Visions of the vocational future of long-term unemployed people

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Abstract

This article presents the dissertation project entitled "Visions of the vocational future of long-term unemployed people". Ten years after the German government implemented what is known as the Hartz legislation, the long-term unemployed are cited as the losers of the reform. How do the long-term employed view their vocational future? And do the reasons also lie in their history, their interests, their experience with unemployment, or with how official employment authorities are run? These are the core issues that this dissertation deals with.

1. Foreword

The idea for this dissertation project came about as part of the "leo. – Level-One Study[1]" research project. In the pre-test phase of the leo. – Level-One Study, reading and writing tests were conducted with nine interviewees who received unemployment benefit II. These people were employed by organisations in Hamburg to work in what are known in Germany as "one-euro jobs". It was noticeable that some of the people also used the one-hour face-to-face tests to talk about their pasts, dreams and goals. Before, during and after the interviews they often mentioned their lack of prospects for the future. Or to put it in the words of the Marienthal study research team, those asked clearly felt "crushed" and "resigned" to their fate (see Jahoda et al. 1986). However, some people discussed their hopes and ambitions, some of which were definite career goals (e.g. one woman wanted to become a bus driver). Therefore, it is clear that some unemployed people are interested in certain jobs and do have goals. At the same time, they want to talk and like to use the opportunity to articulate their thoughts.

Consequently, the objective of the dissertation project presented here is to analyse the visions of the vocational future of long-term unemployed people. How do the long-term unemployed view their vocational future? To answer this question, past histories are to be examined. Because the second research issue concerns the histories of the long-term unemployed people surveyed. It also looks at their experience, interests and skills and how these are associated with any prospects for the future. A third question concerns the importance and consequences for learning by the long-term unemployed and for adult training and education.

The dissertation project hasn't been completed at this juncture. Which is why this article will explain the projects and its issues, its relevance and theoretical integration, as well as its methods of collating and analysing information. The interim result will then be presented.

2. Are the long-term unemployed a target group for adult-education research? Relevance

One of the core results of research into the target group is the realisation of their unintended selectivity in further education or training processes. This only gets worse when people enter adulthood (see Tippelt et al. 2003; Faulstich 2004; Rosenbladt/Bilger 2008; OECD 2014). On the one hand, poorly qualified people are excluded from further education or training, on the other hand they exclude themselves because of previous experience or for subjective reasons (see Bolder 2006, p. 31). This is also the case with the long-term unemployed. Particularly in

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[1] http://blogs.epb.uni-hamburg.de/leo/

this group the risk that they will give up is significant, at least that is what the early social-psychological surveys in the Marienthal Study indicate (see Johoda et al. 1986). Studies on people participating and not participating in further training or education (see Strzelewicz et al. 1966; Tippelt et al. 2003; Rosenbladt/Bilger 2008) repeatedly show that the lower the qualifications obtained at school are, the lower the participation in further training or education. The current job situation and position of people in jobs also correlated with participation in further training or education. The unemployed and people who do basic jobs take part less frequently in further training or education (see Rosenbladt/Bilger 2008). It is left up to the organisations providing further education or training and offering programmes for the unemployed to give those taking part some prospects of a new job (see Gieseke, 1999, p. 25). This responsibility is linked to the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetzes* 'German Employment Promotion Act' (AFG) of 1969. Since then, a link has been created between decreasing unemployment and further training or education (see Meisel 1999, p. 5). However, further training or education can neither create new or a sufficient number of jobs, nor can it guarantee a job at the end.

In addition to psycho-social and health consequences, which are well known, particularly if people are unemployed for a long time, some skills also atrophy. This is evident in basic education for example. The British Cohort Study (BCS) showed that maths skills dwindle the longer people are unemployed. This phenomenon isn't as pronounced with reading as it is with maths, but these skills also decline the longer the period of unemployment lasts (see Bynner/Parsons 1998, p. 10 f). On the other hand, job skills can also be lost the longer a period of unemployment continues, or could become out-dated due to the fast pace of technological change. The long-term unemployed do notice a loss of job skills (see Epping et al. 2001; Ludwig-Mayerhofe et al. 2009).

