

# Constructing Relationships Between the Work and Private Life on the Basis of Narratives of Young Poles Experiencing Precariousness<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*At the centre of our interest is the construction of relationship between the work and the private life, based on empirical material from the PREWORK research project, devoted to the experiences of young Poles on the labour market. The main thesis of the paper is that within the context of the construction of relationships between the work and the private life of young Poles suffering from the construction of relationships between the work and the private life of young Poles suffering from*

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*precarious situation, the sphere of work is dominating the sphere of private life. The private life, in turn, just as professional career, is subject to secondary precarisation. On the basis of selected empirical cases (autobiographical narrative interviews using the method developed by Fritz Schütze) we analyze the ways in which the relationships between the work and the private life are presented in biographical materials. We place main emphasis on relationships between those two spheres as part of deepening or mitigation of precariousness which is treated as a potential source of trajectory, in the sense given to the latter term by Fritz Schütze.*

**Keywords:** precariat, precariousness, young workers, biographical studies.

## Introduction

Young Poles active on the labour market have a higher level of educational attainment than their peers from other OECD countries (OECD 2017). At the same time, they are more exposed to precarious, i.e. uncertain, unstable and very often low-paid jobs. According to definition provided by Rodgers. ‘The concept of precariousness involves instability, lack of protection, insecurity and social or economic vulnerability. Not that this eliminates ambiguity; an unstable job is not necessarily precarious. It is some combination of inevitably to some extent arbitrary’ (Rodgers 1989: 3). The situation of the youth on the labour market is the subject of many studies, e.g. the PREWORK research project. Basing ourselves on the biographical research conducted within this project and on the available subject literature, we discuss the construction of relationships between the work and private life. We believe that this relationship plays a particularly significant role in the biographical narratives of young people experiencing precarious work conditions.

At present, we are witnessing the shift of emphasis from the professional to the private and free time. Work is becoming secondary to other spheres of life (see Burlita and Błoński 2015). This is particularly clear for higher social strata, with notable exception of a small group of people, e.g. higher managerial staff (cf. Domański 2002). The emergence of free time, as well as growing social expectations and aspirations brought about by processes of post-modernity, result in individual identities being shaped mainly outside of the workplace (Giddens 1991). In this paper we are trying to trace the impact of those phenomena on young Poles working in precarious conditions.

Our main thesis is that when it comes to the construction of relations between the work and private life among the young Poles suffering from precarisation, it is the work that dominates over the private life. The latter, in turn, is subject to the mechanisms driving the phenomenon of secondary precarisation. In other words, we

assume that instability and uncertainty that are characteristic for people employed on the civil contracts (the so-called working poor, i.e. people whose incomes are below 60 per cent of the median household disposable income) that work in a poorly paid sectors of economy, are reflected within such domains of biographical experience as: private life, free time, education, social and political activism.

The very distinction between the work and private life throws up a number of questions. Is work related only to a given time and place? Is it mainly about earning money? Does private life go beyond the category of private sphere? Uncertainty is also experienced by the young workers outside their work. In this paper we are looking for its component parts among selected empirical examples.

## Theoretical Aspects of the Analysis of Private Life of ‘Young Precarians’

The everyday life has been a subject of many studies (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966, Erikson 1950, Siciński 1976, Siciński 1978, Palska 2003, Boguni-Borowska 2009, Muszyński 2009 and others). In his book entitled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas describes the process of modernisation that is blurring the boundaries between the public and the private, between the individual and the society (Habermas 1989).

The specific dispositions related to ways of experiencing and thinking about the world in such domains as private life, free time, education, social and political activity constitute a habitus, as conceived by Pierre Bourdieu: ‘As an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production- and only those. Through the habitus, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions’ (Bourdieu 1990: 55).

