

How is Precarious Work Gendered? The Case of Croatian Active Labour

Market Policy

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Abstract

Work traineeship policy (or in its full name on-the-job training without work contract), as a part of active labour market policies, has been introduced in Croatia in 2012 as a way to lower the rising youth unemployment. The aim of this thesis is to show who the users of this policy are and what kind of social consequences the policy has for the work trainees. My main argument is that the work traineeship policy is a type of precarious work that creates underpaid, exploitative positions for the users of the policy. I will show that the users are mostly young women who have higher education with a background in social sciences and humanities. I will support my main argument with a nuanced analysis of precarious characteristic in different types of work traineeships. I will show how characteristics of precarious work vary in intensity across the public and private sector, and informal traineeships. I will show what the latter traineeship is highly precarious on the one hand, and on the other the trainees in those traineeships are more critical towards the policy. Additionally, I will show that the policy reproduces inequalities in social statuses and education amongst young women, prolongs the already long period of youth and creates gendered access to paid labour. I am using the concept of precarious work to analyse the larger changes on the Croatian labour market and show what the possible short- and long-term consequences of the policy might be. I am also complementing the findings of this research by comparing the situation in Croatia with that of the European Union traineeships.

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Introduction

After the 2008 economic crisis there was a rapid increase in youth unemployment in the European Union and beyond. In Croatia, the numbers of youth unemployment were already high before the crisis, and with the impact of the crisis, Croatia is now the third country in the European Union with the highest percentage of youth unemployment. The Croatian government's attempt to decrease the extremely high youth unemployment rate resulted in the implementation of various active labour market policies and programmes in 2012, out of which the most used one is on-the-job training without work contract, which for practical reasons I will refer to as work traineeship. The policy caused a lot of negative criticism as it was believed that it was not a proper employment policy but only a temporary solution to a burning issue. Although seen as a temporary solution, the public discourse around the policy claimed that it can have serious consequences for the users of the policy.

Active labour market policies and programmes have been extensively analyzed recently. Both the analyses that do focus on gender differences in active labour market policies and the ones that focus on young people in general, are looking at the outcomes or the success of the policies; whether or not female and male participants of those policies have the same success rate in finding employment, staying employed or being self-employed (Mansson and Delander, 2011; Hämäläinen and Ollikainen, 2004; Caliendo, Künn and Schmidl, 2011; Bergemann and van den Berg, 2006). All the above mentioned analyses are missing two crucial things. The first one is that the studies mentioned either focus on youth or on gender differences, but never on gender differences amongst young people. The second thing is that they are focusing on the outcomes of the policies and not the policies themselves. In this thesis, I will fill the gap in the research on active labour market policies by looking at the policy itself and the gender differences that are an inherent part of the policy.

With the rise of youth unemployment there has also been a rise in precarious work in Croatia, such as fixed-term employment, outsourcing, part-time employment etc. The rise of precarious work is not limited to Croatia, it is also present in the labour markets of various Global North countries, and has recently been intensively researched in academic papers. Precarious work has been analyzed in various employment sectors and types of employment, from the service sector (Isigicok and Emirgil, 2009), science, academic and research institutions (Goriup, 2012), contemporary strip trade (Fogel and Quinlan, 2011), part-time employment (Rose, Hewitt, and Baxter, 2011), to the impact of unions (Jackson, 2004) just to mention a few. Because of the rise in precarious jobs major institutions such as the International Labour Organization (2011) have published policies and regulations in order to combat precarious employment. The rise of the number of people working in precarious jobs has even brought on discussion whether those workers are a class for themselves (Standing, 2011; Frase, 2013). What has not been extensively researched is precarious work amongst young people and in active labour market policies and this is exactly what I will be doing in this thesis by focusing on Croatia. The Croatian context of the work traineeship policy is relevant as it is one of the countries in the European Union with the highest rate of youth unemployment. I have decided to focus on the work traineeship policy as is the most used employment policy by young people, and therefore the policy itself, the users and the social consequences have to be analyzed.

I am arguing that because of the rise and spread of non-standard employment in Croatia, a certain part of the population is being affected by the changes this type of employment brings. The rise and spread of non-standard employment can be seen in the work traineeship policy, as I am arguing that the policy creates precarious jobs. The precariousness of work traineeship policy mainly affects young women as they are the ones usually doing work traineeships. The dominance of young women in traineeships means that the social consequences that come

from work traineeships such as reproduction of social inequalities, prolonged youth and gendered access to paid labour, will have a greater influence on them than on any other category of (young) people. My research focuses on the analysis of who the work trainees are, how is work traineeship policy a type of precarious work, and what the social consequences of work traineeships are for the main users of the policy, namely young women.

My methodology consists of the analysis of policy papers including recommendations by the European Commission, and policy papers surrounding the work traineeship. I have also analyzed statistics on work trainees and university graduates. Additionally, I have interviewed thirteen young people who are/were work trainees in order to see how work traineeships are a type of precarious work on a day-to-day basis.

This research consists of three research-based and in the first chapter I will contextualize the topic of Croatian active labour market policy by explaining the influence of the 2008 economic crisis on youth unemployment, introducing the work traineeship policy, and analysing who the users of that policy are and what is the reason behind it. Keeping in mind who the users are, I will show in the second research-based chapter the precarious nature of the work traineeship policy and how precariousness varies amongst different types of work traineeships. In the last chapter I will show what the social consequences of work traineeships are, focusing on social inequalities, prolonged youth, and gendered access to paid labour.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Precarious Work

Precarious work is the main concept that I am using and the one I am basing my argument on. I am localising precarious work in Croatia in the work traineeship, the active labour market policy. In this overview of the theoretical framework that I will be using, I will focus mainly on the characteristics of precarious work and show the main gaps that my research will address.

Precarious work is a term introduced by European commentators to be used as an alternative to the former category of 'nonstandard employment' (NSE), which includes part-time and over-time work, double shifts and temporary positions in all sectors of the labour market (Albin, 2012: 1; Young, 2010: 74). 'Nonstandard employment' is defined as anything different from the standard employment relations (Young, 2010: 74), i.e. different from a full-time continuous employment, where the worker has one employer and is under their supervision, and has access to benefits and entitlements (Albin, 2012: 3). Precarious work is also seen as an antonym of decent work which entails "a wage that enables workers to support their household, basic social security protection, contractual stability, protection from unjustified termination of employment, and effective access to freedom of association and collective bargaining" (International Labour Organization, 2011: 2). The characteristics of precarious work vary, but most authors agree that it entails: limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages, health consequences for workers, and low-productivity jobs with little access to training or career development opportunities (Albin, 2012; Young, 2012; Fredman, 2004). Precarious work is defined as "work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements" (Vosko, 2006 in Albin, 2012: 3). I will use those characteristics of precarious

work to show how they vary according to different types of work traineeships, and how they also differ in strength in various types of traineeships.