In the Adult Education/Training manual, Rainer Brödel (2009) refers to unemployed people as a target group of adult education/training in his article on *Weiterbildung von Arbeitslosen* 'Further training/education of unemployed people'. Nevertheless, they have been virtually ignored by research into adult education and training over the past 15 years. However, until the mid 1990s, research into unemployed people was a focus of adult education/training and research into the area (see Faulstich/Ebner 1985; Sauer 1989; Peters 1991; Reh 1995; Klähn/Mietzner 1998; Meier 1998). Back then, the AFG was considered the legal framework for promoting vocational training. However, in 1998 the AFG was replaced by the third *Sozialgesetzbuch* 'Social Legislation Act' (SGB III). Since 2005, the unemployed are divided into two groups: SGB III and SGB II. What became known as the Hartz Reform is ten years old this year (2015) and led to unemployed people being separated into two groups. Statutory amendments and reforms always lead to changes in conditions for state-funded training, the (long-term) unemployed and training organisations. In the ten years since the Hartz reforms have been in existence, there's been an enormous decline in the number of unemployed. However, this encouraging result doesn't apply to the long-term unemployed. In this group the figure is stagnating at around one million people. As a result, almost every third unemployed person has been without a job for a year or longer.

If these aspects are taken into account (long-term) unemployed people are still a target group for research into adult education and training. Above all, ten years after the Hartz reforms were implemented the long-term unemployed are now considered those who have lost out. Around 90 per cent of the long-term unemployed belong to the SGB II group[2] (see Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2015). It is primarily this group that will often be excluded from further training and the mainstream labour market. There are however (long-term)

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[2] Under German law, unemployed people are classified into one of two groups. Unemployed people who belong to SGB III receive benefits as specified in *Sozialgesetzbuch* [Welfare Statues] SGB III They receive *Arbeitslosengeld* 'unemployment benefit' I which is funded from unemployment benefit insurance. Unemployed people who receive benefits under *Sozialgesetzbuch* II (SGB II) receive basic incomes financed through taxes.

unemployed people who deliberately marginalise themselves. The following article examines to what extent this happens due to labour-market policies and what this might mean for vocational orientation.

3. Exclusion of the long-term unemployed from further training

Training vouchers are issued so that people can take part in funded job training courses. Funding for job-training courses is a programme that is only officially anchored in SGB III (article 81 SGB III). Therefore, unemployed people who receive benefits under SGB II aren't entitled to any funded job-training courses. Nevertheless, between 2003 and 2006, 23 per cent of the training vouchers were issued to unemployed people who belong to the SGB II group. This is the result of a quantitative study on the allocation and redemption of training vouchers, which was carried out by the *Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung* 'Institute for Employment Research' (IAB) (see Kruppe 2008, p. 20). However, training vouchers are issued according to an integration rate. A training voucher is issued if a 70 per cent probability exists that the unemployed person receiving the funding will no longer be unemployed after taking part in the training (see Kruppe 2008). [3] Consequently, funding for job training is often based on the "Matthäus Principle". In other words, anyone who already has appropriate qualifications that facilitate their re-entry onto the labour market will tend to be given funding for job training. When the training vouchers were first introduced, this tool was already being judged as selective (see Faulstich 2003; Kühnlein/Klein 2003; Faulstich et al. 2004; Sauter 2005). These fears were reaffirmed in the quantitative IAB study (see Kruppe 2008). As regards the likelihood that vouchers are redeemed, this IAB study confirms that even when training vouchers are redeemed people are still excluded. Around 14 per cent of the training vouchers issued between 2003 and 2005 were not redeemed (see Kruppe 2008, p. 20). There are no differences between the probability that the long-term unemployed and people unemployed for less than a year will redeem vouchers. However, people who receive a basic income under SGB II are less likely to redeem a training voucher than those who receive benefits under SGB III. These exclusions are also based on the fact that the objective of the training and the length of the course are stated on the training voucher (article 81 section 4 SGB III). This is usually an objective determined by the placement officer, but it is the person given the voucher who has to look for a suitable course. This is a very clear example of the concept of providing help, but demanding that people take responsibility for the future too. This concept has been the cornerstone of SGB II since the Hartz reforms. The training vouchers can only be redeemed at a certified organisation and for certified programmes that pursue the training objective set. After approval by the *Akkreditierungs- und Zulassungsverordnung der Arbeitsförderung* 'German Accreditation and Licensing Body' (AZAV) certified training organisations and measures are listed on the online "KURSNET" portal. Anyone with a training voucher has to look there for an appropriate programme nearby (see Kruppe 2008, p. 14). The employment authority uses this process to encourage initiative and responsibility on the part of each individual. However, this portal and indeed even the search for the right programme can present difficulties to many unemployed people. Labour officers give no help with this online portal. It is also likely that many unemployed people resist redeeming the training vouchers because they feel that the specified training objective is not relevant to them and this process allows little in the way of responsibility and freedom of choice (see Kühnlein/Klein 2003, p. 8). The question here is what do long-term unemployed people want in terms of training and jobs? Are these so unreasonable that training objectives couldn't be discussed and agreed with labour officers?

