

**Bachelor Thesis - European Studies**

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**Youth employability discourse in the European Union**

A comparative analysis of the discourse in the European Parliament and the Council on the European Union between December 2009 and June 2013

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## Abstract

This thesis seeks to find the differences in the framing of employability via analyzing the discourse on youth unemployment in the European Union since December 2009. The time period was chosen because the Treaty of Lisbon conveyed more power to the European Parliament and it is expected that the European Parliament has developed its own positions in the discourse on youth unemployment opposed to the Council of the European Union. In order to detect these potential differences the press releases of the Employment and Social Affairs committee of the Parliament and the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council were analyzed. The main features of employability that are used in this research are entrepreneurship and employability. It has been found that the European Parliament seems to be framing its statements more in the direction of collective responsibility whereas the Council also highlights the importance of individual responsibility. In terms of entrepreneurship the comparative analysis is limited as the Parliament has only slightly referred to this feature of employability. In the Council it can be seen that over time the urge of implementing political measures to foster entrepreneurship in order to lower youth unemployment has increased. The establishing of a youth guarantee – the right to receive a work or further education offer within four months of being unemployed – transfers more possibilities to young people for making their voice heard in EU politics. The discursively established right which has a non-binding character however provides them with a frame for issuing their demands.

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## 1. Introduction

Words are the means that help us communicate our perception of reality. In a constructivist view the way we talk about a topic – the way in which the topic is framed – shapes our social reality. ‘Meaning is understood as a derivative of language use within relationships’ (Gergen, 2011, p.109) in social constructivism. In nearly all human interactions, there are power relations at play between the interacting individuals that influence the way a topic is framed and also the way it is perceived. The implications that a formulation of even only one sentence has can be very significant. In line with the ideas of Foucault (1982, 2012), discourse can be defined as an interaction amongst people and between people and their social realities. It is composed of attitudes, thoughts, ideas and beliefs which reciprocally shape the way they perceive each other, and accordingly the way in which different groups of people approach each other or certain topics. Almost every human interaction, whether spoken or written, is a discourse. The more power a subject has in relation to the others - may it be due to the person or to the institution it represents - the wider are the implications that a constant way of framing a certain topic or even a single sentence can have. In the countries that are members of the European Union (EU) representatives are democratically elected to discuss the challenges of today and especially the ways to approach these challenges and to come to solutions. Members of the parliaments and governments are the ones who discuss and deliberate on the best possible solutions. Together with other actors such as scientist and the media they set the frame on which topics currently appear essential to approach. This tends to influence the ways in which the topics are discussed publically (see Tankard, 2001 for thoughts on media framing).

Discourses on certain social problems such as poverty, the demographic change, unemployment or crime are interesting to investigate, because the way in which these challenges are discussed has an impact on the actions that are taken in these fields. If poverty is perceived as a challenge to society as a whole and a general sense of solidarity is created, then welfare provisions from the state seem justified. If on the contrary the state of being poor is presented and perceived as a personal failure or as the family’s responsibility then aid systems do not seem legitimized. This also links different welfare systems to differing traditions or cultural perceptions in various countries. At the supranational level in the European Union social challenges such as poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and rising competition due to globalization have been identified as challenges that have to be dealt with collectively, or at least to a high degree jointly at the European level – even though the competences of the EU for issuing policy papers in related policy fields are of supporting nature. In the field of economic and employment policies, the EU has a competence to coordinate the policies by setting general guidelines for the member states to follow (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Art. 5).

In order to do this the EU issues guidelines in accordance with the larger long-term strategies that it has set for itself. In the Lisbon Strategy, the first cohesive long-term strategy on employment, social cohesion and economic reform the EU set itself the new strategic aim 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' until 2010 (Lisbon Council, 2000, para. 5). The goal of this strategy was to 'regain the conditions for full employment, and to strengthen regional cohesion in the European Union' (Idem, para. 6). Most of the high aims that were set in at the Lisbon Council were not reached by 2010; in the mid-term review of the Lisbon process it was already highly criticized and labeled as a possible failure due to changing and conflicting priorities and poor coordination of power between the European Union and the member states. The main critique that was attested by the independent High Level Group, who was assigned to review the process of the Lisbon strategy, was a 'lack of determined political action' (Kok, 2004, p. 43). 'Failures' of the Lisbon strategy together with the economic crisis led to a decrease of employment numbers instead of the planned increase. Youth unemployment recently reached peak levels and no one can tell if even higher peaks will appear in the future.

In the discourse on youth unemployment, there is a tendency to refer to whether a person is employable rather than whether a person is in employment. Unemployment is framed as the inability to get a job, and thus to increase overall employment the employability of the population has to be increased. Employability is a complex concept which is composed of individual factors (skills, attitudes and values) as well as of structural factors (school/education system, labour market factors and the overall economic situation) (cf. European Commission, 2013, chapter 8). In his analysis of two Commission documents on lifelong learning and the labour market Andreas Fejes found that employability is 'constructed as natural and as something desirable' (p. 91, 2010). The individual is expected to take efforts to constantly increase the own employability through trainings and continuing education. Aside from the formal learning possibilities the emphasis on non-formal learning and informal learning in the lifelong learning discourse leads to an individualization of competences as well as to a 'totalization' of learning 'rendering nothing less than the whole society into an omnipresent classroom' (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006, p.466). The responsibility of the individual for its own employability and thus consequentially for its own economic situation is put into focus (Fejes, 2010, p.90). The possibilities of learning are endless and it is portrayed as if the individual is free to choose between them and is subsequently responsible for its choices. In a radical consequence this means that the responsibility for the economic situation of an individual lies in the hands of the individual and that a misfortune in life which might as well be due to structural factors is perceived as a calling to enhance the skills or to 'improve' the attitude of the individual. This view is not taking into account differences between individuals in terms of learning capacities, family

constraints and financial funds. As Brown, Hesketh and Williams put it 'employability represents an attempt to legitimate unequal opportunities in education and the labour market at a time of growing income inequalities' (p. 114, 2004).

The framing of employability in the policy documents has implications on the policy interventions. In the last years there is a trend towards passing more competences to the supranational level by shifting the competences for certain policy areas from mainly intergovernmental decision-making (involving the Council of the European Union, but not the Parliament) to the since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty so-called 'ordinary legislative procedure'. By that the Parliament got more competences which strengthened its voice in the decision-making process and allocated more power to it. The increase in the power of the Parliament can be exemplarily seen by the fact that the Parliament succeeded to claim a role as an important negotiation partner in the decision-making of the new multi-annual framework where it used its veto power to bring its own comments and ideas into the negotiation process without officially being in the position to negotiate. The increase in power of the Parliament makes it interesting to see how this actor frames the topic of employability because by influencing the way employability is framed in the EU it has real implications for young people. It might offer new channels of influence for young people to influence and contribute to shaping their future by voting consciously and by letting parliamentarians speak on their behalf.

