Long-term unemployment generates scarring effects which will affect young people throughout their life-course. Exposure to unemployment among school

leavers increase the risks of being unemployed in the future (Cockx and Picchio 2013; Gregg 2001), suffering from mental health problems at later stages of their lives (Hammer 2000; Strandh et al. 2014) and running into problems of old-age poverty because of limited pension entitlements (Esping-Andersen 1996). There is a risk, which is perhaps already a reality, of generating a 'lost generation'. This is obviously true in those countries, such as Italy for example, where unemployment levels are high and which are struck by structural unemployment to an important extent, but holds also, at least in part, in countries such as Switzerland, where unemployment is traditionally low. Young people are the future of our societies. When even a small portion of youth in a given place or country is excluded from the labor market for a long time, this threatens the very foundations of that place or country.

Secondly, as we have seen, long-term unemployment often becomes part of the everyday life of young people and is strongly embedded into informal networks, for good (social support) but also for bad (shared experiences of social exclusion). Scholarly writing has testified repeatedly that unemployment affects households, families, neighborhoods or communities in a collective manner (Clarke 2003; Joannides and Loury 2004; Payne 1987). Remedial actions not only have to address individual jobless people, but should also take into account their social environment and its web of social relations. This calls for an approach that goes beyond the simple reinsertion into the labor market of as many people as possible, extending in time their unemployment benefits or activation measures aiming to improve their employability. All this is much needed, of course. What is also required, however, are efforts to counter the negative effects of long-term unemployment in the social realm, be that peers, the family or neighborhoods, and on the everyday lives of young people.

Thirdly, and related to the previous point, fighting unemployment cannot be the sole task of the state. Other actors must intervene as well. Civil society organizations can play a key role in this respect (Baglioni and Giugni 2014). They provide counseling, training, possibly financial support and ultimately also moral support. Moreover, they are sometimes also engaged in political activities aimed at sensitizing public opinion or pressuring the policymakers. In all these areas, organizations active in the field of unemployment are key actors in the fight against long-term unemployment and its negative consequences. In addition, beyond the action of formally constituted organizations, other, more informal, circles have something to say as well. We refer here to the role that family members as

well as close and more distant friends can play. While these actors can provide financial support—this holds above all for the family—and also help to provide those 'weak ties' which increase among other things mobility opportunity (Granovetter 1973), their main role is probably to give moral and psychological support, which only they can give (Beck et al. 2005; Huffman et al. 2015). Indeed, this book has been in large part devoted to showing the impact of social support networks, made of family, friends and other circles, in their ability to alleviate the negative consequences of long-term unemployment suffered by young adults. These findings underline the important of fighting long-term unemployment on various levels. Problem-solving should be a multilayered enterprise involving a plurality of actors, public and private, formal and informal. This requires coordination between the various actors. As to public authorities, there is a need to acknowledge the important role of voluntary organizations, informal groups and interpersonal help, and to actively support and subsidize their efforts.

Fourthly, the previous chapters have highlighted the heterogeneity of the group of long-term unemployed. What we call 'long-term unemployed youth' is in fact composed of a variety of social groups and categories with different levels of risk of staying in that condition and, conversely, different chances of entering or re-entering the labor market. As a result, unemployed youth have different personal backgrounds and trajectories. They also have different stocks of resources, for example in terms of education. Based on such variety of backgrounds, trajectories and resources, they experience long-term unemployment differently and are likely to cope with it in a variety of ways. This, in turn, suggests that 'one size fits all' solutions are inadequate. The complexity of the problem requires multiple problem-solving initiatives, directed at various target groups and risk factors, such as, for example, migrants, lone parents, single households, low qualified jobless and so forth.

Avenues for Further Research

As with any other research, the analyses and findings presented in this book raise as many questions as they provide answers. Therefore, they open up avenues for further research in this field. We would like to stress four of them. A first potential research avenue relates to what we think are one of the strengths of the present book, namely its comparative scope. More precisely, taken as a whole, this book offers a qualitative and comparative

analysis of the experience of long-term unemployment among youngsters in different cities. Most often than not, scholars either go one way or the other; that is, either they go intensively, privileging in-depth analysis at the expense of broad coverage, or they go extensively, covering a broad range of contexts—most often, countries—hence sacrificing the depth of the analysis. Most of the time, the former case applies. This book has followed a new path in this respect by combining an in-depth qualitative and inductive analysis with a comparative perspective, allowing the examination of the impact of different social and institutional contexts on the processes at hand. We invite scholars not only of unemployment but in other fields of social science as well to follow this approach by examining their subject matter qualitatively and in depth, but at the same time covering different social settings and contexts. In the methodologists' jargon, this means maximizing both internal and external validity.

At the same time, however, the comparative scope remains quite limited. The analyses and findings presented here cover six European cities and countries (see also Hammer 2003; Kieselbach 2000). While, to our knowledge, this is unique in a field often filled by helpful but limited cases studies, more could be done in this direction. Thus, a second avenue for future research consists in broadening the scope of the analysis to see whether the findings also apply in other contexts, including in non-European countries. Furthermore, while the focus here has been on young long-term unemployed, at least some of the mechanisms highlighted in the previous chapters as well as some of the findings might apply not only to other cohorts of unemployed people but also to other 'weakly resourced' groups (Chabanet and Royall 2014). For example, the role of social relations and support—most notably in the form of increased social capital—has been shown in the case of migrants (Morales and Giugni 2011). Broadening the scope of the analysis to cover other and more contexts as well as other social groups would increase the external validity of the findings shown in these chapters.

A third, related avenue for further research that we would like to stress relates to a key issue in the social sciences: linking levels of analysis. This has most often been characterized as the micro–macro linkage (Alexander et al. 1987), but micro–meso and meso–macro linkages can be mentioned as well. The former is particularly relevant in this context. While the previous chapters have put the situation and experience of young long-term unemployed in their larger social context, the analysis has focused on the individual level. Future research should look at the contextual

analysis agenda in more detail by showing how the individual experience of long-term unemployment of young adults depends on the interplay of individual trajectories and characteristics (including their capacity of implementing coping strategies), the presence and action of various organizations (including civil society organizations) and the presence and action of social and political institutions (including those relating to the welfare state).

A fourth and final line of investigation has to do with a blind spot in our analysis. This book has focused on the personal and social dimensions of young long-term unemployment, more specifically on the role of social relations and support. This was done on purpose. Yet the latter do not exhaust the life spheres that may or may not be affected by long-term unemployment. One of these is the political sphere. Scholarly work has shown that unemployment potentially has important consequences for the political life of those who are affected by it (Chabanet and Faniel 2012; Bassoli and Lahusen 2015). It can, for example, hinder the political engagement of the young unemployed and lead to their political withdrawal owing to resource depletion, increasing disenchantment or a process of inward retreat. But it may also lead to increased engagement and more radical participation because of the grievances that unemployment may create. The literature is not consensual on the path that unemployment, and more specifically youth long-term unemployment, leads to. Investigating the relationship between the social and political spheres of the young unemployed could yield new insights into these processes.

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