The analysis of precarious work has undergone different stages. Young (2010) explains how the research started with the focus on analysing nonstandard employment and defining it as anything that is different from standard employment relations. Then it shifted towards the levels of precarity across nonstandard employment. Variations to this topic have been added by moving the focus of the analyses from specific precarious work settings (such as part-time, contract, temporary work) towards analysing personal characteristics of the worker and job quality (Young, 2010: 74-75). The research has also become sensitive to gender, race, migration, the elderly and various other groups that are seen as marginal in the economy. This has led to the multifacetedness of the concept of precarious work, which is now seen as shaped by relationships between employment status, form of employment, dimensions of labour market insecurity, social context and social location (Albin, 2012: 3). In the chapter „Who Enters the Precariat?“ Guy Standing (2011) claims that everyone could at some point in their life have a precarious existence, but there are certain groups that are more likely to be a part of the precariat than others (such as women, young people, ethnic minorities, etc.). Standing also claims that there are certain processes that are making the entrance into precariat more likely, and those that are crucial for my argument are feminization of labour; the fall in wages and incomes of young people which amongst others, lowers their bargaining position in access to jobs; commodification of education; the necessity of internships; and the exploitation of interns.

Standing's argument that everyone can at some point in their life be in precarious work and that some of the processes that make that statement possible are gendered, provides me with the possibility for locating my research of Croatian active labour market policy within the concept of precarious work, and to show in what ways is this policy in theory and in practice

gendered. Because precarious work is so broadly defined and can be localized in various contexts, as many others have done it (Escott, 2012; Illigicok and Emirgil, 2009), my contribution to the field of precarious work is in seeing what characteristics of precarious work are found in work traineeship policy and how they differ in intensity in various types of work traineeships. I will show that there are certain characteristics that are the same in all types of work traineeships such as job insecurity and mismatch between knowledge that the trainees have acquired prior to the traineeship and skills they have gained during the traineeship. The same characteristics, although present in every traineeship, vary in intensity across different kinds of work traineeships. Job insecurity is the core of work traineeships, while mismatch between knowledge and skills, lack of mobility, limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, vary across different types of work traineeship.

There are authors who have come close to the analysis of how precarious work influences young women, but they are either focusing on a specific case study that cannot be generalized and used as a comparison to Croatia (such as Escott's (2012) analysis of the unemployment of young women in disadvantaged communities in England), or are using the category of young women just as a part of their observations and arguments, as an interesting observation they have noticed in their research (such as Madnen, Molina, Møller and Lozano's article (2013), Reeskens and Oorschot's (2012), and Vandaele's (2013)). This comes as no surprise, since the more general topic on young women and the labour market (or the genderedness of the youth labour market) is a fairly unexplored field in academia. Young women are not only marginalised in the labour market, but also in academic researches.

Because of the lack of literature that analyses young women in precarious work, I will present issues from various articles that can be applied to my research. None of these researches were specifically about young women, but about either young workers or women in general.

Nevertheless, the category of young women did come up in their analysis, but only when it stood out in results from other categories.

Precarious and exploitative jobs influence the private life of a (young) worker. For my argument it is important to see how precarious work influences young people's short-term and long-term future. This issue is vital because it can be an indicator of how precarious internships are gendered; it can show the different ways precarious work influences young men's and women's lives. Iligicok and Emirgil (2009) have analysed how the precariousness influences the service sector employees in Turkey. One of their findings is that women were more sensitive about the irregularity of jobs they were doing than men. Also, Iligicok and Emirgil argue that precarious employment has an immense influence on everyday lives. One of the most important appearances of precarious employment among the employees was the uncertainty when it comes to the future. Precarious work influences both long-term plans (becoming a parent, getting married, buying a house) as well as short-term daily life practices (leisure time activities). Their study has shown that young workers, especially young women, are more sensitive to these issues than older workers. Their research on precarious work is useful as they have shown not only the gendered differences among precarious workers, but have also in their results analysed young people as a separate category. In my last chapter, I will explain what kind of short-term and long-term consequences work traineeships as a type of precarious work create for young women.

One of the central characteristics of precarious work is job insecurity. Khattab and Fenton (2009) analyze employment and non-work as determinants of life satisfaction for young people. They argue that the effect of demoralizing work and fragmentation, with risks of unemployment and insecurity (which are characteristics of precarious work, although they do not define it as such), is balanced and/or cancelled out by having a sense of control over life and having close association between social relations (such as living with a partner) and life

satisfaction (2009: 24). Ramarajan and Reid (2013) also touch upon identities external to the workplace and argue that because of the declining job stability, rising workforce diversity and the distribution of communication technologies, the difference between work and nonwork life is blurred. They are analysing how people navigate the pressure that is put on their nonwork identity. I will show how the fact that work traineeships are exploitative and precarious influences the private and work life, both short- and long-term. Work trainees are continuing to be financially dependent on their families and are postponing starting their own families. In their work life, their access to paid work is different from the other young people with higher education who do not have a degree in social sciences or humanities.

Angela McRobbie (2011) looks at the participation of women in the rise of post-Fordist regime and what roles young women play in the urban-based culture industries. The success of her article lies in the ability to clearly identify who the new workers in precarious jobs are, and the fact that she takes into consideration gender, class, ethnicity, and race. She argues that the precarious workers are educated young women that are in most cases graduates; they have benefited from the second-wave feminism, they are young, have currently no children or are intentionally delaying to have children because of the nature of their employment; they enjoy their work because they constantly change their employment; they are mostly white; they come from education that has in the last years seen a rise in the number of young women; and lastly these young women are more socially diverse which changes their class composition but there still exist certain advantages (such as social capital) that place some young women above others (2011: 72). McRobbie is one of the few authors who brings in the issue of class into the analysis of the gendered precariat, and the importance of her article lies in the fact that she analyses the diversity not only amongst precarious workers generally, but also amongst young female precarious workers. I will analyse that diversity amongst work trainees and show that although there is anxiety and the feeling of being undervalued amongst young

female work trainees because of the exploitative nature of work traineeships, there is also a large number of women who do not have the means to enter the world of work traineeships and improve their economic, social and cultural capital. The difference between young women who can and cannot do work traineeships produces a struggle and reproduces social inequalities solely amongst young women.

1.2 Labour Market Segmentation

The second concept that I am basing my research on is the concept of labour market segmentation. Doeringer and Piore expanded the idea of a dual labour market and linked it to a dual industrial structure to explain why black men do not succeed in the United State's labour market (Peterson and Lewis, 1999: 506). They have argued that the labour market is segmented to the partial markets, and the segmentation is determined by the influence of various social, economic and political factors (Martinkus, Stoskus, and Berzinskiene, 2009: 42). The concept of labour market segmentation is rooted in the belief that there are different labour markets on the horizontal level where workers operate in different working conditions, promotional opportunities, wages, and market institutions (Reich, Gordon, Edwards, 1973: 359). There are various types of segmented labour markets that sometimes cannot be fully distinguished from one another and often work together to produce the complex labour market conditions. Those types of segmented labour markets include segmentation into primary and secondary markets, segmentation within the primary sector, segmentation by race, and segmentation by gender (Reich et al., 1973). I am using the first type of segmentation, where the primary labour market is characterized by increasing payment, good working conditions, position stability, career possibilities, obeying the rules in organizing the usage of labour force, wages are relatively high, skills are often acquired on the job, and workers are paid more as they gain education, skills and seniority (Martinkus et al., 2009; Reich et al., 1973; Peterson and Lewis, 1999). Secondary labour market is specified by low payment and profit,

worse working conditions, job insecurity, big turnover and temporary unemployment periods, and low career possibilities (Martinkus et al., 2009). Secondary labour markets are dead-end and poorly paid regardless of an individual's qualification or tenure, and are often filled with minority workers, women, and youth (Reich et al., 1973; Peterson and Lewis, 1999).