The aim of this research is to find out to what extent the framing of employability in the youth unemployment discourse differs between the rather intergovernmental organ (the Council) and the supranational organ (the Parliament) in order to see if the framing in the Parliament differs from the framings of the national ministers in the Council. If this is the case it might offer new points of contact for young people for having their voices heard. In this thesis the answer to this question is attended to be found by using discourse analysis. Discourse analysis lies at the intersection between linguistics and sociology. It is the analysis of the use of words, of the language in its context always relating the words to the larger settings in terms of time and place. This means that a discourse can only be understood by taking the external settings - the frame of the discussions - into account as well as the relative power of the narrator in a discourse. The concrete research question of this thesis reads as follows: *What differences can be observed in the development of the framing of employability in the discourse on youth unemployment between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty?*

In order to answer the main research question, two sub questions have been created relating to two features of employability namely *responsibility* and *entrepreneurship*. The first feature refers to the question of who bears the responsibility for the development of the employability of people in a

society. The question is framed as follows: *What differences can be observed in the development of the framing of responsibility in relation to employability in the discourse on youth unemployment between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty?* Fostering entrepreneurship is widely discussed as a mean to reduce unemployment in particular youth unemployment (Others such as Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2012) see the enhancement of entrepreneurship as an extension of the market rationale into almost every part of the individual's lives, as the complete marketing of a person in which all personal features become important for the success of the career. Entrepreneurship is seen as a part of employability as a similar set of skills attributed both concepts and having the skills needed to become an entrepreneur increases one's employability. The question relating to this feature is: *What differences can be observed in the development of the framing of entrepreneurship in the discourse on youth unemployment between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty?*

In the Parliament the Committee of Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL- Committee) is responsible for discussing legislative proposals concerning unemployment and in the Council the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO-Council) is responsible for these issues. Therefore press releases of the Parliament's committee and the EPSCO-Council are selected as units of observation for the analysis. The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter two discusses the theoretical dimensions of employability starting with the evolution of the concept and then presenting the main topics that are currently identified in the employability discourse at the European level. Chapter three presents the choices made in the methodological approach in selecting the data and conducting the analysis. Chapter four is sets the findings in the statements of the Parliament and the Council into perspective and provides an answer to the sub questions. The last part of the thesis presents the conclusions from the analysis and the implications of these findings.

## 2. Theorizing employability

In order to compare the differences in the discourse on employability, the concept has to be clarified at first and the relationship between the selected features of employability –namely entrepreneurship and responsibility – need to be explained. To see which topics are discussed controversially, recent research on the discourse on unemployment and (higher) education has been consulted. By reviewing the contrasting points found in the literature the theoretical dimensions of the concepts are being shown. The chapter starts with a short historical overview on the main developments of the use of ‘employability’ in the social sciences during the last century, followed by a presentation of the main topics that were recently found to be present in the contemporary discourse on employability.

### 2.1. Evolution of the concept of employability during the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Employability is an ambiguous concept. Historically its meaning has changed over time and in the political discourse the meaning different actors attribute to it is variable. Taking a look at the word employ-ability is it intuitive to say that it describes the ability to get or to be employed. How this ability looks like or what kind of abilities are referred to when using the concept has changed a lot in the scope of the last century. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the concept was used in a ‘dichotomous’ way (Gazier, 1998 in McGrath, 2009), a person was either seen as employable which meant able and willing to work or as unemployable which included those persons who were not able or not willing to work and are in need of support. The concepts of the undeserving and the deserving poor play a role in this perception of employability. The undeserving poor who were not willing to work although they were able to, should not receive help from the state but should rather be employed and if necessary forced to take up employment, the deserving poor to which persons who were for example previously working hard but then experienced a period of illness or became handicapped are counted, should be supported by the state (for a deeper discussion on deservingness criteria, see Van Oorschot, 2000). These thoughts are reflected in our modern welfare regimes. In this approach employability was a rather rigid state which could not easily be influenced by either the individual or the care takers.

In the 1940s the concept was mainly used to describe the individual’s socio-medical conditions that allow a person to take up employment. Factors such as a person’s physical and mental health as well as the person’s social status were taken into account to judge whether the requirements of a work placement were met. This approach allowed for variations in how employable a person is and thus broadening the way the concept could be used. Persons could therefore be employable in general concerning their will and their physical and mental ability to work but could be considered as not



employable because they did not fulfill the work requirements for the available placements. In this perception of employability a person had the chance to influence the own employability by taking trainings for example. In the 1960s the French sociological literature referred to employability as the 'objective expectation, or more or less, high probability, that a person looking for a job can have of finding one' (Ledrut, 1966 as quoted in Gazier, 1998, p. 44 in McGrath, 2009, p.2). Contrasting to the previous understandings of employability this approach focuses also on the demand-side of employment meaning it takes the overall economic situation into account. Compared to the other definitions this one is the first which is not merely focused on the personal conditions but on the overall situation, setting individual capabilities into relation with the labour demand. It is a statistical measure to determine how long it takes for groups of persons to get an employment and can therefore be used to draw conclusions on where in society there is need to act in the case of unemployment.

In the 1970s an approach which Bernard Gazier calls 'labour market performance employability' was developed and is in use since then (cf. McQuaid & Lindsay (2005), p. 201). It is similar to the French approach in a way that they both are measurements of performance in the process of getting people in employment. The new feature of the previously discussed approach was that it took the labour market conditions into account. This approach also includes the way in which the labour market conditions are shaped. It frames employability as a measure of labour market performance which shows how successful policy interventions of the past have been. In the 1980s especially in human resource literature the focus in the understanding of the concept moved back to the individual. It was stated that the period in which persons tend to be employed by one company throughout their life or were having the same job is coming to an end. Through a shift towards more knowledge-based and service-oriented jobs which goes along with a perceived need of constant adaptation to changing situations, the necessity of developing oneself and of acquiring skills that are transferable to different situations in the current employment, as well as useful if a change of the career is desired or required, increased. Flexibility became an important element of employability both in remaining successful in the current employment and in the search for a new job.

