SW&S | Social Work and Society
International Online Journal

Learning to Work: Young People's Social and Labour-Market Integration through Supra-Company Apprenticeship Training in Austria

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1 Introduction

This paper will take a closer look at young people's social integration into the 'world of work' via the scheme of supra-company apprenticeship training (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung*; SCAT) in Austria. The capability approach will serve as a grid to go beyond a mere labour-market integration perspective: Focusing on the capabilities for education, for work and for voice, we will scrutinise what conversion factors help (or hinder) youngsters to mobilise the resources at their disposal to develop these capabilities and choose an educational pathway or kind of work they have reason to value.

Before delving into the rich findings of the selected case study, we will first give a short overview of the case study's institutional embeddedness: How can the establishment of supra-company apprenticeship training (SCAT) be understood within the context of Austria's dominant vocational education regime, the 'dual system'? Who are the main institutional stakeholders and what perspectives on capability formation do they pursue?

After a brief introduction into the research methods used, we will outline the key findings of the case study from a capability perspective. What notions of the capabilities for work, for education and for voice did we come across within our case study? How are the capabilities (for work, education and voice) enhanced? What resources are available and convertible for developing these capabilities? What opportunities for capability formation and for being able and 'free' to choose, aspire and follow the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to value do youngsters encounter before and while participating in SCAT?

1.1 The emergence of SCAT

Austria's national educational regime has traditionally been oriented towards the 'dual system', which puts special emphasis on young people's vocational education.[1] Of all

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[1] The Austrian educational regime is characterised by its twofold dimensionality after secondary school. Students can choose between upper secondary schools providing general or vocational education or an apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training takes place at two different sites, thus, apprenticeship training is also referred to as a "dual system of vocational training": company-based training of apprentices is complemented by compulsory attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices (Berufsschule). The focus is on the practical application of skills. Apprentices thus spend most of the time of their apprenticeship training in the "real environment" of a manufacturing plant or service provider, where training on the job takes place. Apprenticeship training is based on an agreement between the company and the apprentice, stating the conditions of training within the framework of a contract of employment.

Austrian teenagers born in 1993, about 42.5% entered apprenticeship training upon completion of compulsory education. (Schneeberger/Nowak 2009, 1) However, uneven business cycles, economic restructuring processes towards a 'service economy'(in particular in cities such as Vienna), the concentration of apprentices in a small number of occupations, the decreasing willingness of Austrian enterprises to provide training facilities have led to a decrease in available company-based apprenticeships.[2]

One of the reform measures aimed at tackling these structural problems was the introduction of the 'Vocational Placement Guarantee' (*Ausbildungsgarantie*) in 2009, which included the incorporation of 'Supra-Company Apprenticeship Training' (*Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung*; SCAT) into the Vocational Education and Training Act. The aim of the Vocational Placement Guarantee is to supply a greater variety of apprenticeship places for those in need. Supra-company training facilities are financed by the Public Employment Service to allow young people to complete an apprenticeship in such a training centre ('SCAT I training'), even if the primary aim remains to integrate young persons into regular company-based apprenticeships. Supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a 'safety net' for those young persons who fail to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.

In 2009/10 16,314 places were financed for the SCAT programme overall (up from 10,213 in 2008/09), with a funding sum of 225 million Euro. (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2011, 60) SCAT thus is part of the active labour-market policy measures targeted at young people. Youngsters who are not able to find a company-based apprenticeship qualify for attending this training by registering as unemployed. SCAT is designed not to compete with company-based apprenticeship training but to supplement it, thus providing support for this traditionally important pillar of the Austrian educational system.

Currently, 7-8% of all apprentices are taught in a SCAT setting. (Bergmann et.al. 2011, 141) Evaluations of the impact of SCAT on the participants' labour-market performance show an overall positive labour-market integration for graduates, which, however, depends heavily on the regional labour-market situation. All SCAT programmes are rather high-threshold measures compared to other measures of the transition system. Thus, youngsters with pronounced learning difficulties or 'personal and social deficits' who fail to adapt to a tight schedule such as that of SCAT I are not absorbed and carried on by this training. One quarter of participants drop out of the measure without having found a placement in company-based apprenticeship training. Of those, more than 70% are either unemployed or drop out of the labour force altogether. (ibid, 111)

Evaluations of supra-company apprenticeship programmes showed that two thirds of participants were male, owing to the fact that apprenticeship training in general is a 'male domain'. (Mairhuber/Papouschek 2010) Another important characteristic was the fact that half of the participants had migrant background. (Bergmann et.al. 2011, 35) The labour-market integration of young people with migrant background is especially hard. In addition to disadvantages such as the often low educational attainment of their parents (which youngsters 'inherit' but often overcome) and their allegedly insufficient German language skills, they frequently experience discrimination when applying for a company-based apprenticeship.

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[2] There is a 'structural' lack of apprenticeship places in Austria of at least 2,000 places per year (see Haidinger/Atzmüller 2011, 18-19).