The system of cognitive and motivation structures of people who experience precarisation of work, i.e. uncertainty and instability, is, in Bourdieusian terms, the result of socialisation to inherited positions whose effects, i.e. the habitus, are usually questioned when experiencing objective, changing and uncertain conditions. This is where the problem lies with the use of habitus in the analysis of precariat. At the same time, we see some advantages flowing from its application. Using biographical approach, we can access the presentation of attitudes, norms and values that are

guiding an individual, and thus, indirectly, to their habitus. It is worth pointing out that habitus is being objectified in biographical experience. The habitus is constructed of subjective expectations which, as can be supposed when analysing people who experience precariousness at work, are mainly concentrated on achieving stable job. That is, in turn, the subject of the analysis within the PREWORK research project. Undoubtedly, the habitus of young precarious workers is an intriguing topic to study. However, due to the scope of this question, in this paper it is discussed insofar as it touches upon the private sphere. Thus, the present paper complements studies and papers on professional sphere (see Gardawski 2009, Mrozowicki 2016, Mrozowicki 2017 and others).

A category that is symptomatic for young precarious workers is that of resignation. Lack of free time, the necessity of flexible adjustment to working conditions, and the inability of adapting the volumes of cultural capital (which often occur in abundance) to the social and institutional context. That, in turn, contributes to the de-valuation of cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986; Davis and Moore 1970). All this creates a picture of young people who are deprived of resources and ability to lead a life as they expect it to be.

Young precarious workers are both the creation and creators of late post-modernity. The social world that surrounds them, and especially 'personal meaninglessness – the feel that life has nothing worthwhile to offer' and resulting sense of 'personal meaninglessness' (Giddens, 1991: 9), throws them into the process of permanent transformations in the social reality. 'Changes in intimate aspects of personal life, in other words, are directly tied to the establishment of social connections of very wide scope' (Giddens 1991: 32). Existential anxiety, shattered frames of ontological security, and the trajectories of identity are accompanying an individual in a 'post traditional' social order where processes and phenomena take an intense and dynamic meaning. Such phenomena are described by Bauman as 'liquid modernity' (see Bauman 2005). 'Lack of framework for reference and homelessness of contemporary human being' corresponds with precarisation. 'To be precariatized is to be subject to pressures and experiences that lead to a precariat existence, of living in the present, without a secure identity or sense of development achieved through work and lifestyle' (Standing 2011: 16). An individual is condemned to the lack of self-direction, the 'powers to influence the game's objectives, stakes and rules' (Bauman 2005: 102// numer strongly//). An individual is thus objectified. The concept of post-modernity links all the above-mentioned with the attempt at encountering the basis for the analysis of private, everyday life of young precarious workers.

The position of young and not so young workers (for the phenomenon of precarisation within the field of work is, after all, not restricted to the youth), seems to be dramatic. The theoretical discussion produces a picture of a situation without a way out. The individual is condemned to suffering and misfortunes due to the inability to self-actualisation and career development in the stable, predictable environment. However, the central position in our analysis is not occupied by the conditions of social life, but rather by how individuals are coping with these conditions. Moreover, we will try to prove that even in this strongly uncertain and insecure world there are narratives that suggest possible alternatives and ways out. The paper is based on biographical materials. One of the most important advantages of such data is that they allow us to trace what are the responses of individuals to challenges thrown at them by the social world. Such a response may take different forms. In the analytical part we present two cases of individual biographical experiences which, to a large extent, tell the story of coping strategies when faced with precarious professional situation. Anticipating subsequent parts of this paper, we can reveal that both cases prove that those individuals, despite their forced participation in an unstable and uncertain world, are able to work out efficient methods for taking control over potentials for suffering and disorder, and by doing so cope with the consequences of unfolding social processes.