I will be using the concept of labour market segmentation alongside the concept of the precariat as defined by Guy Standing. I will use the notion of precariat as a distinctive socio-economic group, a class-in-the-making (Standing, 2011) that cuts across gender, racial, ethnic, class, age and other divides. I am arguing that the Croatian labour market is segmented, and that work traineeships are a part of the secondary labour market, but that there is a difference in precarious workers who are a part of that market. As one's position in the precariat is seen as fluid, Standing (2011: 59) argues that everybody can enter the precariat and in each group that enters the precariat there are 'grinners' who welcome precarious jobs, are usually temporary doing precarious jobs, and it has no long-term consequences for them, and 'groaners' who are forced to take precarious jobs as there are no alternatives. In this research, I am placing work trainees in the category of 'groaners' or precarious workers who are a part of the secondary labour market. By combining the precariat with labour market segmentation I am using a more nuanced theoretical framework in order to analyse work traineeships.

2. Methodology

This chapter presents the sample and the methods I have used in this research. I have conducted 13 interviews during April 2014 in Zagreb, Croatia. In order to find interviewees, I have used the snowball method. My sample consists of young people, which in Croatia is differently defined throughout policy papers, but I have used the definition of the Croatian National Programme for Youth from 2009 to 2013 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 2009) where it is defined that the category of youth encompasses people from the age of 15 until 30. The fact that youth as an age group is differently defined throughout policy paper poses a problem, especially for consistency of the statistics that I have used. Croatian official statistics have five age groups: 24 and less, 25-29, 30-49, 50-54, 55 and more. In order to analyse the number of young people in work traineeships I had to combine two age groups, 24 and less and 25-29, therefore not being able to include people who are 30 years old. This means that one of my interviewees who was 30 when she started her work traineeship is not represented in the statistics that I am using for this research. I took into consideration the interviewees' age when they were doing their traineeships, and not their current age. The average age of my interviewees at the time when they were doing work traineeship is 25.8. The youngest interviewee was 23 and the oldest was 30 when they were doing their work traineeships. The fact that the average age of my interviewee when they were doing work traineeship is 25,8 goes along with their educational background (they all have master degrees) and with the fact that a lot of them struggled with finding a job, which then prolonged their entrance into the labour market.

Aside from the age of my interviewees, they are all graduates either from social sciences or humanities. I distinctly wanted to use graduates from only those educational tracks, because interviewing graduates from other educational tracks (such as engineering) would require a different approach to the topic. It would then be a comparison between graduates from social

sciences and humanities who are the main targets of work traineeship policy, and engineering graduates who have other employment possibilities. In the chapter three where I explain how the precariousness of work traineeship influences young women and reinforces social inequalities, I have limited my statement and arguments solely on graduates from social sciences and humanities. All of the interviewees are Masters of Arts graduates, and three of them have finished their MA programme abroad. Because I have used the snowball method, it was hard to find graduates from humanities, therefore most of my interviewees are social science graduates.

Before I have started the interviewing process, I wanted to have about the same number of male and female interviewees. Unfortunately it was hard to find people who fit my sample and who were willing to be interviewed, and I could not afford to retrieve the call for the interview after someone had accepted, just because of their gender. Out of all my interviewees, three are male and ten are female, making female interviewees the overwhelming majority (77%). This is not surprising since this percentage is close to the percentages of traineeships in Croatia and in the European Union's institutions which confirms the gender division in traineeships. More on this issue will be explained in the first chapter.

When thinking about my interview sample I did not have specific criteria about having a certain number of people from the public and private sector. During the analysis of the interviews I have noticed that there is a difference between the characteristics of precarious work between the public and the private sector, therefore I have decided to include the differentiation between the sectors where my interviewees had their traineeships. The number of people who are/were work trainees in the public sector is 7 (or 53.8%), and the number of people who are/were work trainees in the private sector is 6 (or 46.2%). In the fourth chapter I am making another distinction between the work traineeship, and it is whether or not the

traineeships are legal. Work trainees that are/were doing their traineeship legally make up for 84.5% of all the interviewees (or 11 of them), and there are 15.4% of my interviewees who are currently doing their traineeship informally (or 2 of them).

The interviews were conducted in Croatian, so all quotes have been translated by the author. The quotes were edited in order to be more reader-friendly and information about the name of their workplace was replaced by a more general classification, such as private or public sector, in order to secure anonymity for my interviewees. For the same reason, I have given them different names. The anonymity was of high importance for quite a few interviewees, because of the fear that their employers would find out, especially in cases when the process of getting a traineeship was quite lengthy (a year or more) and when they were doing their traineeship informally. The reason for accepting to do the interviews was because of belonging to the same age group and having similar educational background as the author, and also because most of them were pleased to hear that someone is addressing and analysing the issue of work traineeships.

I have decided to interview only work trainees that are doing their traineeships in Zagreb because as it has the most users of the policy, it was easier to find interviewees. Additionally, there is a difference between work traineeships in larger and smaller cities. It is believed that in the smaller cities there is more manipulation of the active labour market policy, the employers are taking on trainees and making them work only for a few hours a day or not giving them any tasks during the day. Analysing traineeships in smaller cities poses the question of preferential treatment when acquiring the traineeships, and of course, even more limited options for employment than in larger cities. I do believe that my research cannot therefore be generalized on all work traineeships, just on those in larger cities.

I did however want interviewees with diverse backgrounds because on the one hand I wanted to see if people who were born in Zagreb acknowledge that they are in a privileged situation, meaning that they are able to do work traineeships as they have a housing solution (living with their parents) and can be financially dependent on their parents. On the other hand I wanted to find out how people who are not from Zagreb see the privileges of being able to do their traineeships in Zagreb, while their friends and acquaintances from back home might not have the financial support of their families to do a work traineeship, especially if it means moving to another city. In this research 6 interviewees are from Zagreb (46.1%), and 7 are not (53.9%). The interviewees that are not from Zagreb are geographically very diverse, and cover almost all regional units. Their differences in living conditions were also taken in consideration. Three interviewees live with their parents and the other ten either with their friends, partners or spouses. Their living condition is important for and will be discussed in chapter three.

I have used statistics from the Croatian national statistics service, Eurostat, and from an initiative called “Ready for Work” that had received the numbers in a private correspondence with the Ministry of Labour and Pension System. As for the interviews, they were qualitative and semi-structured, and lasted around one hour. When analysing interviews, I have focused on the reoccurring themes that were present in most interviews.

Besides interviews and statistics, I have also analyzed policy papers on traineeships, precarious work and internships, in order to see how the European Union and the International Labour Organisation perceive the before mentioned forms of non-standard employment and what possible consequences do they predict.

3. How is Work Traineeship Gendered?

Traineeships are a common way of enabling young people to have work experience in the global North. Since 2012, that kind of employment has emerged within the Croatian active labour market policies in the form of work traineeships. Firstly, I will give an overview of the concept of traineeships, and subsequently internships. Secondly, I will contextualise the emergence of this policy and how it is connected to the 2008 economic crisis, as well as the impact of the said crisis on youth unemployment in Croatia. My main argument for this chapter is that the work traineeship policy, which is supposed to tackle the problem of rising youth unemployment, is mostly used by young women and is a result of the policy targeting specific educational tracks. I will support this claim with the analysis of official statistics on work trainees, with the focus on gender differences amongst work trainees, and gender differences between various educational tracks. The importance of this chapter lies in showing how the employment policy that is meant to encompass all unemployed is in fact used by a specific group of unemployed. In order to show in the next chapters different ways this policy is a type of precarious work and what social inequalities it reproduces, it is vital to have in mind who the trainees actually are.