Employees are considered to be the ones responsible for their career progress. This approach puts an increased responsibility on the individual for actively shaping its own career and keeping the own skills up-to date in order to be open and ready for taking new steps in progressing in the current employment or for changing the placement. Highlighting the role of the worker this approach is called 'initiative employability'. Relating to initiative employability but going beyond it, 'interaction employability' combines a strong focus on individual responsibility with structural factors and thus argues that a person's employability is a relative rather than an independent concept and can

therefore only be understood and accessed in relation to others. It furthermore re-invites policy makers into the process by acknowledging that labour market rules and the current economic circumstances have an impact on individual employability. Gazier argues that through acknowledging the influence of external factors the responsibility of the state is stressed in providing support especially to vulnerable groups such as long-term or young unemployed persons.

## 2.2. Contemporary use of the concept of employability

McGrath argues that elements of all the approaches that are presented above can be found in 'present popular, practical and policy debates' (2009, p.3). Whereas Gazier suggests that the contemporary usage of employability mainly includes elements of interactive employability and 'is about overcoming a broad array of barriers to work faced by individuals' (Gazier, 1998; in McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005, p. 202) implicating that policies concerning employability should not only focus on individuals, McQuaid and Lindsay state that the current labour market policies 'leans heavily upon its individual centred, supply-side components' (2005, p. 202). The European Commission mentioned individual factors before referring to structural factors in the official definition of employability recently released by its scientific service. The abstract reads as follows:

'Employability is a combination of factors which allow individuals to get a job, stay employed and progress during their career. It is a complex concept, which includes skills, attitudes and motivation. Additional factors which lie beyond education and training policy, involve labour market regulations, demography, the structure of the economy and the overall economic situation' (European Commission, 2012).

This definition stresses that employability is a concept which is relevant to all persons who are active in the labour market whether they are trying to find a job or are in employment and want to keep the employment or 'progress' in their career. It furthermore stresses the individual dimension ('skills, attitudes and motivation') as well as a structural dimension ('regulations, demography, and economic situation') of the concept.

Lahusen, Schulz and Graziano (2013) in their recent research on the development of youth unemployment policies in Europe state that the concept of employability is dynamic and that a trend towards a broadening of the concept can be observed. They found as well that in the recent discourse concerning youth unemployment employability as a concept is not only used extensively in relation to unemployed but also to employed persons. Its 'predominant focus' lies on individuals and how they use their skills. It is a person's skills, attitudes and behaviour that has a huge impact on the capacity to start and pursue a career. It is argued that soft skills tend to be even more important than 'formal or technical skills' especially if these can be learnt relative quickly. That means that the possession of employability skills which mean general skills that can be useful in a broad variety of

assignments are considered to sometimes be more important than job-related knowledge in order to be hired. Even though the focus in the recent discourse is found to be on the individual's capacities - the circumstances of the individual as well as labour market factors also play a role in influencing one's employability. The authors point out that there is a difference between absolute and relative employability. Absolute employability considers the employability of an individual as such. Relative employability takes the circumstances such as the economic situation and related competition into account and can thus vary according to time and place.

In their research they have found that responsibility for the employment situation is increasingly based on the individual. Policies on employment are found to emphasize flexibility and mobility and the 'on-going changes in the labour market' place a pressure to adapt on the citizens of the European Union today. Considering their findings it seems that workers today are best off if they are always open to change - may it be to their field of responsibility or to the geographical place of their assignment. Unemployed persons are thought to search for a work placement in a different country and the EU is increasingly founding programs to enhance worker mobility. That very much puts work in the center of a human's life and other life fields are expected to adapt to this work-centred approach such as the individual is adapting to 'changing labour market conditions'. Talking about labour market demands emphasizes even more the narrator of modern life-stories. Along the lines of the labour-market focused perspective Weinert et al. (2001) found market-oriented behaviour, up-to date competences and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the market processes among the main features of employability thus pointing to the need of continuous renewal of skills and an observing status towards the 'market demands' so that one can on time adjust to the changes in the demands. A life course adjusted to labour market demands can be already found if people's choice which education to follow is based on an evaluation of what is expected to be needed when they graduate or finish their formation. This means that choices are being made according to expectations about market needs instead of personal strengths and desires and that these choices are based on speculations on the future. Dahlstedt and Tesfahuney (2010) in their research have found a culture of speculation to be present and the speculative education belongs according to them to a trend which has emerged over the last decades.

Christina Garsten and Kerstin Jacobsson state related to the uncertainties mentioned above that 'a key idea in the discourse on employability is [...] that in a rapidly changing world, employment today is no guarantee for employability tomorrow' (p.11, 2004). This stresses the need for constant re-education and further education in order to stay in the game and to keep up with competitors. The competition aspect is also important to mention as one's employability can only be seen relative in the comparison with the other persons' in search for a job. The higher the levels of unemployment

are the higher the demands on what sort of competences are needed for a placement can rise and the conditions of the placement can be changed to benefit the company more and more while the firms can still be almost sure that they will find a person willing to work for them because if people cannot find an employment where their full skills are needed then they are willing or urged to take up employments which are below their skill level and work 'underemployed'. This raises the pressure especially on lower skilled persons who face an even higher competition for the open job placements and on young workers who have little or no work experience and thus fall behind more experienced applicants. The situation is tough for both groups of job seekers; those facing higher competition find it harder to acquire an employment and those who cannot find an adequate placement have to do jobs which do not correspond to the education they have followed contently but also related to the remuneration which can be especially devastating to young persons who have invested a huge amount of money in their education and now not only have to pay their living expenses but also have to amortize the debts they accumulated during their studies or their formations with everyone around them telling that such a debt is a good investment and is paid back quickly after graduation in the first years of the new job without noticeable limitations. It becomes problematic if this 'new job' is not available or cannot be found and one finds oneself serving beer in the same bar as the years before in order to survive and to try to lower the debts. Besides that it also a potential for society that gets lost if young energetic people with ideas are not given the chance to put them into work or are not able to get themselves in a state of stability from which they could engage in community actions or which gives them the stability to start a family.

There are different approaches of how to cope with crisis situations such as unemployment. Dahlstedt and Herzberg (2012) found that entrepreneurship is increasingly presented as a solution to increase young persons' employability. Entrepreneurs are portrayed as the 'modern heroes' of our time able to solve problems, to think critically and willing to initiate change. But the risks of becoming self-employed and the issue of what happens to the ones that are not capable of facing the challenge of entrepreneurship are also addressed by the authors. Another approach is the one of capacity-building which is presented by Deborah Eade (1997) who states that 'capacity-building is an approach to development' (p.3), which should enable the development of people's given capacities, in the context of their environment. Because this involves a process of observing, understanding, adjusting the measures and observing again, capacity-building is a 'long-term investment [...] and a commitment to various processes through which they [the affected people] can better shape the forces that affect their lives' (idem). To ensure that the people under concern do not get dependent on the measures taken from external forces fostering their independence and a sincere commitment towards reaching this goal is essential. Deborah Eade further states 'a relationship of trust or 'critical

accompaniment' is the only basis upon which to develop relationships and strategies that can both respond to and manage change' (p.33). This approach which is originally applied to agencies working in the field of development can also be applied to the relationship between social services and other state agencies and young unemployed persons because these relationships which focus as well on the development of a certain group and they should ideally help young persons to be independent from social services and to improve their employability. The active involvement of young persons in the process of tackling youth unemployment might be valuable to consider.