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[3] Previous jobs and motivation (activities undertaken to look for a job, wishes and demand) on the part of those receiving benefits are equally important factors for issuing a training voucher. This was the result of a quantitative IAB online survey, which looked at the issue of training vouchers from the standpoint of the unemployment office (see Doerr/Kruppe 2012).

Due to the barriers stated as regards redeeming training vouchers, it primarily seems to be the long-term unemployed who take part (or can take part) in training less frequently. Unemployed people cannot take part in training courses held in companies or other organisations (see BMBF 2013, p. 23 et seq.). They take part less frequently in general courses that pursue private and professional interests because they see no benefit in them (see Tippelt et al. 2003). There are frequently financial reasons why they refuse to take part in any further education or training courses (see Epping et al. 2001, p. 47). Many of them are excluded from funded job training due to the system of handing out training vouchers, which on the one hand follows statutory regulations and on the other an integration rate. Around 90 per cent of the long-term unemployed receive SGB II benefits. However, only just under a quarter of vouchers issued are given to people receiving SGB II benefits. It appears that the training vouchers aren't redeemed because training objectives are specified by others and due to the sometimes poor support given.

Training organisations offering job-training programmes have also had less freedom in planning their courses since the introduction of training vouchers. Their programmes have to adhere to the employment office's training objectives set out in the annual training objective plans. The pressure to place people also extends to the training sector. Despite accreditation and certification procedures, quality is dropping. Furthermore, socio-pedagogical endeavours to offer programmes that are participant-driven and acquire and build on skills in short-term programmes focused on by placement offers are decreasing (see Faulstich 2003, p. 1; Ambos 2005, p. 11; Klein/Reutter 2010, p. 351). This has been the criticism since back in the 1980s (Faulstich 1981, p. 30; Faulstich 1985, p. 59).

Employment agencies and training organisations are basically dictating training objectives to unemployed people, but are expecting them to act on their own initiative at the same time. Then we have to ask to what extent unemployed people adhere to and indeed can adhere to their own objectives and wishes as regards their visions of their vocational future.

4. Exclusion of the long-term unemployed from the mainstream labour market

Many unemployed people don't just experience exclusion from training, but also from the mainstream labour market.

What are known as one-euro jobs were in fact planned for unemployed people who receive SGB II benefits. One-euro jobs are used to gauge the motivation and ability of unemployed people to work, but also to maintain or regain the capability to work (article 16 d, paragraph 1, SGB II). These are the employment office's most frequently used tools (see Wolff/Hohmeyer 2008, p. 1; DGB Bundesvorstand 2009, p. 2; Boockmann et al. 2011, p. 280).