(Gächter 2011, 7pp.) Other participants came from difficult social and family backgrounds and were said to have social competence deficits, manifested in a lack of work discipline, low frustration tolerance, etc. With respect to participants' educational performance, in particular weak German language and mathematical skills were evident. However, the SCAT programmes also cover youngsters who were simply 'unlucky' when looking for a company-based apprenticeship and took up the chance of an alternative training facility. (Dörflinger et.al. 2007, 23)

The training itself is very much organised in a school-like fashion. Groups of up to 15 apprentices per module learn the theory and practical skills of their jobs in workshops. Internships in companies are another key element of the educational programme. The programme also provides tutoring and socio-pedagogical support for apprentices who have learning difficulties or deficits in the vocational school accompanying apprenticeship training. The innovative aspect of this training is its supportive and workshop-like character which gives the young people more time and space to develop their occupational capabilities than company-based apprenticeship settings. The professional knowledge imparted by SCAT is regarded as on par with company-based training. (ibid, 143)

In Austria, the case study was conducted at "Jugend am Werk" (JaW; "Youth at Work"), which is a rather large provider of a range of labour market and vocational education and training programmes for young people as well as persons with special needs. JaW provides places for more than 1,500 people of different target groups; including some 250 supra-company apprenticeship training places in a range of craft, industry and service-sector professions.

The next section shall briefly outline the different (institutional and individual) perspectives on youngsters' capability formation in the Youth at Work setting. JaW's executive staff, trainers and social workers (meso level), the apprentices themselves (individual level) and the institutional setting JaW is embedded in, i.e. Public Employment Service (PES) stakeholders (macro level) here hold partly overlapping, partly contradictory points of view.

1.2   Different perspectives on capability formation in Youth at Work (JaW)

Supra-company apprenticeship training is provided and financed by PES funds, and potential participants need to be registered as unemployed or job-seeking. As participants' wages (*Ausbildungs-/Lehrlingsentschädigung*) are paid for by the PES, the measure is clearly part of labour-market policy. At the same time, it is run in a school-like mode, with the option – and expectation – for participants to acquire work experience in companies and/or to be transferred to companies at a later stage of the training. The aim of PES labour-market policies is to integrate those registered as unemployed into the regular labour market. Therefore, those who are guaranteed a vocational placement in SCAT are still PES clients – and not (just) young persons to be trained or even educated. Interviews with stakeholders on all levels of JaW and with the youngsters themselves showed that – apart, of course, from the content-related vocational training – a main emphasis of PES measures, including SCAT, is placed on the improvement of so-called secondary virtues such as punctuality, discipline to work, reliability, 'proper behaviour', etc. These are seen as preconditions of successful labour-market integration.

This latter objective is also taken up by many of the stakeholders implementing the SCAT scheme at JaW (meso level). At the same time, SCAT is a form of *vocational* training preparing participants for graduation in the end. It provides high-quality vocational training

and education for young people who could not find a company-based apprenticeship. For
some professions, the JaW apprenticeship programme even offers broader training than most
companies can provide: while most companies today specialise in a very specific range of
services and/or products and therefore cannot cover all aspects of a profession's profile,
apprentices at JaW can acquire a wide range of skills within a profession. Stakeholders see
this kind of training in stark opposition to "any of these courses where the youngsters crawl
around for months. In the end they hold loads of certificates but they are worth nothing"
(JaW_SH1[3]).

Still, the *main* target of the SCAT scheme remains preparing the apprentices for a company-
based apprenticeship: at least from the point of view of the PES, JaW is not to become an
alternative to traditional company-based apprenticeships. Much rather, it is a 'safety net' and
the majority of enrolled youngsters should ultimately complete their apprenticeship outside
JaW.

The transitory, 'safety-net' character of the measure is problematic from an organisational
perspective since the provider's horizon of planning personnel, investment and financing is
determined by factors the institution cannot take influence on, such as the local demand for
apprentices on the labour market. It is also critically viewed by the apprentices themselves:
Many young people appreciate their apprenticeship at JaW and are conscious of its
advantages whereas others feel that they just get a second-class education and do not take the
training seriously but hope for redemption outside the institution.

2   Main research questions and research methods used

Bearing in mind these three levels of involvement at Youth at Work, the next sections will
mainly focus on youngsters' opportunities for capability formation and for being able and
'free' to choose and aspire to the life, work and educational pathway they have reason to
value. The research process was determined by the following research questions: What does
capability for work and education and what does capability for choice and voice mean in the
context of SCAT? What kinds of resources and conversion factors hamper or enhance these
capabilities' formation?

Within the Austrian case study, 18 apprentices, four trainers, three social pedagogues as well
as senior staff of the training provider (head of the professional training department, head of
the metal-working section, deputy general manager) were interviewed covering two clusters
of professions[4]. In addition two group discussions with apprentices were conducted. All steps
of the empirical research were crucial for developing an integrated picture of capability
formation in the SCAT context. The following analysis is fed by findings and the
interpretation of data from all phases of the empirical research.

We began our empirical research by conducting explorative and expert interviews with JaW
management on various levels, with trainers and pedagogues. The aim of this explorative step
was to get an insight into the logic and conception of the institution and its executives in
handling and forming the youngsters' transition from school/unemployed status to

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[3] The interviews with institutional stakeholders at JaW such as trainers or executive personnel
are referred to as JaW_SH. For a more detailed description of research methods see Section 2.

[4] "Zoba Eck", a training centre for the catering and cooking sector, and
"Technologiezentrum", where electricians, plumbers and automotive technicians are trained.

employment. The institution's mission, values and pedagogical principles applied are important external conversion factors that the youngsters have to struggle and cope with, and which foster the youngsters' personality development and capability formation to a greater or lesser extent.