## **Empirical Assumptions Behind the Analysis of Private Lives of ‘Young Precarians’**

The empirical data analyzed in this paper were obtained during the part of the PREWORK research project that was devoted to the experiences of young Poles on the labour market. One of the main categories that were studied as part of this project were people whose employment conditions bear a hallmark of precarisation. In other words, the interviews were conducted with people with non-standard employment conditions, the unemployed, and those working in precarious forms of employment<sup>2</sup>. The informants used the categories of uncertainty, instability, lack of anchoring, not

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<sup>2</sup> There was an additional, income criterion. It was decided that the income of interviewees should not be higher than 2/3 of the median incomes for the voivodeship where the interview took place. The interviews took place in the following voivodeships: Lower Silesian, Mazovian, And Lodz. The income criterion stood at: for Lower Silesian voivodeship 2/3 out of 4200,00 PLN = 2800,00 PLN; for Mazovian voivodeship (including Warsaw): 2/3 out of 4900,00 PLN = 3266,00 PLN; Lodz voivodeship: 2/3 out of

only with regard to their job situation. Such spheres of life as education, family and future were described using similar categories. At the planning stage of the study, biographical consequences of experiencing precariousness were conceived to be one of the key elements of the study. This resulted in a specific strategy for the collection and analysis of empirical material.

In order to capture the biographical dimension of precarised work and, more broadly, precariousness in life, it was decided that the main method for collecting qualitative data would be that of autobiographical narrative interview supplemented with a standardised list of questions. The original narrative interview was developed by Fritz Schütze, a German sociologist who based his work on the traditions of Chicago School, symbolic interactionism, works by Alfred Schütz, Anselm Strauss and other researchers from a broadly-understood qualitative paradigm. As stressed by Kaźmierska (2016: 61), it is not only a data collection technique, but also a coherent approach to research design. This means that a researcher who uses Schütze's approach, not only can collect data in a methodologically-determined way, but also can benefit from a well-developed analytical concepts that stand behind this approach. In principle, that should allow for reaching collective social processes through the reconstruction of individual biographical experience. In the context of the analysed question, we assume that the use of narrative interviews conducted with people experiencing the precarisation of work will allow us to describe aptly the ever more common experience of uncertainty.

Due to limited space, the research procedures will only be sketched here. The point of this description will be to show which elements of data collection technique are important in the context of the presented problem and how do they relate and support us in tracing the relationships between work and private life of people experiencing the precarisation of the labour market. We will also indicate how this was represented in specific parts of interviews and which concepts from the Schuetze's 'language' will be necessary for further research. By means of conclusion, we will try to hint at coping strategies for dealing with mechanisms of precarisation in the field of relationships between the work and the private life.

## Biographical method, theoretical foundations

The goal of autobiographical narrative interview is primarily to extract ‘the life story that is not an aggregate sum of responses to questions posed by the interviewer, but rather a spontaneous narrative which is not distorted by the interventions of the researcher’ (Kaźmierska 2016: 61, transl. WF). In general, such interviews are divided into three parts. In the first part, the narrator is invited to share their life story as they remember it. The interviewer starts the interview by asking a general question about the life story of the narrator. In this part, since the main focus is on the ‘undistorted’ story, the interviewer remains in the shadow, does not probe for anything, and should not interrupt or correct the narrator. It is only in the second part, demarcated by a more or less clear structure (‘coda’) closing the first part, that the interviewer takes up those questions that need to be expanded or clarified. This is a place to deepen the narrative about the key events that had been told by the narrator in the first part. The third, concluding part is dedicated to more general issues, not necessarily connected with the first or second part of the interview. In the research carried out within the PREWORK project, the last part of the interview was dedicated to topics that the project team deemed to be important in the context of project objectives.