### 2.3. Conclusion

In this chapter the theoretical dimensions of employability were discussed. At first it can be stated that employability is relevant to all persons in the labour market and not only to the unemployed. It is made up of individual and external factors and one person's employability is relative to the other persons' employability. It is found that the focus in the recent understanding of employability frames the individual persons as the main actors for increasing their employability. They are framed as being pro-active, taking the initiative for constantly increasing their knowledge and their situation which implicates that individuals are portrayed as the bearers of responsibility in the employability discourse. Entrepreneurship is presented as a possible alternative solution to the unemployment. It fits within the wider context of speculation, risk-taking and uncertainty that is found to be present in the employability discourse. Entrepreneurship was found to be portrayed in a positive manner in the in recent political discourses; however the downsides such as higher levels of insecurity are mentioned by the researchers as well. As for responsibility the focus of individual responsibility is quite different from the one of collective responsibility for employment. These findings will be used to assess the points of view of the European Parliament and the Council to see how they frame these topics. It is expected that entrepreneurship is framed in a positive way in both the Parliament and the Council and that there is a tendency of highlighting the individual's responsibility to obtain and secure employment.

### 3. Methodological approach

In order to do a discourse analysis it has to be clarified at first in which form a discourse is observable and which of the units in which evidence of the discourse can be found will be selected. The outcome of and the choices made in this selection are presented in the first part of this chapter. Having introduced the concept of employability in the previous chapter, it has to be made operational in order to use it in the analysis. To make the concepts measurable two features of it – responsibility and entrepreneurship - are selected based on the readings of research. Then accordingly keywords relating to these two features are selected in order to find the relevant passages for the analysis in the units of observation. Finally a strategy for analyzing the discourse needs to be developed.

#### 3.1. Methods of data collection

To analyze how the views on employability have been developed in the EP and the Council different sources can be consulted. It is possible to look at releases of the committee meetings or of the plenary meetings. It is also possible to analyze the speeches of the EP's president in order to deduce the position of the Parliament. According to the structure of the decision-making process the committees are the place in which the main discussions and exchange on the content of the proposals take place and where amendments are formulated. It is thus the place where the topic is framed discursively. In the case of employment the EMPL-Committee of the Parliament is responsible. The Committee publishes press releases that summarize the discussions that have been taken place and presents the outcomes to the public. The data which will be analyzed in order to detect changes and developments in the position of the EP are the press releases of the Parliament's EMPL-Committee in the period December 2009 till the end of June 2013. This period has been selected because the decision-making powers of the Parliament have been extended for example through the wider use of the co-decision procedure which was renamed 'ordinary procedure' since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force which was in December 2009. The extension of powers and also exemplary the renaming of the procedure show a trend towards a strengthening of the role of the European Parliament among the institutions.

The press releases dating back to April 2010 can be accessed through the Committee's homepage.<sup>1</sup> The press releases issued between December 2009 and April 2010 are available in the archives of the Parliament's homepage.<sup>2</sup> All releases with employment-related topics were pre-selected. Those which related to youth employment or to general employment guidelines, a total number of 26

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/empl/press-releases.html#menuzone>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parlArchives/pressArch/search/topicSearch.do?language=EN&startValue=90>

documents, were selected for the analysis. The largest part of the 26 documents are press releases (24), the two remaining documents are one article and one story on youth employment. All the selected documents are between one and four pages long and are designed to inform the public on current developments in the decision-making of the Parliament in the field of social and employment policies. To observe the potential developments in the position of the Council of the European Union towards entrepreneurship and responsibility, documents of the EPSCO-Council will be analyzed. The EPSCO - Council is selected because it is the organ of the Council of the European Union where topics related to employment and social affairs are discussed. In order to gain an impression of the full range of the framing related to the topics, all press statements of the quarterly Council meetings which relate to youth employment or general employment guidelines are selected. They have been retrieved from the homepage of the EPSCO-Council<sup>3</sup>.

To access the potentially more specific formulations or to obtain further information, the documents which were linked to the press statements were analyzed too if they were of interest for this study, meaning if they were related to youth employment. A total number of 21 documents were selected using this approach. The 14 press releases providing information on the outcomes of the EPSCO meetings vary between 14 and 21 pages. Besides those three Council Conclusions, two notes for lunch discussions, one report and one note for a policy debate are analyzed. The Council Conclusions are policy documents that have a non-binding character and are addressed to the Member States. The selected ones on *Establishing a Youth Guarantee, Towards a job-rich recovery and giving a better chance to Europe's youth* and *Promoting Youth Employment to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives* vary in their lengths between eleven and 15 pages. The notes for the lunch discussions and the policy debate are addressed to the delegations participating in the summits and are documents compromising the main points of the current debate on approximately three and in the case of the note for the policy debate six pages. The *Joint Employment Report* is a 25 pages document containing an analysis of the current labour market situation and recommendations on how to adjust and improve the current policy measures in order to deal with the employment situation. It is addressed to the European Council and was forwarded to the Heads of States ahead of their next meeting.

### 3.2. Methods of discourse analysis

A reframing of unemployment in terms of unemployability has been found in the discourse on youth unemployment. Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004) have stated that the concept of employability is used to reformulate the responsibility of the structural problem of unemployment as an individual problem of a lack of adequate skills and thus shifting the responsibility to act from the public

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press/press-releases/employment,-social-policy,-health-and-consumer-affairs?BID=79&lang=en>

authorities to the individual persons. In order to see how this topic appears in the statements of the two European institutions the concept of responsibility as one feature of employability will be investigated in the analysis of the selected policy documents and press releases. The dimensions of responsibility in this case are individual responsibility in which the persons themselves are mainly framed as the ones responsible for taking care and improving their employment situation (cf. Lahusen, Schulz and Graziano, 2013) and contrasting to that state responsibility in which the state or state agencies are framed as the main actors in the field of youth employability. In order to detect the statements relating to responsibility in the documents the keywords 'provide' and 'support' are being used for searches related to state responsibility. The keywords '(own) choice' and '(re) training' are used for the individual and the keywords 'partnerships', 'stakeholders' and 'shared/mutual' for the shared vision of responsibility. For an overview consult *figure one* in the appendix. Individual employability also includes having the skills that are needed at the moment in the labour market.