Next, we conducted two group discussions with the apprentices themselves. The interviews were designed interactively with role play elements, brainstorming rounds and associative methods. (Bohnsack et.al. 2010) The aim of these two sessions was to get an overview of the key issues and problems young people face when going through this kind of educational shaping and to look at collective patterns of orientation. Besides, we wanted to explore how the youngsters interact, how they relate to each other and which topics they find worthy of discussing when talking in peer groups about their experiences with teachers, learning contents or the training's time structure.

On the basis of the results of the group discussion, semi-structured interview guidelines were created for individual interviews with 18 apprentices[5]. A combination of biographical-narrative and problem-centred interviews was used. (Rosenthal et.al. 2006) This phase of empirical research brought deeper insights into individual strategies of capability formation, its limits, room for manoeuvre as well as into incisive internal and external conversion factors to lead a life/hold a job/choose an educational pathway the youngsters have reason to value.

The empirical findings will be analysed by looking at three dimensions of capability formation: the role of education as a capability to be achieved and as a conversion factor; the capability for work; and the process freedom and opportunity freedom to voice.

3   Education at JaW

Following Walker (2005), education is a basic capability that itself affects the development and expansion of other capabilities (what someone is able to do, to be and to imagine) and therefore the opening up of more opportunities for choice. Promoting functionings in childhood or youth ("enhancing education") means to develop the "relevant mature capability" and to expand the freedom youngsters will have in future. (Walker 2005, 107)

This means that education first is a capability to be desired and achieved itself; following Bonvin (2012), the capability for education is the real freedom to choose the education or educational pathway one has reason to value. The capability for education must imply the capability not to be educated (in a specific institution) if one chooses to via a valuable exit option and the capability to participate actively in the definition of the educational content, organisation, conditions, and modes of remuneration. We will also refer to this understanding of capability for education in section 5 when analysing what scope of process freedom and opportunity freedom to have particpants' opinion heard and considered and to choose can be achieved within the JaW educational setting.

Second, education is also identified as a conversion factor having the scope for empowering young people to enhance their capabilities.

The two notions of education for the capability approach – being both a capability and a conversion factor – shall optimally be pervaded by their reflexive and emancipatory nature:

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[5] The interviews with youngsters are referred to as JaW_Y1 to JaW_Y18 throughout the text.

Walker stresses that "the education that best articulates Sen's capability approach is one that develops autonomy and judgement about how to exercise autonomy and that develops the capacity to make informed and reflexive decisions." (Walker 2005, 108) In how far this quality approach is realised will be part of the case study's analysis.

3.1 Capability for education

How – in the Austrian case study – is the real freedom to choose the education or educational pathway one has reason to value enhanced? What resources are available and convertible for realising the capability for education? What (conversion) factors promote this capability, what factors impede capability formation for education?

We differentiate between two phases of standing at the crossroads for choosing the educational pathway one has reason to value: The first, 'orientation' period is a phase of principal searching, processing information and finding an adequate setting for education. The second phase involves the decision *for* training in the SCAT programme and the reflection of its advantages and disadvantages from a youngster's point of view.

3.1.1 'Orientation period': informational basis, the role of the PES, family and peers and the capability for aspiration

The transition phase from one educational system to another or into the employment system is also labelled as youngsters' 'orientation period' in both institutional lingo and public discourse. The PES (Public Employment Service) is one of the major institutional stakeholders in charge of supporting young people's transition into employment or employment-related training. The youngsters interviewed perceived it as a rather inscrutable and rigid institution generally supplying useful information, however hardly tailored to youngsters' individual requirements and aspirations. Instead, the young people are expected to adapt to the institution's culture and to take up its proposals.

The transition phase is also strongly associated with failing school and, consequently, negative learning experiences. Interviewees expressed a profound dissatisfaction with teachers and the particular school they attended. "The teachers simply were a pain in my neck." (JaW_Y1) But what followed on from this obvious rejection frequently was not a deliberately chosen pathway but a period of questioning and an undetermined phase in life: "I was … well … what shall I say? I wanted to earn money by myself. I didn't want to go to school anymore. Actually I wanted to go to school but it just wasn't right for me." (JaW_Y2)

In the Austrian education system apprenticeships are traditionally seen as an educational alternative for people who are not good at school – accordingly, a more 'practical' education seems to be a suitable solution. But not all youngsters want a practical education – they would much rather need additional support to help them stay in school or need a 'break', a phase of reorientation, to reflect about themselves and their abilities – and maybe reformulate their wishes in order to allow them to choose an educational pathway they have reason to value.

Thus, first, social and institutional (PES) pressure to find a more or less adequate training option within a limited period of time stand in the way of a 'real freedom of choice' – even though the PES also provides useful information on possible education (and employment) trajectories.

Second, some youngsters (have to) choose a profession they actually did not want or plan to choose due to a lack of apprenticeship places in their initially desired profession. Here it is the unsatisfactory support of PES and its lack of time resources for extensive talks with youngsters and for preparing individually tailored counselling as well as the limited range and numbers of desired apprenticeship professions that hamper the youngsters' opportunities. Many interviewees would be ready to start any apprenticeship rather than spending 'too long' searching for an apprenticeship in the intended profession.