In a special analysis of the PASS study, the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* 'German Federation of Trade Unions' (DGB) [4] looked for the first time at the standpoint of unemployed people who had experience with one-euro jobs. Around 61 per cent of those asked who do a one-euro job thought their chances of being employed were poor because while doing the job they don't receive job offers as often (see DGB Bundesvorstand 2009). From the IAB's perspective the opposite is true, they say that it is the people doing one-euro jobs themselves who during this period don't seek regular employment. Based on the quantitative data captured, the reasons given are that unemployed people with one-euro jobs have less time and/or see one-euro jobs as alternatives to regular employment and therefore don't submit applications elsewhere (see Wolff/Hohmeyer 2008). While doing one-euro jobs, people also receive less support with writing applications and fewer offers to take part in training programmes (see DGB Bundesvorstand 2009, p. 7). But the interviewees in the

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[4] "Labour market and social welfare" panel

special DGB survey were also positive about one-euro jobs. They see one-euro jobs as a way of allowing them to experience greater social integration, to do something worthwhile, to meet other people and to improve their financial situation (DGB Bundesvorstand 2009, p. 8). One-euro jobs mean that people are excluded from the mainstream labour market and from training and training support programmes. It is likely that these conditions are also reflected in the development and pursuit of future prospects.

Two qualitative studies show that the unemployed people interviewed (and some of the employed people) appreciate gainful employment as a key condition for taking part in society. (See Bescherer et al. 2008; Ludwig-Mayerhofer et al. 2009). Therefore, work is highly relevant to them. However, the longer the period of unemployment and failed endeavours to find and apply for jobs lasts, the more hopes fade of obtaining gainful employment. Doubts about own skills grow the longer unemployment lasts. Therefore, the long-term unemployed people interviewed tended to look for jobs on the low-paid labour market (see Ludwig-Mayerhofer et al. 2009, p. 174). They fear not being able to cope with the demands of the mainstream labour market. It is possible that this assumption is enforced by convictions that people are personally to blame for being unemployed. These beliefs are fed by labour market policy and the employment office. Many people believe that having a job at all and topping up their basic income benefit through a one-euro job is an alternative to a "real" job (see Bescherer et al. 2008). The research team calls this type of job orientation "pretend workers". This approach automatically means that low-paid jobs, or voluntary work, are undertaken so that an image of the working citizen is maintained and compensates for the lack of gainful employment that is properly paid. Two more types of people emerged from this study. There were people who wanted to work at any cost who are very active and try to keep their jobs or look for new employment. And non-working people who have developed an attitude of resignation towards gainful employment.

Above all, it is the long-term unemployed who are excluded from the mainstream labour market. They seek one-euro jobs or accept low-paid unstable jobs just to be able to work at all and in order to feel a sense of usefulness and belonging.

5. Theoretical integration

This dissertation project deals with the long-term unemployed and their visions of their vocational future. At the same time why is a vision necessary at all and what role does it play? This will be shown by taking utopian thinking as an example. Afterwards, learning associated with the past, present and future will be examined.

5.1 The roles of utopian thinking

Utopian thinking has been taking place in various forms since antiquity. Thinking about the future is important because it allows us to escape from reality and to what might be possible. As a result thoughts can dream up a better life that isn't real or doesn't exist, or won't even be possible at present.

> "A longing for happiness that is impossible to dispel, pushes currently unattainable wishes into the future. Utopia's intention is to solve current problems by lengthening the perspective". (Faulstich 1990b, p. 16)

Wishes and hopes for a better life in a better future often occur in times of crisis, or in times of radical social change. Crises that occur in people's lives, such as unemployment or a crisis on the labour market in general, can generate utopian thoughts and hopes for a better future.