In line with Schütze’s guidelines<sup>3</sup>, the analysis of a specific interview should be based on finding and describing the basic biographical process structures. These can be understood as the most important principles guiding a specific life story. We can distinguish four basic structures:

- *Biographical action schemes* that cover the efforts on the part of the individual to shape in an active and planned way of their biography;
- *Trajectories of suffering* that cover the experience of losing the control over one’s own life;
- *Institutional expectation patterns* that cover those parts of life when individuals are fulfilling institutionalised and normalised life trajectories;

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<sup>3</sup> In this paper we only discuss the key goal of the narrative interview. A more detailed description of this method, its procedures, as well as a developed description of its concepts and the analysis of empirical examples can be found in papers written by Schütze himself (Riemann and Schütze 1992; Schütze 1992a; Schütze 1992b; Schütze 2008) and other researchers from the field of biographical sociology.

- *Creative metamorphosis of biographical identity* that cover the onset of new biographical development pathway.

The analysis of the material collected in the entire project had as one of its objectives to trace how do the patterns of process structures unfold in this targeted sample. Is it possible to talk about the domination of one kind of structures? Are trajectories of suffering a common biographical experience for those with precarious employment? Leaving aside these issues, we want to point out that we can talk about certain potentials for trajectories (sources of suffering) in the analyzed cases, whose sources can be traced precisely to the uncertainties generated by a specific type of biographical experience.

Kaźmierska stresses a huge versatility of narrative interview: 'One of the advantages of this concept is its potential to be modified or used partially, e.g. by only using the technique of narrative interview, i.e. a specific way of data collection' (Kaźmierska 2016: 61, transl. WF).

Despite its comprehensive character, a narrative interview does not have to be used strictly adhering to all the guidelines and within the framework of a specific research and analytical logic. It can be modified, by e.g. adding some items. The very technique and analytical framework offered by Schütze may be combined or adapted to specific needs. This is what we also did when analysing the material for the purposes of this paper. Firstly, out of the entire collection of interviews, two cases were picked that were interesting with regard to the topic of the present paper. It has to be stressed that both narrators were young women in a similar (though, of course, not identical) positions: both are working in sectors of the economy characterised by the prevalence of project-based work, unstable employment and modest wages. It has to be pointed out that from a methodological point of view, both interviews represent developed and detailed narratives that are full of narrative communicational schemes. Secondly, both narratives were analysed not only as narrative interviews in themselves, but above all with regard to the subject of the present paper. In the cases of both Alicja and Zuzanna we can see the mechanisms of mutual interdependence between the precarisation of the sphere of work and private life, as well as, more broadly, the symptoms of precarity<sup>4</sup>. In the subsequent part of the paper we will expand on this remark. Thirdly, the conclusions from the

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<sup>4</sup> The difference between the three concepts of precarity, precariousness and precariat is explained by Ryszard Szarfenberg (2016: 2). Referring to, among others, Butler (2009) and Standing (2011), he points out that precarity is a condition, common to everybody, related to uncertainty and risk of the durability of their bodies. In contrast, precariousness points to the ways in which precarity is manifested at the social and individual level in a given institutional context which makes 'bodies and

analysis of each of the cases were contrasted and compared with other interviews from the sample<sup>5</sup>. Their theoretical characteristics allow us to assume that they do not diverge in a radical way from the rest of interviews. Therefore, it is possible to add important elements of description to the main analytical categories generated during the analysis of the empirical data.

The main analytical categories mainly concern types of coping strategies applicable to precarious biographical situation (mainly rooted in employment and working conditions). Due to lack of space, we would like to share the description of only one strategy: the creative type, characteristic of the so-called 'projectarians' (people who build their professional experience through project work, e.g. in social projects Predominantly, but not exclusively, this phenomenon is characteristic for the NGOs)<sup>6</sup>. This choice is driven by the characteristics of the analyzed cases. During the analysis, Alicja and Zuzanna were classified as cases that complement the description of the 'creative' strategy. The 'creative' type is characterised by the blurring of the borders separating the world of work and world of private life. In this case, the precariousness is normalised (Mrozowicki 2016, Lorey 2015): it is tolerated as a normal feature of contemporary work. The main value for those interviewees is to strive for self-development at the cost of material attributes of success.