Third, as the interviewed apprentices are still quite young (17-19 years old), opinions of friends and (older) family members influence their vocational orientation. The family context is a 'safe' space where youngsters' ideas and dreams can be discussed. Parents or older siblings provide the young person with relevant practical information about a profession (especially about their own profession). This of course provides a rather restricted scope for judgement – and is even more problematic when parents want to influence their children's professional choice.

Another, fourth, factor for choosing one particular or any educational pathway and readily leaving behind the 'transition period' is the desire to get accepted by others who are allegedly not searching 'for their way' and who seem to be more settled. To stop "doing crap" (JaW_Y16, JaW_Y2) or being bored and to start pursuing socially valued activities, such as working, going to school or attending training, is an expression of *individual and collective disciplining*. Plomb (2000, 61), who conducted a study on the application, job/training search and initial work experiences of unemployed youngsters in France, speaks about the difficulty of youngsters in search of a career path to *justify taking or not taking a timeout* – "the emptiness, the lack of a comprehensible, visible and generally acknowledged activity is a heavy burden".

3.1.2 Opting for and sticking to SCAT

That youngsters' desires and hopes have not been yet settled is also revealed by the fact that 25% of those starting supra-company apprenticeship training drop out, mostly because they did not get the apprenticeship place they initially preferred. What is more: Although many of those interviewed believe that they took the right decision when beginning a SCAT training, there was *no 'strategy' pursued* – the youngsters are not 'masters' of their situation. Their decisions are "practical answers to lacking social structures which could limit insecurity". (Plomb 2001, 65)

According to social pedagogues, some apprentices need the first weeks of the apprenticeship to reorient; in some cases, where the apprenticeship does not correspond to his/her favourite choice, it may also take some time to decide if they want to continue the apprenticeship. In this early phase of the training, having a less strict apprenticeship schedule would be preferable, as was suggested by one of the trainers interviewed at JaW.

SCAT provides an institutional setting designed to prepare the youngsters for the world of work outside a protective framework. This is not a banal exercise. The youngsters experience a radical break in their life courses: From school to an empty, meaningless space in-between ('orientation period'), and from a bulk of free time to a strict regime of rules of working life in SCAT. The apprentices tend to idealise the easygoingness of school time (which in many cases was not as easy-going as perceived in the aftermath) as a life of fun and easy living in stark contrast to their hard-working lives as apprentices today. "The arrival of work in the

lives of youngsters restructures their accustomed daytime, their familiar places of gathering, the doings and distractibility they are used to completely. Work implies a completely different order of things. It is the first step into a CV [Curriculum Vitae] you are not yet prepared to pursue." (Plomb 2001, 61) The youngsters have to re-invent themselves in new surroundings. They have to make sense of their doing which is not yet revealed to them. (ibid, 66)

What speaks against 'choosing SCAT' is the – still widespread – opinion that JaW only or mainly offers education and training for persons with special needs. The youngsters do not want to be perceived as 'handicapped' and clearly delimitate themselves from those who, from their point of view, are completely excluded and will never be able to become 'unmarked'. The youngsters both reject and reinforce the image of JaW as a place for those who are 'left over'. Rejection strategies, for example, include emphasising their productivity and their desire to 'prove' that they are not 'retarded', that they are 'normal persons'. At the same time, the youngsters do have different speeds of learning and working – willingly or unwillingly. Some of the apprentices are very keen to adapt to labour processes 'outside' and experiencing and mastering the stress waiting outside.

One of the main issues the apprentices bemoaned was the much smaller amount of money they received compared to apprentices in companies. Some emphasised that the money question was not crucial for them from a financial perspective, however this huge gap marks the apprentices as being less appreciated than those who had the power, luck or brains to take up a company-based apprenticeship. At the same time, most of the interviewees have a very high opinion of the quality of the training they are going through in terms of equipment, didactics and support. JaW is perceived as a place of structure, of stabilisation, of integration – however a temporary place: what will happen afterwards?

To sum up, the two critical phases for choosing the educational pathway the youngsters have reason to value, the 'transition period' on the one hand and the deliberate decision for a SCAT training on the other hand, are heavily influenced by social and instutional conversion factors and a lack of personal and particularly institutional resources hampering the "excercise of autonomy" (Walker 2005). A "real" freedom to choose – as will be also elaborated in section 5 when turning to the capability for voice in decision processes – is far away from the youngsters' ungergone experiences.

3.2 Education as a conversion factor

The second notion of education from a capability-approach perspective is its significance as a conversion factor for choosing a (life) trajectory one has reason to value. As a conversion factor – how 'empowering' is the SCAT training for the youngsters involved? What individual abilities to improve the youngsters' capacity to act are enhanced? We identified three main features of education as a means to adopt those capabilities the youngsters have reason to value – and those crucial for a possibly trouble-free integration into the world of work: the provision of an appropriate institutional support for learning and in social matters, the internalisation of 'secondary virtues', and the enhancement of 'constructive learning'.