In reviewing the research of for example Patricia Weinert (2001) and Deborah Eade (1997) differing approaches for adjusting skills to labour market demands can be found. The capacity approach as promoted by Eade focuses on the demand of the people and helps them to find a placement which suits their needs and in which they can use their skills and capacities. The market-oriented approach described by Patricia Weinert (2001) focuses on the demands of the labour market and requires adjustment of skills to the changing conditions and requirements. This involves re-training and continuous learning. The aim of the analysis concerning this part is to find out in which way the responsibility is framed in the Council and the Parliament because of its implications for the policy recommendations on how to proceed with the challenges raising from youth unemployment. This is done by using the above-mentioned keywords to search for the relevant passages in the policy documents. The passages found are then listed and the statements are then examined in a chronological order at first in order to detect changes in the framings inside the single institutions and then the framings between the institutions are compared.

The second feature which is present in the discourse on youth employment is the topic of entrepreneurship. The skills related to entrepreneurship and employability in the literature are similar (see e.g. Watton et al., 2006). Similar skills that make you more employable for an employer also create the basis for being one's own employer. Entrepreneurship is described as an alternative way to approach unemployment and the ways in which the entrepreneurship is portrayed are varying. As Magnus Dahlstedt and Fredrik Hertzberg (2012) concluded after the analysis of European and Swedish policy documents in the sector of educational policy the entrepreneur is portrayed 'almost like a contemporary hero' (p.6) - risk-taking, innovative, creative and always ready to search for the next challenge and for a way to realize his or her ideas. The focus of the analysis is to find out



how the concept of entrepreneurship is pictured in the policy documents and press statements of the discussions in the Parliament and the Council. Therefore the discussion in relation to entrepreneurship is analyzed using a cluster of positive features connected to it and a set of negative features. To detect statements with a positive perception of entrepreneurship the key words 'active', 'initiative', 'creative' and 'innovative' are used. To find potential statements with negative impressions of entrepreneurship the key words 'risk', 'anxiety/fear', 'investment' and 'stability' are used in connection with the word 'entrepreneurship'. To make this relationship more vivid it is portrayed in *figure two* which can be found in the appendix. The statements that are found using these keywords are ordered chronologically in order to see changes in the framings over time. At first the question of how the discourse has developed over time inside one institution is approached followed by a comparison between the statements of the two institutions. The analysis of the statements is done in a chronological order as a discourse is connected to the time in which it takes place.

### 3.3. Conclusion

As having developed in this chapter in order to answer the sub questions in the analysis the appropriate units of observation need to be chosen, these are press releases of the Council and the Parliament's committee as well as single policy documents referred to in the press statements. The discourse analysis will be executed using the statements of the selected documents that include the keywords that are stated above. These statements will then be order chronologically and will be compared inner-institutional first in order to see whether there has been a development in the framings of the two features of employability. Then the points found to be present in the discourse in the two institutions will be compared and a conclusion is drawn on whether the Parliament and the Council frame the topics in a similar way and if there are differences, they will be described using dimensions presented in this chapter.

#### 4. The employability discourse

In this part of the thesis the aim is to answer the sub questions thus comparing the framings of responsibility and entrepreneurship respectively between the Parliament and the Council. By looking at the statements selected from the policy documents and press releases it is searched for relations of power presented in the statements between for example the government and the young people, as the way in which power is presented in the framings shows the perception of hierarchy in the view of the narrators of the discourse. It is furthermore paid attention to the way in which the statements are presented. The chapter is structured as follows: At first the discourse on responsibility as a feature of employability is presented, followed by a discussion of the role of entrepreneurship in the discourse on youth employability.

##### 4.1. The concept of responsibility in the youth employability discourse

The discourse on responsibility as a feature of employability centers around the question whose responsibility it is that persons are employable. It might be seen as the responsibility of the state to provide for available and qualitative valuable education and training opportunities and to ensure that children and young persons make use of these possibilities. The policy intervention to make education compulsory until the age of at least 15 in all Member States of the European Union is a choice which shows the acceptance of the responsibility of a state and of a society for its next generation and to not let every individual or the single families decide on whether the duration of formal education or whether formal education at all is desirable. On the other hand it is the individual's responsibility of how much effort a person puts into his or her education and what other steps he or she takes to learn new skills and to in turn increase his or her employability. It might also be seen as the responsibility of the family to provide the necessary means for their children's education and to support them and lead them towards finding their place in the world and to a successful integration to the labour market. Whether the development of skills and the fact whether a person is able to find and keep an employment is framed as the responsibility of the state or of the individual and its family has important implications for the type of supportive measures that are provided by the public authorities to unemployed persons. In the following section the framings used in the policy documents of the Council and the EP are presented and the ideas that underlie these framings are discussed.

The European Parliament in its statements argues implicitly for more state engagement in improving the overall labour market situation. As early as April 2010 the European Parliament called on the Council and the Commission to 'establish a European Youth Guarantee which would protect [the young person's] right to be offered a job, apprenticeship, additional training after a maximum period

of 4 months unemployment' (European Parliament, 2010). To state that young persons have a right to be offered an employment or training opportunities shows that the responsibility for increasing the level of employment and the unemployed person's employability is at least partly placed on the policy makers for issuing the relevant legislation, on the business sector for providing the corresponding conditions for offering such placements and on the social services – the employment agencies – for connecting the young persons with the available offers. The responsibility for implementing this recommendation would be at the national governmental level; partnerships between public authorities, social services and corporate partners would be needed to successfully realize such a guarantee. Furthermore the resolution stresses that it is the responsibility of the policy makers to approve provisions that ensure fair and decent incomes for young people in order to become financially independent which is important for the further life course as it contributes to the personal development and strengthens the freedom of the individual.

In February 2012 the Committee goes own step further and issues a resolution asking for the establishment of a Youth Guarantee scheme 'to secure the right of every young person to be offered a job, an apprenticeship or training after four months of unemployment'(European Parliament, 2012e). With this formulation of securing a right, the existence of such a right is already taken for granted and now it is framed as the duty of the policy makers to adopt the corresponding legislation to protect this right – to 'secure' it. In December 2012, the Committee's President Pervenche Berès (S&D, FR) states that the 'youth guarantee is not a job guarantee, but an instrument ensuring that all young EU citizens and legal residents up to 25 years old and recent graduates under 30, receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education or apprenticeship, after four months' (European Parliament, 2012a). It means that the youth guarantee even if it is implemented is not meant to guarantee a job to everyone who is in search of an employment but it attempts to provide possibilities for persons to increase their employability through acquiring new work-related skills and learning how to deal with unknown situations by making new experiences. Another point where the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) emphasize the collective responsibility is when they state that one reason for high youth unemployment is a 'failure to create new jobs' (European Parliament, 2012d). Likewise they argue that 'the position of young people is highly dependent on the overall economic situation' and call on the Member States to design a European Investment Plan to encourage 'inclusive, sustainable and job-rich growth' (European Parliament, 2012b) and thus increase the employability in the French sense - meaning the probability of a person getting employed taking the labour market conditions into account.