The Case of AlicThe narrator, at the time of the interview, was 29 years old. She was co-running an association active in the field of cultural animation in a small town in the South-Western Poland. She comes from the Upper Silesia region, from a family with mining traditions and conservative outlook. She left her region for studying. She lives with a partner who works as a graphic designer and in his spare time supports Alicja with her work for the association. For most of her adult life she has been active in the so-called third sector. Her entire professional career has been project-based.

It has to be stressed that, from the point of view of the analysed issue, Alicja fits well the above-described strategy of coping creatively with precariousness. Firstly, the interview is mainly dedicated to the experience of work. In the first part of the

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lives of some people and communities are better protected, whereas those of others are protected much worse or not protected at all'.

<sup>5</sup> The collection of interviews conducted within the framework of the project encompasses 70 37 of them were conducted in the Lower-Silesian Voivodeship, 29 in the Masovian Voivodeship, 4 in the Lodz Voivodeship. 38 interviewees were women and 32 were men.

<sup>6</sup> See the article by Adam Mrozowicki and Mateusz Karolak in this volume.

interview, while answering the question on the life trajectory, Alicja introduces her talk in the following way:

Alicja: 'Okay. I don't know. Can I go backwards, for example? That is, starting from what I am doing now. Gosh, it is so hard to start (2.0) Okay. So maybe something about my connection with non-governmental organisations, because I am connected with non-governmental organisations for maybe about seven, eight years now'.

This introduction imposes the interpretation of the subsequent elements of the interview which do not relate to the sphere of work but describe, in a traditional way, family life, education or choice of university career. However, the theme imposed by the narrator in the opening parts of the interview frames subsequent events as leading to the attainment of present work position.

The second thing that needs to be stressed is that Alicja consistently used first person plural form over the course of the interview ('we', 'our', 'at our', 'ours' etc.) where, at least in theory, she should be using first person singular. It seems that we can interpret this grammatical construction as a way of understanding Alicja's biography as a result of joint action (taken up with her husband or other collaborators).

The third, characteristic thing about the interview with Alicja is that it was dominated by professional experiences. When describing her everyday life, the narrator rarely introduces items that are not related to her professional role. She is focusing on characterisation of a defined social world (Schütze 2012b) which can be called a local milieu of NGOs and social activists. It is here that Alicja looks for self-actualisation, new contacts, motivation to act. We will also find here the main significant others (carers of her biography), key frames of reference and main fields of generation of biographical action schemes. Even moving from a larger town to a small one is for Alicja a mere change of space and not of social world that she belongs to. The attitude that the interviewee refers to is that of being an active and involved leader:

Alicja: 'We knew from the beginning that once we come here we would get involved here, would we buy a flat and just live here? It makes no sense. So we knew that we would probably do something'.

The key quote from the interview comes when Alicja is summing up the first part of the interview (coda):

Alicja: 'Gosh, I am a bit of an idealist, I live of my dreams and we are launching a new project somewhere, that is here in (name of the town). There is very little entrepreneurial wit in it, it never went well with me, that is probably why I am not earning a fortune and I am not working at places which would give me huge money, but I am really satisfied with my job, right? So I will probably muddle through this kind of self-employment for the NGOs. We'll see. As for now, I have submitted

billions of proposals for the coming year, so (laughter) hoping that some will pass. Well, the time may come that all this will go to the devil and I will look for a job in a corporation ((laughter)) which probably is not a bad thing, but a new one for me, something that I have never experienced, to tell the truth. So I happen to work with good people and that is probably why I want to do it. That is how things are, briefly'.

Note that the coda has an argumentative character. It is as if the narrator wanted to justify taking her life pathway. Alicja is satisfied, because she still can realise her dreams. She stresses that she is an idealist, but she is aware of the uncertainty of the world in which she is living. The suggested alternative way forward, embodied in this interview by working for a multinational corporation, might give us an opportunity to reconstruct the perspective from which Alicja analyzes the surrounding reality. Uncertainty is not frightening (it does not trigger a trajectory, to use the language of Schütze), because those characteristics that allow her to smoothly move in the world of NGOs make Alicja believe that she could have a successful career in the multinational corporation.