3.2.1 Institutional support for learning and in social matters

SCAT is performed in a workshop setting with school-like organisation but practical contents. The young people appreciate the additional study support and especially the good preparation for the final apprenticeship exam as well as the socio-pedagogical support provided. Learning-friendly apprenticeship conditions imply a respectful, mutually benevolent and

friendly relationship between trainers and apprentices where the young people feel free to make mistakes and ask questions. A good learning and working atmosphere, finding friends among the apprentices, and the feeling of being supported (by trainers/co-apprentices) if necessary are crucial factors for being able to unfold resources. One interviewee even talked about the apprenticeship 'peer group' (including the trainers) as her "second family" (JaW_Y1).

Of course, officially discriminatory behaviour of peers or trainers against others is not accepted. However, intervention in cases of discrimination is not easy. Despite social pedagogues providing conflict management, youth representatives standing in for the apprentices' interests and an open-door-policy by the local and central management, youngsters often feel left to their own devices when challenging discriminatory behaviour, particularly of trainers, who are in a structurally more powerful position.

For the apprentices, it is motivating if trainers respect them as *capable persons* (*not* in terms of their learning progress), conversely disrespectful treatment does not enhance learning processes. The usage of the apprentices' language of daily usage (which often is not German) in conversation among them and with trainers is perceived as very positive. It is a gesture of personal interest, of friendliness, of respect – and ultimately of trust. Conversely, to be constrained to speak German is a form of non-usage of available resources. This prohibition impedes the positive perception and acknowledgement of the institution as a conversion factor of their resources and consequently the willingness to learn in such a surrounding.

3.2.2 Learning to labour

Shaping the youngsters' personalities and behaviour is not only accomplished by providing a supportive learning atmosphere. In course of the training youngsters succeed to a greater or lesser extent or fail to adapt to the requirements the world of work outside a protective frame work expects. Consequently, labour becomes more and more integrated into the youngsters' habits, routines and fantasies. Their daily routines – and dreams – are structured newly and 'realistically' around working time and working issues. (Plomb 2001, 62) The process of adaptation to working life is naturalised – and internalised. The inner resistance against unaccustomed habits of structuring your daily life along the work process is absorbed by interpreting this habit as 'normal'. "What I don't like is that you have to work for such a long time and that you have to get up that early. But that's the 'job'. You cannot change anything about it." (JaW_Y7)

Becoming 'normal' and adhering to norms required in working life necessitates the internalisation and the non-questioning of being disciplined – in terms of 'behaving properly', executing what is expected – and of being punctual. Punctuality is a key welcome behaviour as was expressed by institutional stakeholders on all levels of SCAT. This process of becoming used to being on time and the reflection of its importance is perfectly voiced in the following statement: "Punctuality is really important. Myself, I am not punctual." (JaW_Y17)

The youngsters become aware that when going through such a measure you receive something very much valued by society: an exam which recognises you as a professional. The motivation to learn is going to be not coerced by trainers or by parents but shifted to an internalised power. The ambition to 'make something out of your life' is connected with the youngsters' own responsibility for succeeding or not succeeding. An apprentice claimed that he "didn't have any idea about life" before coming to this institution, that he has changed "a

100%" (JaW_Y15), that he is even worth to be trusted with the responsibility for supervising an entire production process. His pride of his capacity to take on responsibility in a working arrangement is intertwined in his narrative with the worthiness of his doing – and being.

3.3.3 Constructive learning – how to learn

After having grasped conversion factors that deem important for the social integration and fitting of youngsters into the institutional logic and the institution's aims, we now want to take a look at learning processes themselves.

The motivation for learning and working was positively influenced by youngsters' chance of doing something productive, useful and tangible. This involves several features: Learning processes in apprenticeship training must imply the production of something visible and a useful outcome (1). The production process itself is not only physically or psychically tiring but also makes youngsters aware of their capacity to form and shape raw material into something of completely different appearance (2). The production of things for daily usage opens up immediate alternatives of agency and 'empowers' them in daily life – as professionals and as social agents. Youngsters not only learn for an abstract exam or for the commodification of their labour but for the application of their skills in daily life (3). Finally, taking on responsibility for entire production processes – their supervision and self-determined organisation – strengthens the motivation to learn and consequently enhances the development of capabilities (4). These four features of constructive learning shall be described in more detail:

First, this form of learning is defined as '*being productive*' in terms of *useful*: to produce something of value (for others) and for practical application. To accompany an entire production process and to have a final and useful output is seen as a very positive way of adopting a capability to – for instance – construct something. Conversely, the destruction of what has been constructed or repaired by the apprentices fosters quite sad images of their work products: "We 'repair' cars provided by MA48 [municipal waste management]. They are, so to say, taken from the scrapyard. After we've 'had' them, MA48 picks them up with a claw, dumps them into a container and makes small tin cubes out of them." (JaW_Y1) 'Unproductive doing' demotivates the youngsters to work "because whatever I construct is taken apart again. It's useless what I am doing. I don't produce anything. It's just practice I learn from. But it's useless, you cannot call that doing 'work', you can just call it 'learning'. What I make I dismantle again. It's 'production-free', that's simply demotivating, the whole motivation is gone." (JaW_Y2)

Second, it implies the deployment of your *senses*: The product in the end must not only be 'of use' but it also must be tangible. The motivation to learn, do and work stems from the fabrication of a formable product which changes its features, taste, smell and shape during the process of production. Many of the future cooks described production processes in fond detail and were impressed and proud of the transformation process they initiated and accompanied and of the creatively arranged products of their doing they could present.