The core argument of the Parliament for taking the challenge of tackling youth unemployment collectively is the risk of 'having a lost generation' (European Parliament, 2013d). The 'lost

generation' is framed in economic terms stressing that not being in the labour market for a longer period of time might have negative long term effects on the career path of the persons and it constitutes a loss for society because there has been an investment in the education of the young persons. The social consequences are crucial as well. Self-development and finding one's place in society and in life are to a certain extent connected to having a job or to regular involvement in community actions and economic independence largely depends on having an employment. The EP's President Martin Schulz (S&D, DE) made the crisis responsible for the huge level of youth unemployment and for 'robbing away the future of young Europeans' (European Parliament, 2012c). The policy makers in partnerships with the stakeholders now have the 'shared responsibility' of dealing with the situation. In the first reading on the Youth Guarantee Schemes MEP Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE, FR) goes on step further in saying 'we had to act urgently to avoid sacrificing a whole generation to the crisis' (European Parliament, 2013b).

The Council also acknowledges the role of the crisis in the field of youth employment. It states that 'young people are at risk to be turned into a lost generation' and that there is 'a need to press ahead with specific action' in order to prevent youth unemployment from becoming a permanent feature (Council of the European Union, 2010). The situation of the young persons is framed as a passive one and the state's obligation to act is emphasized. The reasoning to intervene is framed as a consideration of the costs and the benefits of whether to activate the workforce; it is stated that taking action now will avoid high costs and ensure great benefits (cf. Council of the European Union, 2013a). A reduction of the high levels of youth unemployment 'could be achieved by developing an integrated approach similar to the 'youth guarantee' (Council of the European Union, 2011b) 'with the objective that within a few months of leaving school, young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship, or a traineeship' (Council of the European Union, 2012). In comparison to the statements of the Parliament developing a youth guarantee is seen as one possible approach. The formulation 'a few months' is less concrete than the one in the papers of the EP. In March 2013 the Council demands to 'ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education' which is a huge step forward in terms of specification and clarity in comparison with the preceding statements.

The need to work together with stakeholders to improve the situation of youth employment is 'crucial' (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p.2) and the 'mutual responsibilities approach should be the norm' (idem, p.23). The Council speaks of a 'strengthening of cooperation with the social partners, employment services and other labour market stakeholders, and education and training

bodies' (Council of the European Union, 2011b) and a 'greater cooperation between the public and private sector' (Council of the European Union, 2012). The role of stakeholders in the process is to 'equip young people with higher skills' (idem, p.10) which stresses the active role of the state and private actors and the rather passive role of 'the young people' who are being equipped. The ministers in the Council finally state that 'interconnecting the worlds of education and work' (Council of the European Union, 2013b, p.9) is important in order to allow young people to 'develop skills that are relevant to the labour market' (Council of the European Union, 2012, p.8). In the field of education the obligation of the state or other stakeholders to act is highlighted by talking about 'providing' trainings (Council of the European Union, 2010) and possibilities for growth (Council of the European Union, 2011c, p.2) and 'supporting' (Council of the European Union, 2012, p.8) work-related training initiatives. The improvement of the young persons' employability is thus dependent on 'reforms of education and training systems' (Council of the European Union, 2013b, p.5).

In two statements the individual's responsibility is highlighted. In October 2012, the Council states that in order for 'the continuous investment in skills' to pay off for the persons they need the 'knowledge on future skills [which] is particularly important for young people making choices in their education and vocational training' (p.8). In the recommendation on establishing a youth guarantee in March 2013 it says that 'appropriate supportive measures are [...] required, whilst recognizing the young people's individual responsibility in finding a route into economic activity' (p.2). To ensure that the skills that the young persons have acquired also lead to an employment, social services need to 'intervene rapidly, by offering further education, (re) training or activation measures [...] in order to get them back into education, training or the labour market' (Council of the European Union, 2011b). Overall the Council mainly framed measures to increase employability as the duty of the state, such as providing for training and education systems, issuing reforms to adjust the labour market and supporting young people through provision of information. It shortly stated that it is in the end the individuals who have to find and choose their own way.

The claims of connecting education and work and the framing of education as an 'investment' as well as the consideration of the costs and benefits of improving the employment situation for young people relate to what Magnus Dahlstedt and Mekonnen Tesfahuney (2010) identified as linking the values of formation 'to the abstract rationality of the market and the calculus of profit maximization' (p.5). Dahlstedt together with Fredrik Herzberg (2012) stated that 'education has increasingly come to be defined as an individual project, with an increasing emphasis on individual choice, responsibility and equivalence from essentially having been imagined as a social collective project, with the means to redistribute resources and to deal with socio-economic divisions in society' (p.6). The statements mean that by closely linking education and trainings to the demands of the market profit-

maximization becomes the highest value which leads to a certain kind of education. The individualization of education can lead to a greater freedom of choice because individual persons have more possibilities to design their career but this approach is limited to those individuals with the right resources such as networks, certain skills and support by their family. Therefore such individualization can lead to a reinforcement of existing social injustice and leaves those who cannot afford investing themselves in their education for example through taking up unpaid internships with the bitter feeling of having failed to pursue their path. The structural problem of unemployment is so attributed as belonging to the responsibility of the individual which means if one fails to get or maintain an employment this is a personal failure and can lead to individual crises.

A somewhat different approach to the development of the employability and a different outlook on the question of responsibility is presented in the capacity-building theory. Kevin Watkins describes capacity-building as enhancing people's possibilities 'to have a say in shaping critical decisions affecting their lives, through open and accountable political structures [...] and so to be active participants in the process of social change' (1995, p.15 cited in Eade, 1997, p.168). Accordingly for young persons, being involved in the process of finding a work placement and negotiating the terms of agreement would enable them to see themselves in a more active role in society. Seeing young persons as a resource not in terms of profit-maximization but as valuable partners and closely involving them in the process as consultants on how to solve the structural problems and building upon their knowledge and their personal experiences for creating and managing (social) change would allow young persons to be part of the solution (instead) of the problem. This could furthermore open up new perspectives and new possibilities and a tighter voluntary involvement of young persons could build trust and provide for wider social acceptance of measures taken and a broader understanding if problems cannot be tackled immediately because the involvement of the people who are concerned by these measures gives the process higher legitimacy.