3.1 Youth Unemployment

Work traineeship as a Croatian active labour market policy came about as a response to the negative impact the 2008 economic crisis had on the labour market which resulted in rising unemployment and especially youth unemployment. The rise of youth unemployment is not specific to Croatia; it is a major concern throughout the European Union, especially after the 2008 economic crisis. Looking at the economic crisis on the macro level, researchers explain how the crisis has had an impact on the South East European region¹. Sen and Altay (2012) argue that because of the high level of openness of their economic and financial systems and

¹ Which includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia

because they are integrated in the global economy via trade, foreign direct investment, and remittances, the crisis has impacted countries in the SEE region through contagion². Focusing on the micro level, Leschke and Jepsen (2012) argue that young workers were affected by the crisis in the first wave of the crisis (2008) and that their situation has worsened in the second wave (2010). As a direct consequence of the crisis, Croatia's youth unemployment rate has gone up. In the year 2008, when the crisis had just started and did not yet affect Croatia, the youth unemployment rate was 21.9% (Eurostat). Even in the first wave of the crisis, the rising unemployment affected mostly young people, similar to a decade ago when a crisis affected the Croatian labour market and youth unemployment rate increased more than unemployment rates for any other age group (Matković, 2009: 13). In the first wave the biggest increase in unemployment for young people without work experience was for those who had finished higher education (in 2009 the unemployment of those young people increased by 22.8%) (Matković, 2009: 15). The issue of rising unemployment amongst young people with higher education is emerging in other countries as well (International Labour Organization, 2011b: 10). In 2012 the rate of youth unemployment rose to 43%, and in February 2014 it was at 49.0%, placing Croatia right behind Greece and Spain (Eurostat).³

The percentages presented are at first glance gender blind, since there is almost the same number of young women unemployed as there are young men. However, when looking at youth employment, the percentage of employed young men is 31.9%, while for women it is only 25.7% (Eurostat). What the statistics do not show is that young women face multiple forms of discrimination on the labour market, because of their gender and age. More specifically, their presupposed gender roles are a constant obstacle when trying to find permanent employment. Questions about marital status and future plans concerning children,

² Contagion is defined as the "transmission of a crisis to a country because of its real and financial interdependence with countries already suffering from a crisis". (Fratzscher, 2000 in: Sen and Altay, 2012: 247)

³ These percentages include young people up to 25 years.

although illegal, are posed during job interviews and sometimes included in the employment contracts. Bušić Crnković et al. (2012) have researched the position of young people in the labour market, and have shown that 61% of young women have been in situations where they were discriminated against on the basis of their presupposed gender roles. As much as 70% of young women were asked questions on children, family planning and marital status during job interviews, while 42% of young men were asked the same questions. Compared to 30% of young women who were directly denied the employment during the selection procedure because of their gender, 14% young men were discriminated on the same basis (2012: 39-40). These percentages show in which ways young women are discriminated on the labour market which is something that the official statistics on youth unemployment do not show.

The rise of youth unemployment and the lack of available job positions have put the problem of youth employment finally in the public discussion, after a long period of not discussing the problem and not offering solutions to reduce unemployment. Bušić Crnković et al. (2012) claim that young people, who were most concerned about the problem of youth unemployment and most affected by the youth employment policies, were excluded from the debates amongst policy-makers on how to decrease youth unemployment. Bušić Crnković et al. (2012) explain how the media, during the second wave of the crisis, had an important role in bringing in the problem of youth unemployment into the public debate and raising public awareness on this issue. The media might have raised awareness, but the way in which they managed to do that was problematic. Bušić Crnković et al. (2012) claim that the media portrayed young people either as “silent witnesses” or as powerless victims of a deep socio-economic crisis, without proposing any solutions to the problem of youth unemployment or giving hope to unemployed youth.

3.2 Traineeships and the Larger Context

Before analysing the work traineeship as a specific Croatian government's active labour market policy, it is necessary to explain what traineeships are, and what the difference between them and internships is. There is an overlap between the definitions of traineeships and internships *de jure*, but *de facto* they are often used interchangeably, meaning that for my research I will use the research that has been done on both terms. The European Commission also highlights this issue, and says that there often arises confusion about the terms traineeships, internships, and apprenticeships (European Commission, 2012: 4), meaning that these terms tend to be used interchangeably, without clear distinctions between them.⁴ The second reason for using research done on internships is because there is a lack of research done on traineeships.

The European Commission defines traineeship as “a work practice including an educational component (either as part of a study curriculum or not) which is limited in time. The purpose of these traineeships is to help the trainee's education to work transition by providing the practical experience, knowledge and skills that complete his/her theoretical education,” (European Commission, 2012: 4). The reason that I have chosen a definition by the European Commission is because work traineeship as an employment policy is part of the Youth Guarantee, European Union's youth employment strategy. Since there is no official definition of internship by the European Commission, I will use the criteria for unpaid internship from the Fact Sheet which was released in 2010 by the Department of Labour in the United States. Durrant (2013) explains that in the Fact Sheet an unpaid internship is legal when it is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment. The internship experience has to benefit the intern; the intern cannot displace regular employees, but has to work under close supervision of existing staff. The employer who provides the training cannot derive

⁴ Even the Eurobarometer research says that “traineeships are also known as internships or “stages”” (European Commission, 2013: 3), which makes their analysis problematic if analysing only traineeships or internships.

immediate advantage from the activities of the intern. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job after the conclusion of the internship, and the employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time of the internship (2013: 175-176). This is a definition that includes only unpaid internships, but can be extended to paid internships if one disregards the last characteristic, and presumes that the intern in that case has more responsibility and performs more complex tasks.

3.3 Work Traineeship in Croatia

Work traineeship is a fairly new concept of employment in Croatia. It was implemented in 2011 when it was limited to people who had to have work experience in order to pass either the Master Craftsman Exam (an exam that comes after apprenticeships) or the State Qualifying Exam (intended for teachers or state officials). After the increase in youth unemployment because of the 2008 economic crisis, the Croatian government had to come up with a policy that would at least for the time being bring down youth unemployment. The problem was that young people were unable to acquire work experience because they could not get a first job (or a starting position), and they could not get their first job because they had no work experience. This situation the International Labour Organization calls the “Catch 22” and explains how other countries have introduced similar programs (such as summer jobs, part-time employment, training programmes) as one of the ways how to increase the employability of young people in order to facilitate the school-to-work transition (2011b: 14). In 2012 the Croatian government decided to expand the eligible beneficiaries of the work traineeship policy to unemployed young people up to the age of 29 who have a maximum of one year of professional work experience. In the same year the length of the work traineeship was extended and the age limit was abolished (Levačić and Ostojić, 2014: 6). The fact that there is no age limit for this employment policy shows that these precarious job positions are not solely for young people, but are expanding towards the rest of the labour market,

encompassing the rest of the working force, and making the inclusion of marginalized unemployed people impossible (for example those who have lower socio-economic status, as I will show in the fifth chapter).