Third, learning how to produce things of *daily usage* is a real – almost pure – capability. It opens up alternatives of agency in daily and working life: "We bake our own bread and we produce almost everything ourselves. We even make the pasta ourselves. We don't just open bags and empty them into the pot. (...) And imagine a restaurant runs out of pasta. There's no pasta and you can't buy it just like that. Then I have the chance to make it myself."

(JaW_Y12) To be interested in forming this capability for work is closely connected to the conception of 'apprenticing a trade' and of learning a handicraft: "It's good to see that I can do something for people. Life without a plumber is impossible. Can you live without heating, without warm water, without a stove? No!" (JaW_Y7) Apprentices can thus show that they can contribute to society something that has value for themselves and for others. Providing others with know-how and suitable advice empowers the young person and can have a positive effect on his/her self-esteem. As the young people realize they can bring their own capacities into their future profession – such as their creativity or strength – their interest in distinct activities of the apprenticeship profession rises; many apprentices begin to appreciate the profession and develop a kind of passion for it.

Fourth, and as a consequence of the above mentioned points, doing something that makes sense with all your senses means that you are highly motivated not only to learn ('automatically') but also to *take on responsibility* for the production process. Becoming responsible for taking decisions throughout the production process and for its supervision implies – as an apprentice –becoming more autonomous from the trainer. SCAT apprentices frequently work on their own or in groups without constant and direct supervision. The fact that the trainers appreciate and trust their abilities raises their self-esteem and their motivation to learn: "I *love* it when we are two or three persons in the kitchen – without the boss [trainer] (…) we do our own thing … It's stressful between eleven and half past eleven, but that's the wicked thing about it!" (JaW_Y15)

The empowerment dimension of JaW's pedagogical approach to enhance the youngsters' capacity to act as self-confident but also 'adjusted' persons can be summarised as follows: First, the provision of institutional support for learning and in social matters including a respectful and non-discriminatory treatment and cooperation, is an incisive factor for the youngsters' social integration into training. Second, JaW's training prepares the youngsters for their labour market integration – this is an empowering and constraining excercise at the same time. Empowering it is because youngsters are educated for an 'autonomous' living in terms of being self-supporting. Constraining it is because youngsters' habits and routines are newly transformed and stuctured around working issues and work ethics. Third, a from our point of view important empowerment dimension stems from the kind of vocational and practical education the youngsters are going through: the encouragement for participating in constructive in terms of productive, useful and tangible learning processes.

4 The capability for work: Options for choosing the work, doing and labour processes one has reason to value

We will now turn to the second capability to be examined. The capability for work is of particular interest in an educational setting, such as the supra-company-apprenticeship-training scheme, preparing explicitly for the 'world of work'. Before coming back to the 'constructive learning concept' laid down in chapter 3.2.3 as an important conversion factor for enhancing the capability for work, some principal thoughts about the capability for work shall be formulated. Furthermore, we will elaborate on the social function of the capability for work taking into account what 'work' signifies for youngsters in abstract terms. Finally, we will outline how the voice character of work – how work ideally shall be organised – is imagined by the young people interviewed.

Following Bonvin (2012), the capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activity one has reason to value. He refers to work as labour, as paid work and asks what is perceived as a valuable activity or job. This notion of capability for work has to be related to

the embeddedness of work in a society traversed by the accumulation of capital. Antagonist forces between labour and capital as well as power asymmetries feeding this antagonism may be an issue to be addressed or even challenged when promoting a "job one has reason to value" but never removed. We'd like to contrast this notion of the 'capability for work' with the 'capability for living a life one has reason to value'. 'Work' itself is coercion in capitalist societies, and requirements imposed by the labour market for being integrated and being able to participate in it are particularly for young people more often a threat rather than a challenge.

Sketching '*constructive work and learning processes*' in the previous chapter, we wanted to show what doings and activities the young apprentices perceived as making sense, being productive and being a worthwhile proficiency to develop. What motivates them is producing things that are useful and 'important', that are 'here to stay', that are kept and that you can look at as a product of your doing. This notion of work is imparted by the particular kind of education – apprenticeship training – focusing on the development of skills and on learning a handicraft.

When youngsters think about work and a future job in *abstract terms*, two observations stand out. First, the interviews show that working itself is an important 'value' for the young people: From their point of view, it is (almost) always better to work than to be unemployed – even if the financial outcome is (almost) the same. Therefore, work has a very basic function in terms of personal well-being and is perceived as the main safeguarding factor against social exclusion. Additionally, the social function of work has to be considered: personal work experience is an important topic among friends: "You feel silly if you are unemployed because everybody talks about work. [If you are unemployed] you don't have a say." (JaW_Y2) Second, the internalisation of capitalist work ethics also plays a role and is expressed directly, for example: "Everybody who can work should work." (JaW_Y6) These ethics also imply that hard work pays off in financial terms or – the other way round – that you only earn good money if you are willing to work 'more' (than the average working time).

When youngsters speak about their *concrete doings* at JaW, the appreciation of sensuous and sensible doing and the wish for a 'just division of labour' become apparent. Concretely, the youngsters are pooled in working groups, practice co-working and permanently swap roles in the labour process. Labour within the concrete labour process is divided, however tasks are shifted from day to day from person to person. A just division of labour from the youngsters' point of view implies that everybody should do everything (including the annoying tasks) and implicitly opposes a functional division of labour within the production process. Rather than the person who is 'best' specialising in a particular task, everyone should get the chance to learn everything and everyone should be allotted to unpleasant though necessary tasks.