#### 4.2. The concept of entrepreneurship in the youth employability discourse

In order to see what differences can be observed in the discourse in terms of the framing of entrepreneurship the statements found in the policy documents are compared. In the literature having 'entrepreneurial skills' is framed as something desirable and a valuable feature for finding and maintaining an employment (cf. Dahlstedt & Herzberg, 2012, p.6). The interest which is followed in the next section is to see whether entrepreneurial education is demanded in relation to the quest of increasing youth employment and where the developments and differences lie in the claims found in the documents of the Parliament and the Council. As in the sections above the framings of the Parliament are presented first, followed by a discussion of the Council's statements and an overall conclusion of the differences found. In the Parliament 'fostering entrepreneurship' (European

Parliament, 2013) was mentioned as one measure to increase youth employability. This is the only time it is referred to entrepreneurship in the Parliament's statements. It might be that discussions relating to entrepreneurship are being held in other committees such as the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Affairs or on Industry, Research and Energy. The Council referred to entrepreneurship more often underlining its potential and value in the process of increasing young person's employability. The Council notifies that self-employment is not an attractive option because it includes a higher risk than being employed and 'the net benefits of self-employment are not perceived as sufficiently greater than other alternatives' (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p.13). Therefore the Ministers conclude that 'policy intervention is needed to 'create an environment in which entrepreneurship can prosper' (idem). Furthermore 'promoting entrepreneurship and supporting young entrepreneurs and self-employment among young people' is one of the proposed measures to 'complement various supply-side measures by making efforts on the demand-side of the labour market' (Council of the European Union, 2011b, p.7). Entrepreneurship should be connected to and promoted via mobility programmes.

The Council furthermore emphasizes the 'fundamental importance' (Council of the European Union, 2013a, p.5) of promoting entrepreneurship for the creation of new jobs. Entrepreneurship is portrayed as an 'alternative way' [idem.] to employment especially in times of crisis. The fostering of entrepreneurship is framed as a way to support young people in what they want in the first place. It is presented as a way of providing opportunities for young people for 'achieving their aspirations' (Council of the European Union, 2013a, p. 5) and 'meeting their aspirations, as well as their creativity and innovation' [idem, p.6]. By framing it this way it is assumed that young persons are creative and innovative and risk-taking ect. and that they want to work in changing environments. The connection between entrepreneurship and education is made several times in the Council documents. To 'improve the entrepreneurship culture in school curricula and higher education' (idem, p.10) is portrayed as a goal which could be achieved through the involvement of private partners. Also the need to 'encourage' schools and other places where education and trainings take place to 'provide continued guidance on entrepreneurship and self-employment for young people' (idem, p.11) is mentioned. The importance of integrating different stakeholders in the process of helping young people to start- up is highlighted.

In line with what the findings of Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2012) entrepreneurship is connected to positive and desirable features such as creativity and innovation. Furthermore its potential for improving the labour market situation is highlighted. The closer connection and cooperation between private partners and the inclusion of education on entrepreneurship in schools leads to what Aihwa Ong (2006) calls 'entrepreneurial pedagogy'. The main feature of entrepreneurial

pedagogy or entrepreneurial education is 'connecting students and their subjectivity to the rationality of the market' (Dahlstedt & Herzberg, 2012, p.18). 'Advocates of entrepreneurial education imagine a teaching with the transformative power to change the individual in a tangible and very positive way. This wide and encompassing change is about nothing less than changing the attitudes or self-conception of the individual' (idem. p.8). As this quote indicates the inclusion of entrepreneurial thinking in the school teaching is a fundamental one as it aims at influencing not only the conduct but the deeper layer of values and beliefs of students. 'The ambition of entrepreneurship education, however, is not only to develop the students but also to liberate them from their previous mentalities and conditions' (idem, p.16). This means that entrepreneurial education introduces a different form of governing the mentalities of the students. A one that links all the thinking to the end of maximizing the profit of one's actions and to the constant strive for being better equipped or adjusted to cope with external changes. A quote of Nikolas Rose highlights the kind of governmentality that is desired by entrepreneurial pedagogy: 'The enterprising self will make an enterprise of its life, seeks to maximize its own human capital, projects itself a future and seeks to shape itself in order to become that which it wishes to be (1998, p. 154 cited in Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012, p.19).

Nikolas Rose, Dahlstedt & Herzberg and others (eg. Lahusen, Schulz & Graziano, 2013) state that the promises of entrepreneurship as well as the more far-reaching promises of higher person freedom in a society which provides the individual with more opportunities in all fields of life including education and employment are only appealing to or promising for the ones who have the capacities to adapt to and develop themselves in line with the existing and future demands. The persons who are unable or unwilling to do so are 'defined as deviant, problematic and in need of retraining' (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012, p. 4). Fostering the spreading of the perception that we are living in a world of ultimate free choices leaves those persons behind who can for different reasons not afford investing in their own employability or taking the risk of becoming self-employed or who are not willing to adjust themselves to changing external conditions. The cited authors thus see the risk of a realignment of social injustice and a strengthening thereof.

Philippe Legrain, a British economist and writer, who is currently chief advisor in analytics to the Commission's President José Manuel Barosso, states that global processes are opening up opportunities for everyone and that 'people everywhere have more choice' (2003, p. 3). He is really positive referring to 'the beauty of globalization' which is able to 'free the people from the tyranny of geography' (idem, p.1). Legrain does not refer to the risks and the uncertainties that this 'freedom' brings along is. Magnus Dahlstedt and Mekonnen Tesfahuney (2010) on the other hand have testified that we are living in 'a speculative age' (p.1) and that this speculative culture has emerged in



the recent decades alongside with the processes of globalization. In their notion of speculation the adjustment of economic conditions, educational systems and even identities to the expected conditions in the future is highlighted. Everything is reframed as an investment where 'life itself [...] is subject to the calculus of risk and risk-taking' (idem). In this culture the 'entrepreneurial self has come to be the ideal citizen subject – at once flexible and docile yet risk-taking' (idem). The approach to education that accompanies these developments and produces 'entrepreneurial selves' is what the authors call 'speculative pedagogy'. It is connected to what the Council has demanded, the interconnection between education and the work life. 'Speculative pedagogy is about learning how to calculate risks, under highly uncertain conditions'; its task is thus to '(re)mould individuals into calculation, risk-taking and maximizing subjects' – into 'gamblers' (all citations Dahlstedt & Tesfahuney, 2010, p.3). As already suggested above, this sort of education and this approach of thought 'recast issues of ethnicity, gender and class in terms of lack of speculative skills and ethos. Structural problems of poverty, unemployment and segregation are thus presented as expressions of the absence of a speculative culture and ethos in the other' (idem, p.4).