An important change was made to the policy in 2013 when it was decided that the financial compensation for transportation costs be included in work traineeships. This was a way to make the policy more inclusive towards people who might not live near their workplace, and to improve the mobility of young people. The monthly wage that trainees receive is 1600 Kuna (or 210 Euro), which is below the Croatian minimum wage of 3017 Kuna (or 397 Euro) for 2014 (L.T.J., 2013). The wage, the additional costs for the transportation and social benefits (that include basic health and pension insurance) are all paid by the state. In other words, the employer does not have to pay anything for the trainee, which makes the work traineeship a lucrative option for the employer and even makes it possible to replace paid workers with trainees (which is one of the issues the European Commission also sees as a growing concern when it comes to traineeships generally (European Commission, 2013b: 2)). The other danger of the employer not having to pay their trainee is that it can result in offering only traineeship positions although it would be possible to offer full-time employment instead. As many of my interviewees have noticed, the majority of jobs that are currently offered are work traineeships, which then forces young people to accept those positions as they have no other options. Buković claims that young people have to lower the bar when applying for employment, because of future's uncertainty and the possibility that when young people get older they will still be without work experience (2012: 75). Another possible consequence of the work traineeships is discussed in Levačić and Ostojić's article (2014). They claim that the future employers might exploit former work trainees and pay them less than they would have if they were not trainees, because the trainees have gotten used to

working for less money. This kind of behaviour by the employers could in the long-term decrease former trainees' labour costs and the value of labour.

The most recent problem with work traineeship is the lack in funding for employment policies. Since November 5th 2013, most of the applications for work traineeship funding sent by the employer have not been approved because of the lack of funds. Applications are slowly being approved, but many are still on hold. Because there is still no clear solution for the funding and therefore there is no clear future for the entire policy, there are very few calls for work trainees. The lowest number of work trainees for the year 2013 was in April when there were 576 work trainees, and in the same month of 2014 there were only 62 new work trainees (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, personal communication, 22 May 2014). The lack of funding poses many problems, such as what to do with all the people who have been assigned positions as work trainees, but are still waiting for the final approval by the employment office. They are still registered as unemployed although they have been selected by the employer for the position of work trainees, and their only option is to wait for the approval. The pause in work traineeships has an effect on everyone who was thinking of applying, since there have been almost no calls for work traineeships for the past couple of months. Finally, it is not certain if there are any positions for which young people can apply, since before the pause almost all calls for employment were for work traineeships, and those that were for permanent employment required at least one year of work experience. Now inexperienced young people cannot apply to regular starting positions because there are none, they cannot apply to other non-starting positions that require experience because they have none, and they cannot apply to work traineeships because almost none are being offered.

3.4 Croatian Work Trainees

Work trainees are in many ways a homogenous group. The wording of the policy implies that it is intended for all inexperienced young people, and by removing the age limit it was

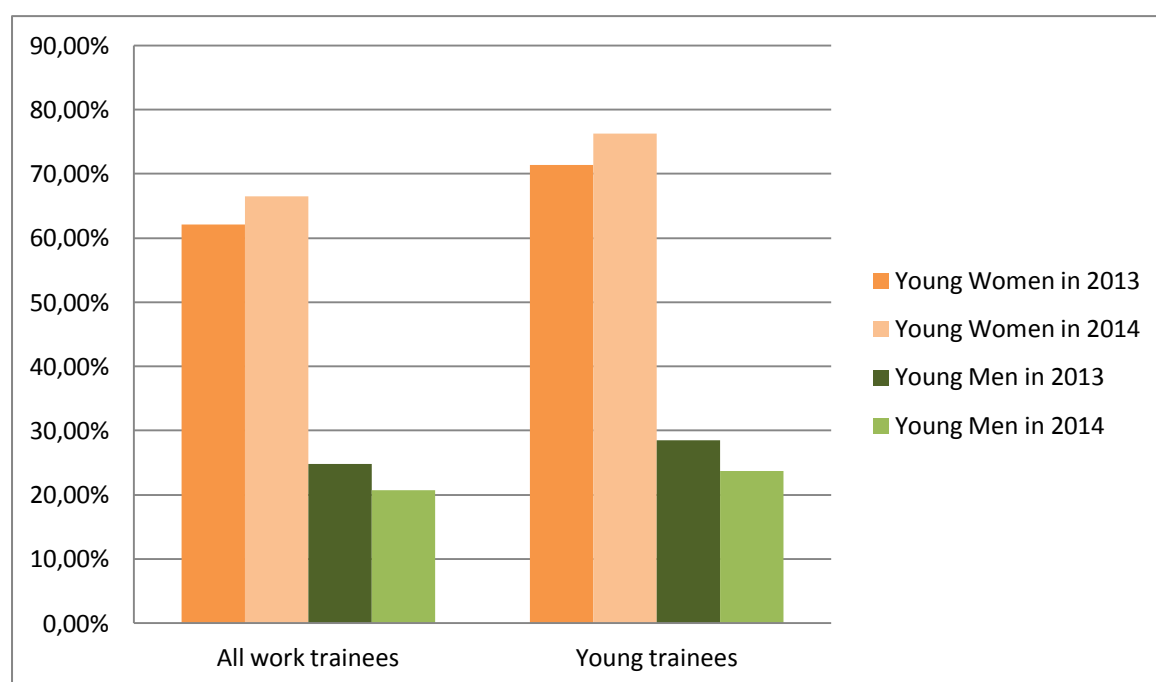
expanded to all unemployed citizens who have no professional experience. The reality is that work trainees are in most cases young women who have higher education with relatively high economic, social and cultural capital. The latter will be explained in more detail in the fifth chapter, but for now I will focus on the fact that mostly young women are doing the work traineeships. Figure 1 shows young women and men as a percentage of all work trainees and all young work trainees. Their numbers are analysed for the year 2013 and for the four months available in 2014 (January-April) and come from the statistics I have received from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (personal communication, 22 May 2014). I have chosen these two time periods because the policy had seen little changes in 2013 and the policy's provisions are still valid for the year 2014. It is also the year when the policy really set its roots and has seen a significant rise since in trainees. In 2012 there were 9.583 work trainees (Barić, 2012), compared to the year 2013 when the number was 14.446. The number of work trainees will certainly not increase in the year 2014 because of the lack of funding, as described in the section before.

There are far more women than men amongst all work trainees and young work trainees, and it seems that their numbers continue to rise. In 2013 there were 62.1% of women amongst all work trainees (including all working ages and both genders) and in 2014 there was a rise to 66.5%. In the category of solely young work trainees (including both genders from the ages 15 to 29), young women comprised as much as 71.4% and in 2014 their numbers have increased and are now 76.3%. The latter number is the most relevant since this policy was primarily intended to combat youth unemployment and because of the fact that I am focusing on young people in this research.

For the reason mentioned in the previous section, the number of newly included trainees in the year 2014 has significantly dropped, from 4915 work trainees between the period from January to April in 2013, to 1954 work trainees for the same period a year later. When the

overall number of trainees drops, the percentage of young women is higher. Although there are significantly less work trainees in 2014 than in 2013, young women had the highest percentage in 2014 in both analyzed categories for the time periods of 2013 and 2014. The highest percentage of young women amongst all work trainees is 69.4% in April, and amongst young people is 79.4% in January.

Figure 1 – Gender difference amongst work trainees



Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, personal communication, 22 May 2014.