> "A spark of hope smoulders in any utopia that it might turn into reality". It always entails criticism of the status quo and the vision of what is to be". (Negt 2002, p. 432)

However, crises can also have the opposite effect. They can engender fear and therefore lead to resignation or even apathy, as has already been shown in the Marienthal Study (see Jahoda et al. 1986). This study leads us to assume that resignation comes about when hope is so far from reality and achieving this goal seems impossible. Apathy arises when the crisis is subjectively perceived as distressing, so that current problems don't allow any thoughts about the future at all. Resignation can however occur when ideas about the future are negative and form pessimistic pictures. These are called dystopias or images of fear about the future. Peter Faulstich allocates two roles to these images. On the one hand images of fear can act as a warning to people. On the other hand, they can foster a feeling of resignation because these images predict a definite downfall (see Faulstich 1990a, p. 25).

It could be said that utopian thinking creates forces to overcome reality. Therefore, utopias can be seen as ways of combining imagination and reality (see Faulstich 1990b, p. 16). Utopias allow us to experience what could be, but isn't yet the case. They offer the chance to shape the present and influence the future depending on interests (see Ludwig/Zeuner 2006, p. 9). Nowadays utopias are no longer just social utopias in the form of new social models in non-existent places. Utopias are very much present and already exist in people's heads (see Negt 1984, p. 215). Utopian thinking does however assume that an ability to dream up a utopia does exist in the first place. This is something that has to be learnt. From the theoretical perspective of social backgrounds it is assumed that underprivileged people don't have the ability to anticipate (see Vester et al. 2001). They probably also have good reasons why they don't look to a future that might also be unsure. Because insecure jobs, the constant threat of unemployment and long periods spent unemployed lead to a feeling of helplessness instead of motivation. Which is why Negt believes it is important to think in contexts that combine individual interests, needs and objective conditions and to create these in the first place. Because this is the only way of creating and maintaining motivation in learning processes (see Negt 1993, p. 661). The ability to "create contexts" is comprised of six key social skills (Negt 2010):

1. Learning to deal with identity that has been threatened and ruptured (a skill of personal and external perception)
2. Understanding social effects and developing an ability to make decisions (technical skill)
3. Adopting a caring attitude to dealing with people and things (ecological skill)
4. The ability to recall and create utopias (historical skills)
5. A sensitivity for processes of confiscation: An ability to perceive right from wrong, for equality and inequality (a sense of justice)
6. An ability to deal carefully with material and intellectual resources – in terms of personal manpower and society's resources (economic skill)

Historical competence is important in this paper. Due to Oskar Negt and his definition of utopia and the ability to create utopia, a transition can be made from utopias that are driven by socio-philosophy to learning and therefore to the subject. Therefore, according to Oskar Negt the ability to create utopias is vital in order to create contexts: contexts between individual interests and objective factors on the one hand and contexts between the past, present and future on the other. These aspects are reflected in Holzkamp's theory of learning from the perspective of the subject, which is applied to answer the research questions presented.

5.2 Learning in the past, present and future

In the theory of learning from the standpoint of the subject, the reasons for learning are rooted in the subject. Learning is considered a specific form of action. A learning process occurs when taking action becomes a problem. Depending on interests and motivation, the subject must stop acting in a certain way (or choose another method), or decide to follow a learning

loop. Problems of how to act then become problems with learning where people hope to add to their skills. This is called intentional learning because the subjects are doing it deliberately in order to overcome any shortcomings. This does however assume that subjects recognise their problems and know they can overcome them by learning new skills.