The relationship between work and private life is tilted towards the domination of the former. The world of work is the main generator of the narrator's identity. It is hard to find any spheres of interests or activities that would be separated from the role of a social activist. Alicja talks about her adulthood experience through the prism of actions taken within the community of her collaborators, among whom the husband plays a key role. Her private life is being played out and constructed in the broadly conceived field of professional activity. Assuming that uncertainty triggers a sense of instability and is a potential marker of trajectory, Alicja must take up a job whose aim is to reduce or normalise the precariousness. This can be seen in the above-quoted coda in which she describes the logic behind submitting new proposals, framing it in categories of hyperactivity, which will allow her to continue to pursue her dream. Secondly, there is attempt at establishing non-material values as a key criterion for evaluating success. It is important to be satisfied with one's job, to find good people, to follow one's dreams. Of lesser importance, or even marginalised, are from this viewpoint such features of work as stable employment or decent pay.

## The Case of Zuzanna

Zuzanna is 28 years old and lives in a large city. She works as English teacher on different forms of temporary contracts. She aspires to become a dependency therapist

(To this effect, she is enrolled in a course). She holds a degree in social sciences. She comes from a middle class, intelligentsia family. She is reproducing the model of 'free professions' of her parents. Her professional pathway in the area of dependency therapy is strictly established and consistently implemented. At the time of the interview she is working at an (unpaid) internship at an outpatient clinic and hospital, as part of her recently concluded therapist course.

The woman's narrative has a distinctly clear and stressed biographical scheme of action. The voluntary work done both in Poland and abroad, as well as consistent development in the field of dependency therapy suggest a coherent nature of her biography. And the professional pathway in dependency therapy represents a conscious choice on her part. The interview shows a clear biographical metamorphosis in the life of the narrator who breaks with the trajectory of a failed relationship (we will expand on this in the next part of this paper). A lecture on the prevention of dependencies and a subsequent discussion with the activist-come-lecturer gave her a direct impetus to start cooperating with an NGO active in the field of dependency therapy.

The woman works in precarious conditions for the NGO: at first as a volunteer, then as a 'projectarian' (working on a project basis). This scheme is repeated over her entire professional career. Only once does she have a full-time job on the employment contract (this experience lasts for three months). Quitting this routine job in a public institution is also a conscious choice and leads to a further clarification of her idea of work. The project work brings a sense of freedom with it: 'This freedom is cool, that you can do the project as you want, from beginning to the end, as you want. That is, on your terms' (Zuzanna).

The professional work is very important to her. It gives her satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. An equally important aspect of her life is, however, her private life, especially her romantic relationships. She dedicates a lot of attention to the discussion of her past and present relationships. Her partners are carers of her biography. And her private life plays an important role in identity building and sense of agency. A termination of a relationship is a particularly momentous event for her.

Another element that constructs Zuzanna's identity is her free time, especially her passion for travelling. Travelling is a multi-dimensional concept for the woman. Firstly, she recalls that travelling was a form of therapy after leaving biographical trajectory of her failed relationship. Secondly, travelling is what she wants to do in her spare time and it is how she plans to spend her savings. Thirdly, she wants to organise her time spent on working in a way that allows her to travel freely.

Zuzanna: 'I somehow got really into travelling. It all started somehow with my trips to volunteer, then I started travelling with my friend, we started hitchhiking. This is how my travelling and all the rest of it started... This is what I think, that, for example, on the one hand it is cool, it's cool to have a stable job, just as decent people do. But on the other hand, I really love that I can go somewhere. That I have more of a leeway. That things are more flexible. Now that I think about it, that we will have a few days of holidays and will be submitting those proposals and we will be framed in this, then this really seems to be not that cool to me. And certainly for me this is one of those motives'.