The fact that there are more young women doing work traineeships has a myriad of consequences for them. I will briefly outline the consequences which will be explained in more detail in the fifth chapter. Young women with higher education have to be in precarious work traineeships a whole year before starting regular employment, and because of this prolonged period of school-to-work transition there is a gendered access to paid labour. Their participation in the policy also prolongs their already extended youth.

3.5 Broader Context of Work Trainees

Work traineeships can be compared to traineeships in the European Union's institutions, because they are both precarious in the sense that they are underpaid and there is no guarantee of employment after the traineeship ends. For this subchapter it is important to look at another similarity between those two traineeships, and that is that the ones doing the traineeships are mostly young women.

According to European Commission's (2010) press release that focuses on the period between 2000 and 2010, 70% of trainees in the European Commission were female, while only 30% were male, and the average age of the trainee was 26. This means that out of around 1200 trainees that were accepted for the traineeships in 2010, around 840 were young women, just out of education. The press release also states that the trainees spoke on average more than four languages and had around two university degrees. These young women have higher education and since their average age is 26, it would appear that there is a trend of prolonging one's education in hope of finding a better paid position afterwards.

In his book 'The Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy', Ross Perlin claims that in United States women are 77% more likely to be engaged in an unpaid internship (2012: 27). He claims that "internship injustice is closely linked to gender issues, both because of the fields that women gravitate toward and possibly also because female students have been more accepting of unpaid, unjust situations" (2012: 27). The first part of his claim, that young women gravitate towards fields that require internships and traineeships, is closely in line with my argument, that work traineeships in Croatia are gendered because they target specific educational tracks (university degrees). Education is the immediate reason more young women are doing work traineeships, but is only one of the overall reasons for the disproportionately high number of young women in traineeships.

3.6 Higher Education

There are certain higher educational tracks that are considered to be privileged in the aftermath of the economic crisis, the ones who do not have to worry about struggling to even find precarious work traineeships, let alone permanent employment. Lea talked about her observations on what professions are more targeted by the work traineeship policy:

I think that programmers and IT specialists are in a better position, because they can find regular employment in a few months. I have never seen a position for a work trainee in that field, only positions with normal wages.

Work traineeships are clearly affecting social sciences and humanities more than other educational tracks which is unjust when one takes into consideration the fact that higher education is gendered, and that there is no equal distribution of male and female students in every educational track.

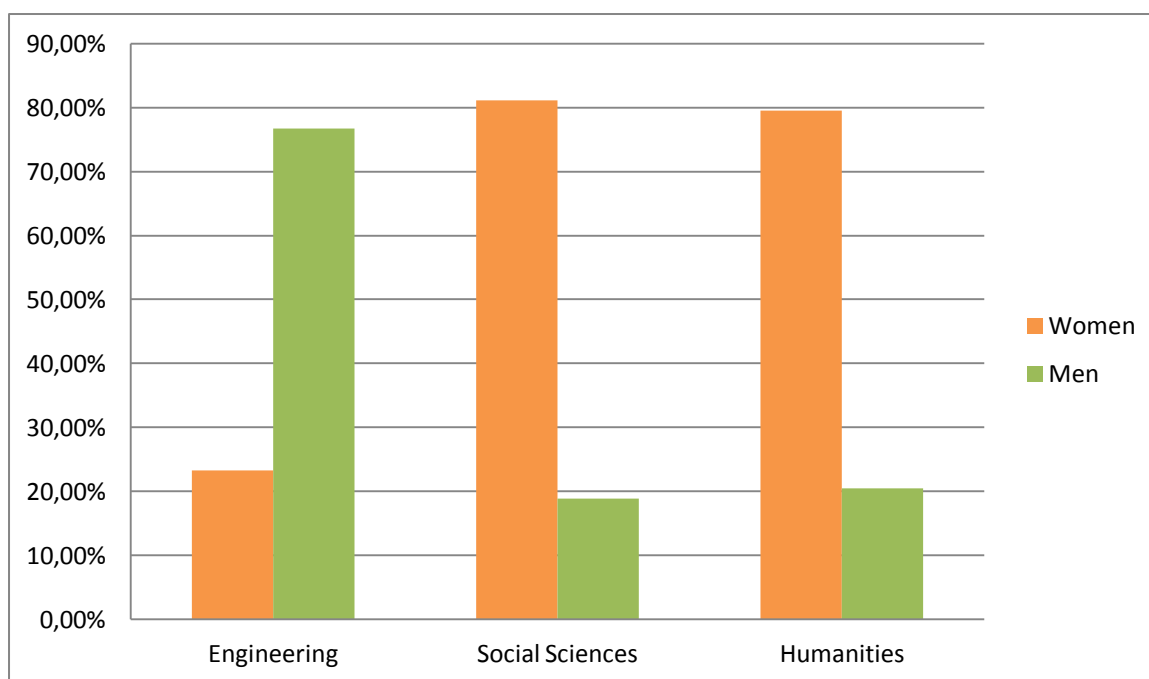
In higher education, female students have surpassed their male colleagues when it comes to overall number of students enrolled in the institutions of higher education. In this part of the research I will show the differences in educational tracks, but I have limited my research on the faculties solely in Zagreb and I am not taking into account other institutions of higher education. In the 2011/2012 academic year, there were 59.3% women enrolled amongst all students in universities. In the same academic year women represented 60.1% of all university graduates (Periš, Avilov, Šojat, 2013).

For my analysis I will be using three very gendered fields of education: engineering, social sciences and humanities, in order to show that Croatian higher education is gendered. The importance of this analysis for the study of Croatian work traineeships lies in the fact that the policy targets only certain fields of expertise, making young women the majority of the policy's users. The fact that young women are targeted by the government's employment strategy has numerous social consequences, as the work traineeship policy influences their

current financial independence, future labour costs and the value of labour, and reinforces social inequalities, all of which will be explained in more detail in the fifth chapter.

Figure 2 shows the gender division of 2012 graduates in engineering, social sciences, and humanities. For the engineering field I have chosen the faculties with the most difference in the number of male and female graduates which are also the fields considered privileged in the economic crisis, while for the field of social sciences and humanities I have included data for all faculties.

Figure 2 – Percentage of university graduates



Source: Ostroški, 2014

The discrepancy between the number of women and men in engineering, social sciences and humanities is enormous. When analysing these percentages, it would seem that social sciences and humanities have a higher concentration of female graduates than the number of male graduates in engineering. That means that the gender structure of engineering universities appears to be changing gradually, and with more women entering those universities more of

them will be also employed in similar fields. Differences in higher education are not exclusive to Croatia, but are also present in the rest of the European Union. According to Eurostat, in the 2007 the number of female graduates in humanities for all European Union members was 67.5%, while the number of male graduates was 32.5%. In social sciences, business and law there were 58.1% of female graduates compared to 42.9% of male graduates. The biggest difference was in engineering, manufacturing and construction where the number of female graduates was 25.7% and the number of male graduates was 74.3%.⁵

Professions that are based on engineering degrees are not targeted by the active labour market policy that enables employment through work traineeships. The policy targets graduates from social sciences and humanities which in some cases consist of more than 90% of female graduates, making the work traineeship an option (if one can even call it an option) for mainly female graduates. Gender differences in education tracks are closely tied to how the labour market is structured. Those differences would not have such an impact on society (for example wage gap) if the labour market was not structured in a way that humanities and social sciences are valued less than engineering.