What is more, the SCAT apprentices perceived 'abstract labour', which does not make immediate sense and or prove immediately useful to them, as well as industrialised production, where the production process itself cannot be observed, tracked and controlled, as 'alienated labour'. The youngsters also had a clear picture of what 'exploitation' of their labour means: they mentioned long working hours; physical and psychical stress and doing only annoying and repetitive work. By contrast, decent work included a good working climate; nice colleagues; having enough to do – "so that I am challenged in my work" (JaW_Y13); having "fun when working"– here again sensuality and 'enjoying' work is a crucial feature; and not working in unqualified jobs (such as a cleaner). Voicing your rights as

a worker and standing up for these rights begins when rights "you are used to" (JaW_Y1) are jeopardised.

Practicing in internships can also motivate those youngsters to become part of the labour force, as some reported experiencing finally 'in real' the diversified tasks of their profession. What is more, they have experiences they can share with others, especially with their friends – most of whom are also apprentices in a company. This is a very strong factor of social inclusion. On the downside, sniffing the air of 'real' working life also foreshadows their possibly monotonous deployment in the working process. One girl remembers her internship and puts it in stark contrast to the learning and working processes experienced at JaW: "When I did my traineeship in a canteen, they just had tinned food. I didn't see how to do things. And here we hardly ever take food from a tin." (JaW_Y12)

5 The capability for voice: opportunity freedom for choice and process freedom at JaW

The capability for voice must be contextualised with the other two capabilities for education and for work building the framework of interpretation for this case study. We have already discussed the restricted opportunity freedom in the so called 'transition phase', in choosing an educational pathway and life trajectory one has reason to value. At the same time we tried to outline that youngsters in this particular educational setting have the capacity and do develop a sense for judging what activities are and what pathway is worthwhile for their professional future. Following Bonvin (2012, 16) the capability for voice in young people's lives and educational trajectories relies on the availability of political resources (ability to constitute a collective body); the availability of cognitive resources (ability to communicate and argue, access to information, representative bodies); and available entitlements, i.e. de-commodification options or a reasonable fall-back position. Are these resources available and viable for the youngsters and what (kind of) process freedom and what (kind of) opportunity freedom do the youngsters encounter in the JaW setting?

In the last section we want, first, to come back to the principal opportunity freedom youngsters envisage when they stand at a crossroad of several pathways to continue. Next, we will turn to the question what resources and conversion factors the young people encounter or miss for realising the freedom to intervene in the daily schedule and organisation of this educational *and* labour market measure they are going through.

5.1 Opportunity freedom

First, the decision making process itself in the transition process from one (educational) institution to another (educational or labour-market) institution or to the labour market itself must be taken into account. How can a youngster judge his/her 'real' opportunities? How can he/she gather all information necessary to decide on one or the other pathway? How can he/she make the right decision, loaded with the expectations of maturity and responsibility?

Not surprisingly, *friends and peer group* do have an important impact on behavioural norms of the young people. The peer group is the doorman at the entrance into the world outside – but is it a 'collective body' of agency in this precarious phase?

Schittenhelm (2010, 95) refers to *collective status passages* between education and employment which young people experience when they have completed school. This phase of transition may be undergone collectively; peer groups do have an incisive influence on decisions about future educational pathways. However, due to the diversity of educational and

professional decisions of colleagues/friends they may suddenly find themselves alone with their future, left over or trapped in a gap between two systems and the big responsibility to choose the right, future-oriented and most prosperous alternative. Having overcome this phase, their desire 'to choose' may be exhausted.

Instead of being coerced to choose, the youngsters clearly formulated a *request for 'structure'* of their daytime during the apprenticeship training and for being set 'limits'. Free choice 'of doing what pleases' and the self-determined adaptation of free space are linked to fears of disorientation. In contrast, a limitation of searching processes in learning settings and the correction and supervision within these settings is connected with fostering learning capabilities.

Second, all youngsters should be adequately equipped to escape from the constraints of valueless training either through the real possibility, i.e. entitlement, to refuse the training or through the possibility to transform it into something they have reason to value. However, the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of 'getting lost on the street', becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living. As one interviewee puts it, "Most of those who are on the street have lost in their life. If I have such friends and join them outside at this time of the day and simply don't do anything but just botch things up then at some point I don't have any future anymore. (…) Some of those going through this measure have already been in jail. And this I don't want. You have this on your criminal record. And what can you do then? You can't do anything. You can go and clean toilets – that's all what is left for you to do." (JaW_Y2)

To sum up, opportunity freedom is limited by the fact that youngsters face major difficulties in judging their 'real opportunities' when being expected and actually socially coerced to choose deliberately and autonomously the most reasonable option for their professional future. 'Autonomy' is here to be interpreted as a a feature rather constraining than opening up a freedom to choose. What is more, the non-availability of entitlements in case of 'rather prefering not to' (Melville 2002 [1856]) and the lack of a reasonable and eqivalent fall-back position are also factors hampering a real choice of what the youngsters have reason to value.