#### 4.3. Conclusion

The Council as well as the Parliament stressed the need to enhance youth employability which they see threatened by the crisis. Whereas the Parliament had an urge to support and help young persons who became unemployed through the introduction of a youth guarantee which was called upon by the Parliament three times and in which they introduced the right of the young persons to be offered an opportunity for further learning or a work placement, the Council was reluctant in referring to this measure. Overall both institutions in their statements mention the role of external factors such as the labour market situation, the educational system or exceptional circumstances such as the crisis in determining the employability of young persons. The responsibility to improve the situation was awarded to public as well as private stakeholders with a focus on stakeholders such as social services and employment agencies. In the Parliament the concept of entrepreneurship is not really taken account of neither in a positive nor a negative way. Only one time the need to 'foster' entrepreneurship is mentioned. In the Council entrepreneurship is presented as one possible road to employment which needs special political attention to foster its development as it is not perceived as very attractive because of the higher risks that it involves. In the early statements the consideration of fostering entrepreneurship is discussed as an option. In later statements the claims to politically engage in this topic in order to increase youth employability are formulated more urgently. Whereas the Parliament argues strongly for supporting young unemployed persons the Council is more reluctant and emphasizes the individual responsibility of the persons. Entrepreneurship is mentioned as a solution by the Parliament once but by the Council more explicitly.

## 5. Conclusion

The European Parliament tends to have been the driving force behind one policy proposal which was referred to extensively in the documents of both institutions – the European Youth Guarantee. The introduction of a right to be offered a placement in either further educational programs or in a company is a strong statement for taking the responsibility for its young people as a state and as society. The Parliament not only discursively introduced this right but framed it as an already existing condition which has to be restored by politics. The Council is more reluctant in its statements and frames a Youth Guarantee as a possibility among others and is using slackly expressions such as vague time frames in its statements relating to it. In the analysis of the framings of the topic of entrepreneurship the Parliament only mentions it one time with a positive connotation. The Council refers more often to entrepreneurship and demanding a closer relation to education. It is especially in recent statements stressing its high importance for increasing youth employability. Comparing these findings with the insights of the studies who were mainly analyzing the discourse based on policy documents of the Commission and the European Council, and which have been reviewed and are presented in Chapter two, it can be noticed that the idea of state responsibility for the problem of unemployment can increasingly be found especially in the papers of the European Parliament.

This contrasts to the findings of Lahusen, Schulz and Graziano (2013) who have located a higher responsibility on the individual. It is certainly the case that as work relations have become more fluid, work contracts are not expected to last for a life time and through the opening of many borders the field of choice is largely extended but with it the (perceived) uncertainties have also increased enormously. I agree with Dahlstedt and Tesfahuney that the conditions of life have seemingly become more complex and that this development in which a more entrepreneurial conception of oneself is postulated are providing enormous possibilities for self-realization for those who can cope with uncertainties and are willing to 'live and act in accordance with the rules of the game' (2010, p.3) but might leave many people behind and that existing social injustice is more likely to be reinforced instead of dealt with. The European Parliament seemed to be more open in comparison to the other institutions in its formulations concerning supporting people in need and helping them in the periods in which decisions need to be taken and not only proclaiming that there are numerous possibilities for young persons but also taking into account that there is no purpose of having huge possibilities on paper if this is not reflecting the real life situations in which it seems nearly impossible to find a good-quality employment with a just payment. Therefore building upon this openness young people who want to make their voice heard and act as reporters and adviser on their own situations can address the Parliament.

In terms of procedures the TFEU allows every citizen of the European Union to ‘individually or in association with other citizens or persons [issue a petition to the European Parliament] on a matter which comes within the Union’s fields of activity and which affects him, her or it directly’ (Art. 227). As the Parliament has discursively established a right to be offered a job, people who feel that their right has been violated can use this instrument to draw attention to their point. Furthermore there is the possibility to influence the discourse by contacting the European Economic and Social Committee which represents the interests of employers, employees and the civil society at large. To have a direct contact to the decision-making in the European Parliament one can contact the Brussels or the regional office of an MEP. The findings overall suggest that a change towards a more human-focused instead of market-focused policy in the European discourse is possible and that outcomes might shift in this direction as the EP gains more influence. The establishment of the Youth Guarantee although only in the form of a non-binding recommendation is already a sign in this regard.

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7. Appendix:

Figure one: The dimensions of and the keywords relating to the concept of responsibility

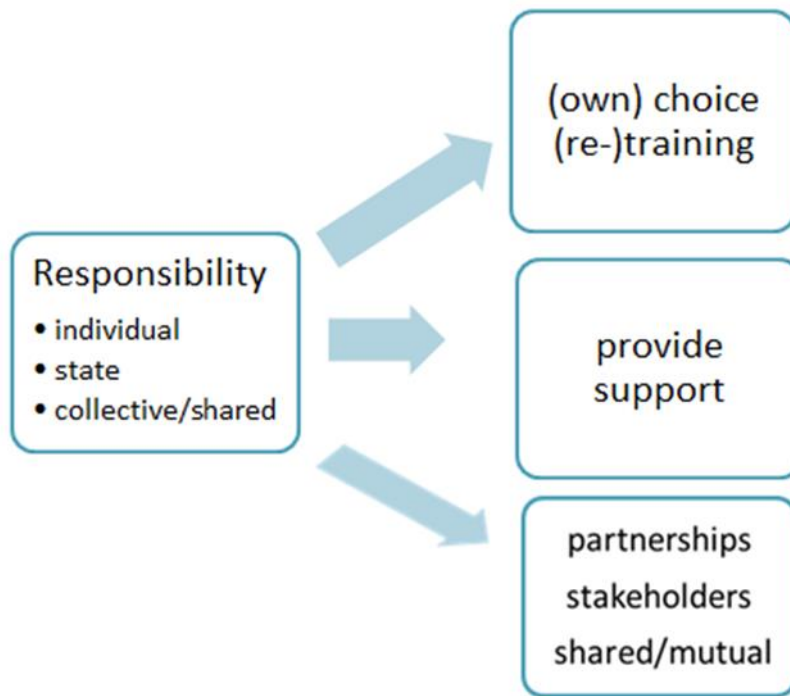


Figure two: The dimensions of and the keywords relating to the concept of entrepreneurship