> "Learning requirements are not learning processes per se, but only become these when I can consciously accept these as learning problems. In turn this assumes that I do at least accept what I have to learn". (Holzkamp 1995, p. 185)

Holzkamp is saying that the future has to be anticipated. Consequently, motivation to learn only arises when the learning process suggests what there is to learn and what consequences can then be expected. The reasons for learning are drawn from the interests of the subject. It should be emphasised however, that these are always within the context of the objective conditions in which learning takes place and social contexts as experienced by the subject (Holzkamp 1985). Because the subject is a socialised subject. Because the fact that problems about how to act generate learning problems can be for two reasons and result in two different types of learning. If subjects expect to be at a disadvantage in any way if learning is rejected, learning is considered to be a threat to the options they have for acting or their quality of life. Holzkamp calls this type of learning "defensive learning" (see Holzkamp 1995, p. 192 et seq.). Some learning processes are motivational, i.e. the subjects' intention by learning is to gain insight into meanings and their relationships. New opportunities will be open to them so that they can subjectively expect a better quality of life. This is called expansive learning (see same source p. 190). These reasons for learning can be explained by personal learning and life interests. They are in turn embedded in social conditions and can be encountered with objective interests in the context of the subject's environment. Consequently, reasons for learning are produced from the subjective situation (physical, mental, verbal and personal), which are shaped by experience. Here there are parallels to Oskar Negt's key qualification of "historical skill". Relating the past, present and future with one another and learning lessons from this process assumes a certain skill is in place. Holzkamp believes that it is anticipation that is a prerequisite for learning. In John Dewey's theory of pragmatism, taking action (pragma) lies at the core of this theory system. Similarly to Holzkamp, Dewey also assumes that people take action for a reason and that these activities are logical to the people concerned (Faulstich/Grotlüschen 2006). In addition to action taken, experience and thinking are key terms of Dewey's pragmatism. Experience is the result of trying things out. These are associated with past experience and in turn have an effect on future experience (Dewey 1997).

Learning is connected with projects and experience (see Grotlüschen 2010, p. 44). Processes of acting, thinking, reflecting and learning are always a conflict between past and current experience. Processes of reflection always entail on the one hand a feeling of unease, doubt and hesitation and on the other an act of exploration or searching.

A relationship between the subject and topics is created via interest. People encounter situations and things every day. If personal growth is to be expected by dealing actively with these encounters, these topics are given a meaning. Dewey characterises interest as "active", "objective" and "personal" (see Dewey 1913, p. 16). Subjects actively pursue interests connected with an objective world. Interest is therefore always linked with the subject and therefore "only possible when the subject is involved in the outcome, or affected by it" (Faulstich/Grotlüschen 2006, p. 10 et seq.). This importance is gauged by reflecting on past and future experience (see Grotlüschen 2010, p. 54). Dewey states that interest is process-driven. Interests aren't simply there, but develop by coming into contact with an object (see Dewey 1913, p. 65). Consequently, interests arise because of the experience people have had (see Grotlüschen 2010, p. 53).

Therefore, to answer the research questions in this dissertation, both the theory system from the standpoint of the subject and the pragmatic theory system can be applied.

6. Future prospects for the long-term unemployed as stated in narrative interviews about their lives

The research questions in this dissertation already create a link between the past, present and future. Interest is not just driven by plans for the future per se. Very important are also the subjective reasons given by the long-term unemployed and how their attitudes and visions of the future are shaped by certain events and experience, certain patterns in the way they act and social conditions. The theory also shows a strong correlation between these three phases. If therefore, people who have been employed for a long period of time are to be asked about their future prospects, it is logical that the past and present are included. As a result, a biographical survey is a good way of linking these three phases.