By analysing the official work traineeship statistics I have shown how the work trainees are not a heterogeneous group as the policy intends them to be, but are mostly young women with higher education that have a social science or humanities background. Having young women with higher education doing underpaid and precarious traineeships is not a situation that is unique to the Croatian context. Because the majority of work trainees are young women, work traineeship has a great deal of influence on the social inequalities amongst women and on access to paid labour, as I will show in the fifth chapter. The importance of this chapter lies in

⁵ The numbers for the European Union average must be taken with caution since there are multiple other categories that were not taken into consideration under the social science category, such as education science, journalism, law etc. which are in the Croatian education system all a part of social sciences (the same goes for humanities and engineering).

not only introducing what the work traineeships are in order to show in which ways they are precarious in the next chapter, but also to show that the users of the policy are not a heterogeneous group, but are mostly young women who take on underpaid exploitative traineeships. This sheds a light on youth employment policies as being gender blind and needing to be analysed with a gender mainstreaming approach in order to see how the policy effects young men and women differently which is what I am doing through my research. As the work traineeship is part of the various types of precarious work, in the following chapter I will show in what ways is the work traineeship precarious, and combine such an employment with the findings from this chapter in order to present social consequences that are a result of precarious, gendered work traineeships.

4. How is Work Traineeship Precarious?

Precarious work is a very common research topic in academic research because of the way employment is being constructed. Characteristics of precarious work are to be found in different kinds of jobs, and different policies are being implemented that allow the employers to hire employees who will work under much more precarious conditions. For example, the new Croatian labour law that is currently in the process of being passed by the parliament promotes insecure and flexible types of employment, such as jobs through employment agencies and outsourcing. Analysing work traineeships as a type of precarious work shows that the rise in precarious types of work is also found in the Croatian context. Firstly, I will define what precarious work is and then apply the definition and its characteristics to work traineeships. Secondly, I will analyse characteristics of precarious work in the context of work traineeship and confirm my argument that the work traineeships are a type of precarious work. I will show that the characteristics are found in different intensity in the work traineeships in the public and private sector, and in informal traineeships. Lastly, I will show that the more precarious the traineeships are, the more the trainee is critical towards the current economic situation and the position of young people in it. I will also explain how the fact that work traineeships are a type of precarious work induces feelings of anxiety and being undervalued amongst trainees.

4.1. What is Precarious Work?

Precarious work is generally defined as “work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements” (Vosko, 2006 in: Albin, 2012: 3). For my analysis of work traineeships, the most important part of the precarious work are the characteristics which define whether a particular job is precarious or not. Characteristics of precarious work vary, but most authors agree that they include limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages, health consequences for

workers, and low-productivity jobs with little access to training or career development opportunities (Albin, 2012; Young, 2012; Fredman, 2004). Similarly Standing (2011) defines the precariat as consisting of people who lack seven forms of labour-related security, which are “labour market security (adequate income-earning opportunities; at the macro-level, this is epitomised by a government’s commitment to ‘full employment’), employment security (protection against arbitrary dismissal, regulations on hiring and firing. . .); job security (ability and opportunity to retain a niche in employment, plus barriers to skill dilution, and opportunities for ‘upward’ mobility in terms of status and income), work security (protection against accidents and illness at work, through, for example safety and health regulations, limits on working time. . .), skill reproduction security (opportunity to gain skills, through apprenticeships, employment training and so on, as well as opportunity to make use of competencies), income security (assurance of an adequate stable income, protected through, for example, protections such as minimum wage machinery. . .), and representation security (possessing a collective voice in the labour market, through, for example, independent trade unions, with a right to strike)” (2011: 10). Standing identifies certain groups as having a high probability of being in the precariat, and one of those groups are interns. He explains that some governments have started intern programs “as a form of ‘active’ labour market policy designed to conceal unemployment. They have high administrative costs and use people to do little of lasting value, either to the organisations or the interns themselves . . .” (2011: 16). The statement can be used to describe the situation in the Croatian active labour market policy programmes, more specifically work traineeship. The policy, as shown in the previous chapter, was designed to conceal unemployment, it has high administrative costs because the government pays for the trainees’ benefits and wage, and it uses people for work that has little or no value, especially for the trainees, as will be shown later in this chapter. Although the context of the Croatian work traineeships does confirm Standing’s statement that those kinds

of employment policies are a part of precarious work, in order to prove my argument that the work traineeship is a type of precarious work, I will have to analyse the work traineeship in a more nuanced way. I will first analyse characteristics of precarious work that apply to all work traineeships, regardless of the sector the traineeships is held in, or the legality of the traineeships. After presenting the general characteristics, I will analyse the different types of traineeships and how the characteristics of precarious work vary in intensity between different types of traineeships.

4.2. Characteristics of Precarious Work in Work Traineeships

The first general characteristic of precarious work in work traineeships are low wages or what Standing (2011) calls income security. All work trainees have the same wage, which is below the minimum wage, regardless of the sector they are doing their traineeship in. The only exception are informal trainees who do not receive any reimbursement for their work, but that will be in more detail discussed in the last part of this chapter.

The second general characteristic of precarious work is the precarious status of work traineeships. Since the implementation of the Croatian government's youth employment policy of work traineeships, the policy's provisions have been constantly modified. One of the major changes was in 2012 when the Ministry of Labour and Pension System decided to include payment for transportation fees for trainees in order to bring in youth that lives further away from the workplace. Andrea was a work trainee who did not have to travel from one city to another when doing her traineeship, but she still had to use and pay for the public transportation in order to get to work. She said that before the change in transportation fees, when she still had to provide for the fees herself, that "it was expected from work trainees that are in that kind of employment status which is not treated as regular employment, to pay the full worker's price for a monthly pass as if you were actually employed". Andrea shows that back in 2012 the legal status of the work traineeships was unclear which provided problems

for trainees. The actual status of the work traineeship is still a problem for trainees, because on the one hand trainees are legally seen as being employed, and on the other they lack some of the basic rights that employed fixed-time workers have, such as receiving a minimum wage. The legal status of work traineeships is still unclear, especially in the informal traineeships which will be discussed more in the penultimate subchapter.

Every trainee has at some point during their traineeship looked at other employment possibilities, but there are complex issues surrounding the work traineeships status and the trainees themselves. Nina was actively looking for employment over a year and even after getting a trainee position she continued to look for other employment possibilities.

When you are doing a work traineeship, you are neither here nor there. You can't apply for a traineeship⁶ position that requires no work experience, because you've acquired it. And you can't apply for a real job where the minimum working experience is always a year because you don't have that.

Nina claims that when starting a traineeship one is automatically excluded from majority of other employment possibilities. Trainees are 'stuck' in their traineeships, because they have to wait until they have completed their traineeship in order to gain a full year of professional experience which makes them eligible to apply for jobs in their professions. The fact that they have to complete their traineeships in order to move on to a next position makes their exit possibilities almost nonexistent. The lack of other options would not be a problem if there was a real chance of being offered an employment contract at the place where trainees were doing their traineeship. Eurobarometer shows that in Croatia 75% of young people were not offered an employment contract after finishing their traineeship. Additionally, considerably more men were offered an employment contract after completing their traineeship (European Commission, 2013: 67-69).

⁶ These are not the same traineeships as work traineeships. These traineeships are better paid and offer full-time permanent employment after a year of working in a public administration.