5.2   Process freedom: intervening in daily schedules

The concept of capability for voice also addresses the issue of process freedom: to which extent are (young) people allowed to express their wishes, expectations and concerns in collective decision-making processes and how can they make them count? (Bonvin 2012, 15)

The daily routine within supra-company apprenticeship training is determined by a fixed schedule consisting of theoretical and practical modules. This structure cannot be modified by the apprentices. It is not foreseen that youngsters going through this measure participate in its design. In addition, time management is very strict – in order to inure the youngsters to the required punctuality and discipline in the 'real' working world – encompassing a very early start at 7.15 a.m. and rather short lunch breaks. What the apprentices can sometimes influence are their concrete activities: they can suggest doing practical work instead of studying theoretical modules or vice versa. Although several apprentices criticise these strict time requirements, they see little or no need for a change in terms of a more 'democratic' way of

determining their daily time structure. Two reasons for this are particularly interesting: First, several apprentices feel that their trainers do try to consider their wishes if possible. The trainers know what is 'best' for their pupils. Following Ley and Düker (2012) in their contribution to this Collective Volume this attitude can be interpreted in the following way: "[the youngsters] comply with the decisions and actions of these authority figures and do not expect that their needs and requirements are a legitimate basis for social work interventions." Second, many youngsters are simply not interested in intervening: This attitude might have to do with their perception of SCAT as a temporary solution on their way into a company-based apprenticeship. Another aspect is that many apprentices generally sense and experience having few choices. This may be explained by the fact that they are (continuously) told – by their parents, the media, PES counsellors, etc. – that they have to adapt their dreams to 'what is possible', which leaves few ways open on how to imagine and organise life, especially when it comes to learning and their (future) professional life in a competitive society.

Youth representatives, directly elected representatives of the apprentices, are an institutionally provided resource for realising the capability for voice. Often however when elected they do not know how to 'fill' the post, and it was bemoaned by the trainers several times that the youngsters do not (yet) know what it means to 'take on responsibility'. Expressed demands (such as the right to smoking breaks) are not taken seriously, even though these are topics that affect the youngsters personally, directly and immediately and stand a good chance of being successfully implemented. Other – more 'profound' – requirements, such as more space, longer breaks, more excursions, better equipment, are hopelessly unrealistic in their realisation. The fact that many interviewed apprentices perceive participation as impossible or only "seemingly possible" within SCAT could be interpreted as a consequence of missing participation possibilities as citizens in society in general.

6 Conclusions

JaW is a measure standing at the crossroads of labour-market and educational policy[6]. This location has various implications for the capability formation of education, of work and of voice. The article aimed at identifying the main aspects of what resources and conversion factors support or impede the development of these three capabilities in a supra-company-apprenticeship training scheme.

In terms of the capability for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. The experience of working with and shaping material (of high quality) is an important and motivating learning process for the youngsters.

Second, trainers, both as teachers and as persons appreciating or depreciating youngsters' abilities and resources are crucial factors for enhancing or impeding youngsters' capabilities. They are seen as positive role models, as professional craftspersons, as those with whom youngsters have to struggle and to argue about their own learning process (and skills) and their acknowledgement. Conversely, they can also be perceived as negative social figures reinforcing the distance between the established institution and the aspiring youngster.

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[6] See also Haidinger/Atzmüller (2011) for the institutional setting and implementation of the supra-company-apprenticeship training in Austria.

As a third aspect, the strict daily structure has an impact on the learning processes at the training centres. In general terms, structure is appreciated by many apprentices as they provide a framework for doings. More time should be dedicated to recreation in terms of individual breaks and individually organised non-dedicated 'creative' time. These structural constraints of the SCAT turn out to be ambivalent for the development of the capability for 'self-organisation', for 'agency and autonomy' (Walker 2005, 108), which serves as a prerequisite of the capabilities for learning and work. On the one hand, from the very beginning of the training the youngsters are trusted with creative and responsible tasks, however supervised. On the other hand, due to the tight institutional and pedagogic scope set by SCAT, the individual strengths of the youngsters are only marginally taken up, acknowledged and developed.

Thinking about the capability for work needs a critical reflection of what work actually is. Possible answers are diametrically opposed: Does 'being capable for working' mainly mean preparing a young person for the labour market or does it imply teaching her/him to be proud of what he/she is DOING – of what the person is able to create? In the first case, the focus of the training will be on how discipline (and self-discipline) can be encouraged among the youngsters in terms of secondary virtues and principal 'work ethics', but also by providing psycho-social and learning support to sustain a searching young person's process of maturation into a valuable worker in a company. At the same time, SCAT is a space for 'practical capability formation' and the training very much endorses the quality of work and of production processes.

'Capability for voice' encompasses opportunity freedom and process freedom. SCAT itself – in terms of process freedom – offers little scope for voice and choice. It is a thoroughly structured system, with little room for manoeuvre to develop self-determined and freely chosen capabilities. In general, the youngsters feel that they have little opportunity freedom in their lives– in terms of raising their voice as citizens but as well concerning more concrete issues, such as freely choosing a particular educational pathway. Youngsters should get the chance and time to find and choose an educational pathway they have reason to value. Admittedly, finding the appropriate pathway is hard to achieve in view of the external pressure from society, labour-market institutions, peer group and family.

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