The declaration contained in the coda is an exposition of a defined plan and consistent development of her professional career and private life around a work that is full of freedom and unshackled by principles and rules.

The main goal for Zuzanna is to become a therapist and work with people who need help. This aspect is rooted firmly in the entire interview and visible at different stages of process structures. During her narrative, Zuzanna often comes back to the mission-like character of her work and her experiences, starting from the voluntary services up to the present job with her clients. The biographical vector is directed towards the social aspect of her work and private life. This is consistent with her social involvement. The involvement is both a driving force and an important part of her identity life choices.

The combining of life and work into a single space seems to be a key feature of the discussed cases and narratives of both women. Zuzanna thinks that a good life has no duties, is flexible and gives freedom. In her life the spheres of private life and work are intertwined. The narrative clearly shows that the woman takes utmost care so that her professional life brings her the expected satisfaction and accomplishment. It also clearly shows her involvement in the subject that has become both her passion and interest.

## Conclusions

The position of young workers in the epoch of post-modernity is characterized by high levels of uncertainty, instability, with no possibility of effectively predicting career pathways. Such conditions of social life bring about certain complications that are visible at different levels of social structure. Basing ourselves on the results

of biographical analyses, we can make an attempt at describing macro processes (part of which are, undoubtedly, market transformations that promote and spread precariousness), taking the perspective of biographical experience as a point of departure.

One of the hypotheses with the use of narrative interview was existence of specific types of biographical process structures. We suspected that trajectory of suffering, the experiencing of disorder and chaos, would be the prevalent type. The basis of such thesis was the precariousness of the experiences in the world of work connected with the loss of its stability and predictability, features characteristic of modernity.

Despite the fact that our findings show that in both cases we can see a domination of work over the private life, it seems, though, that:

- Either the experience of precariousness of work does not carry the risk of trajectory;
- Or the individuals use coping strategies that allow them to discharge the potentials for trajectory.

One of the possible explanations of this situation is the huge importance played by social worlds of both narrators. In both cases, we see norms and values that result in mitigation of undesirable consequences of uncertainty at work. Especially in the case of Alicja we see that the milieu of the interviewee is based on stressing such values as self-actualisation, freedom from obligations or her agency. A question remains as to whether we can frame these as classical examples of biographical action schemes, understood as a truly free construction of one's own biography, or rather as deeply internalized institutional paradigms of action.

Despite the fact that counterposing the selected cases with other interviews from the collection does not confirm that potentials for trajectories are weaker in all cases of creative type adaptive strategy. Even if an individual shows flexibility, ability to adapt to conditions or autonomy, that are characteristic of the creative type, the key role is played by social conditions in which that individual acts. Lack of family support, low volumes of social or cultural capital, working in a social world with lesser degree of internalisation of individualist values, the experience of other type of social exclusion (e.g. being labelled in the local world as 'unemployable') are all weakening the ability to reduce the potential for trajectory. Moreover, those very same characteristics of a creative type are transformed in the latter cases into an additional burden and make an individual more vulnerable and sensitive.

By means of conclusion it is worthwhile to go back to the character of relationships between work and private life of young workers that are part of the so-called precariat. In the biographical sense the stake that they are fighting for is to preserve control over

their lives. Some of them, since they work in specific sectors of the economy (such as the third sector), have to take up the game not only with the top-down processes that filter through social world, but at the same time with mechanisms of local origin, such as those that create closed communities that generate their own culture, norms, values, career development pathways etc. In the case of our interviewees their seemingly alternative-less situation provides them with concrete argumentation that both narrators are using to support the reconstruction of their biographies. One of the most important of these lines of argumentation is a deep internalisation of values shared in their social world. This brings a sense of accomplishment and builds a relationship between the individual and their community.

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