The narrative interview is a biography method, developed in the 1970s by Fritz Schütze and based on grounded theory for example. This is a frank method of interviewing, where an honest and generally worded question or request to people to tell their stories generates an off-the-cuff response. In this way, interviewees can decide for themselves when to start their life story and which events and experience had or have subjective relevance. Interviewees should not be interrupted if possible. Because they are allowed to start telling the story in the way they wish, they can use their own style, making their stories authentic and fluid. As this is not a typical question-and-answer interview between the person conducting the interview and the interviewee, there are no linguistic inhibitions or barriers. Schütze assumes that people who talk about their own experiences relate them as perceived. And those interviewing gain access to the experience, interpretation and interests of the interviewees (see Schütze 1983, p. 285; Felden 2012, p. 336). From a narrative theory perspective, the narrative interview becomes an ad hoc story structured by the cognitive figures from people's own histories and events, by a chain of events and experiences, situations, social backgrounds and environments, as well as people's life stories as a whole. A narrative is also shaped by the pressures placed by having to tell the story. Due to the pressure to provide details, the constraints of narration, as well as the need to provide relevance and to paraphrase, the narrative becomes transparent (see Felden 2012, p. 337). This process appears to tally with the research perspective of the theory based on the standpoint of the subject. In this case the focus is placed on socialised subjects and their reasons for acting, learning, resisting learning and learning interests, spawned by social structures and how these are experienced by the subjects. This survey method allows this subjective reasoning logic to be recorded with virtually no external influence from questions already worded etc.

Access to the long-term unemployed was provided via past research projects (debt counselling, employment organisations), as well as through centres for the unemployed or training facilities. It proved very difficult to contact the long-term unemployed through the Jobcenter and unfortunately didn't lead to one single interview. Overall, nine narrative interviews with long-term unemployed people were carried out in two German states. The interviews lasted between one and two and a half hours. They were structured in such a way that there was a warm-up phase beforehand to put people at ease (small talk about the weather or similar subjects, an explanation about how the interview would be recorded, anonymity and information about the interests unemployed people have). It was only then that people were asked to talk about themselves. In the first three interviews, the request to talk was directed through a few focused questions. In each case the interviewees were asked to tell their life stories and to start them at the point they could remember actively thinking about what job they would like to do. However, this focus led to very brief stories that usually started when the interviewees were young. Therefore, very little or nothing was revealed about how these wishes developed. Consequently, from the fourth interview onwards, people were asked to tell their life story and to start wherever they liked. Therefore, they were able to decide for themselves at what point they wanted to commence their story. As a result, subjectively relevant topics, events etc. were easier to identify.

When the ad-hoc story is ended by the interviewee, two follow-up phases ensue in narrative interviews (see Schütze 1983, p. 285). To start with immanent questions are allowed which relate to the narrative until that point and therefore still refer to the relevance created by the interviewee. The purpose of these questions is to achieve plausibility and to go into more depth about certain passages of the narrative (see Kleemann et al. 2013, p. 74). Afterwards exmanent questions were allowed in which abstract descriptions and "why" questions also enquire about reasons. In this third phase, questions that cover the research interest of the person conducting the interview can also be asked. In this dissertation project, the exmanent questioning phase is used to focus on the future. A guide with questions, driven by reflection and the future, was developed, such as for example: "What gives you a feeling of satisfaction? What would you like to change about your life?" or "Imagine you could use a crystal ball to see into the future. What do you see in the crystal ball? What will a day in your life be like in ten years?"

Not all the questions in this guide should be put, the goal is merely to suggest possible follow-up questions. Which of these questions is asked always depends on the story the interviewee has told beforehand.

An analysis of the narrative takes place once the interviews have been transcribed. The goal of this analysis of the narrative is to reconstruct process structures. Schütze assumes that:

> "elementary forms (even if just traces exist) of these process structures can be found in all phases of our lives". (Schütze 1983, p. 284).

There are four processing structures in a life phase: (1) Institutional expectation patterns, (2) biographical patterns, (3) trajectories of suffering and (4) biographical transformation processes. They differ regarding the perceived possible actions in different life situations and indicate which attitude the subjects adopt vis à vis their biographies (see Kleemann et al. 2013, p. 69). While institutional expectation patterns are characterised by normative principles and a personally chosen goal is pursued based on institutional specifications, biographical patterns are intentional. In biographical patterns, developments that have been personally initiated and controlled manifest themselves when a key goal is pursued. The principle of being forced is typical of trajectories of suffering. In this case, people feel powerless to act and sense a loss of control in the way they live their lives. Biographical transformation processes then dominate if subjects regain their sense of direction and perception and the ability to act due to changes in options open to them (see Kleemann et al. 2013, p. 73).

By analysing the subjects' stories, their biographies and the associated options to act, meanings and sense of direction can be looked at. This dissertation examines how important the future was in the past, the extent to which the future is discussed and whether the story ends in the present, or is continued into the future. It is likely that the dominant process structures in each of the interviewees' life phases are linked to the concepts they have about the future. By posing exmanent questions it is possible to address the future without the interviewee emphasising it beforehand. As a distinction is made been narratives, reasoning and description and all types are examined in the analysis of the narrative, reasons for certain decisions and visions of the future can be analysed. Therefore, recording the narrative interviews and analysing them enables a study of various visions of the vocational future in conjunction with the past and present and therefore where these ideas are generated.

7. Interim results and outlook

The data from the interviews has not yet been fully analysed. Nevertheless, initial results can be presented, which at least refer to the first question put by the dissertation project: "What

kind of visions of their vocational future do long-term unemployed people have and what are the reasons for this?".

The long-term unemployed people interviewed have very diverse ideas about the future. They range from none at all to standard ideas about a life as a family with a job, a house and a car, to actual job goals that are based on a deliberate plan. Visions of their professional futures are stated (feeling stretched, being productive, caring for senior citizens, seamstress, retraining), but also goals and wishes that are based on visions of their own lives (living an independent life, being at peace, not planning too much, no longer being called a scrounger).

It is noticeable that interviewees whose dominant process structure is a trajectory of suffering have no definite ideas about the future. The reason for the lack of ideas about the future is given as the lack of a certain skill that the interviewee is required in able to do so in the first place. Other reasons given are feelings of helplessness and that as unemployed people they have noticed that planning the future is risky. Wait-and-see attitudes and then making the best out of the outcome, as well as the feeling of not being able to act yourself and take the right decisions, or strive for goals and put plans into action, are characteristic of trajectories of suffering. In their youth, some people did have ideas of jobs they wanted to do which they couldn't turn into reality. Even if no actual visions of the future were specified, it is noticeable that they talk a lot about their own hobbies and interests, as well as their own skills, how these were developed and how these were acquired and practised during their leisure time. Some people express the wish to turn back the clock, or are hoping for a lucrative business idea, or want to be their own boss.

Interviewees, whose dominant process structure is a biographical pattern, tend to specify actual goals and plans to implement these objectives. In one case an interviewee talked about her dream of having her own café combined with a tailoring business. She wanted to offer traditional baked goods and clothing made of traditional fabrics from the place she originally came from. But as she had never learnt to read and write, she was now planning the steps required to achieve this goal. She wanted to learn to read, write and do maths so that she could work out the amounts of fabric required. Then she wanted to do an internship and train to be a seamstress. For this interviewee the future is part of her biography. She doesn't end her narrative in the present, but continues it in the future.

Another interviewee didn't have an actual professional goal, but she still had certain expectations of her career, or job and she was ambitious when it came to training/education. These visions of the future differ from the other interviewees because three different scenarios are shown in their professional futures. She wants to retrain to be able to do a job where she is stretched and feels productive, where she is satisfied and which can be combined with periods looking after her children. Because she realises that she has to be realistic, she sees herself working in a dental practice again in the future. For her the worst-case scenario would be working in a low-paid cleaning or kitchen job because she wouldn't feel stretched. In this case subjective interests are linked with objective conditions.

Based on these very brief examples we can already see on the one hand how varied the visions of the future and reasons for these are. On the other hand, we can see that the trajectory of suffering is connected with a subjectively justified avoidance of any thoughts about the future, while the biographical pattern is often associated with actual visions of the future. A systematic and structured analysis cannot be published here yet. The completion and publication of this dissertation are planned for the beginning of 2016.

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