The third general issue concerning work traineeships is that in certain cases there is a clear mismatch between the knowledge they have acquired either during their education or in previous workplaces and the skills they are supposed to obtain during their traineeships. Work traineeships should be about giving young people a working environment where they can learn and develop skills which they can use in their further employment. The issue that I am raising here is not that trainees are doing menial or not enough challenging tasks, but that trainees who have previous experience with internships, traineeships, volunteering, or with different kinds of paid employment, find work traineeships an unnecessary transition step towards their regular employment. It is especially unnecessary because it lasts twelve months, and a majority of interviewees claim that for the knowledge and skills that they have obtained, that period is too long. Hana had numerous internships and volunteering experience during her studies and therefore already had a vast set of knowledge and skills for the area which she was doing her traineeship in.

I think that the work traineeships aren't useful for people who have been active in all sorts of things while they were studying, who have worked before, and have already acquired that know-how. You can't learn anything new during your work traineeship. You will simply complete the traineeship, be there for a year so that you can put it on your resume and it will be calculated as having one year of experience so that you can afterwards apply somewhere. In the end you already know most of it, or if you don't, it isn't something you can't get a grasp on in a month.

Hana claims that if a work trainee has experience before starting the work traineeship, the trainee will already have the basic knowledge and skills that they are intended to obtain during the traineeship. Therefore the work trainees with prior experience have to wait for the period of traineeship to pass in order to be eligible to apply for a regular employment, making traineeships an unnecessarily long transition period from education to paid employment.

One can argue that this is an issue affecting only a small amount of work trainees and that most of them do not have prior experience. But most of my interviewees had previous

experiences with volunteering, internships and different forms of employment, making work traineeships not their first contact with work responsibilities. The fact that my interviewees already have some kind of work experience shows not only that they find the period of work traineeships too long, but that also shows how much the current labour market devalues experiences that are not calculated into someone's years of service. One interviewee had finished two year-long internships and had done a number of volunteer work, and still had to apply for a work traineeship to gain 'official' experience, in order to one day be able to apply for regular employment.

The last general precarious characteristic of work traineeships is job insecurity. Work traineeship in its full name (on-the-job training without work contract) indicates that it does not mean regular employment during the time of the traineeship nor is it presumed that the trainee will be employed after completing their traineeship. Even before applying to work traineeships young people already know that there is no regular employment implied and that their future is not secure during or after the traineeship. Jan is only one of the interviewees that were preparing themselves for precarious employment even before actively looking for employment.

In order to make this situation more easier and durable I have convinced myself that I have to go through this phase, cheap labour, work traineeship and such. This is not that different abroad, such as applying for EU Commission traineeships. I have also read posts on forums and internet portals, everyone says that you have to do a few internships. Internships abroad are usually unpaid, they last 2-6 months, so I have set my mind so that this [work traineeship] is two paid internships at once, and as something that I have expected I would have to go through.

Jan explains how he was aware of job insecurity as a precarious characteristic of work traineeship. Even before looking for employment, he already knew the current situation on the labour market which is that as a young person from a humanities or social sciences

background, he has to do some sort of traineeship as an access point to paid employment in the future.

Ross Perlin claims that internships are not only needed because of the lack of regular employment, but it is also understood “more in terms of its cultural and professional function than in terms of actual responsibilities: a box that has to be checked, a rite of passage, a prerequisite for future ambition” (2012: 25). It is now culturally expected that a person does internships/traineeships before they are fully employed. In the next sections I will focus on precarious characteristics of traineeships and how they vary in intensity according to different types of traineeships, starting with the private sector.

4.2.1. Private Sector

The main difference amongst work traineeships is whether they are done in a public or private sector. I will show in this subchapter that in the private sector trainees seem more enthusiastic about their work, more connected to their co-workers and supervisors. This is because unlike in the public sector, there is a chance of being offered employment by the company/organisation after the work traineeships ends. Because there are no strict hierarchies in the private sector, people feel like they have more power and influence in the workplace, and have more flexible tasks which young people see as learning opportunities.

The first characteristic of precarious work I will analyse is job insecurity. Although as described before, job insecurity is at the core of the work traineeship policy, in private sectors job insecurity is much lower due to the real possibility of employment after finishing work traineeships, unlike in public sectors where there is a ban on full-time employment. The more secure the prospect of a job is after finishing the traineeship, the less people think about looking for other employment, and are therefore more invested in the work they are doing, as well as perceiving themselves as regular employees in that firm. When talking about her

workplace, and the fact that both her co-workers and she herself are making no distinctions between her and other permanent employees, Marija said that:

I think that my perception is connected to the fact that I get positive feedback on my work, and I don't have the feeling that once the work traineeship is over I will have to go to the employment office and start looking for a job. There is a real possibility that I will stay in this firm, so I don't think about the difference between me and other employees.

Marija's statement shows how although job insecurity exists *de jure* in the description of the work traineeship policy, it is *de facto* less insecure when there is a possibility of employment after the traineeship ends. In the cases when there is no strong possibility of being employed at the same workplace where one is doing their traineeship and job insecurity is present *de jure* and *de facto*, trainees start looking for other kinds of employment. When there is no available employment on the Croatian labour market, they start thinking about working abroad, as one possible unemployment exit strategy. Looking for other jobs during a work traineeship can be seen as trying to regain control over the negative effects of one's precarious employment. Job insecurity can reach high levels when a work trainee is told only at the end of their traineeship that in fact they will not be employed when the traineeship ends. Hana was in that kind of situation and explained how she coped with the sudden job insecurity.

Towards the end of my work traineeship I have started applying for other kinds of employment. Considering that I have thought that they will give me a full-time employment after the traineeship, I have started applying to other jobs only at the end. If I didn't get the job I have now, the next step would be working abroad.

Hana explains how she had to suddenly look for other employment opportunities only at the end of her traineeship. Her experience is similar to Isigicok and Emirgil's research (2009: 91) when one of the main characteristics of job insecurity in precarious work was the increase of unemployment risk and the threat of not finding a new job in the labour market after falling out of the job. The bigger the risk of those characteristics are, the more precarious the

employment and the future is, which forces young people to look for alternatives outside the country.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, one of the general characteristics of precarious work found in work traineeships is the mismatch between knowledge and skills. In the private sector the mismatch is much less present than in the public sector. This happens because in private sector the hierarchy is less rigid, work trainees do not have fixed tasks that they have to repeat on an everyday basis, as the nature of the job requires them to be flexible and to adapt to new tasks and challenges. They can utilize the knowledge they have attained either during education or previous work experience which reduces the mismatch between knowledge and skills, but makes them more aware that considering the amount and the complexity of tasks, they are performing regular employment and therefore being underpaid for the effort they put into their traineeships. Hana had much more responsibility than other interviewees (especially work trainees in the public sector) and claims that:

My problem wasn't like the ones that most people that I know have. [...] Most people who are work trainees don't do meaningful tasks, they make coffees and do administrative work. My problem was very different, I did a normal job, but it was for only 1600kn. I was taking over and heading projects, and it was my initiative, I wanted that. So my wishes to do something of importance during my traineeship weren't pushed aside. I really wanted to do things there that were of importance to me, which I did, only for very little money.

Hana is an example of a work trainee in the private sector that because of the lack of rigid hierarchies can utilize the knowledge that she got from her previous work experiences and reduce the mismatch between knowledge and skills the traineeship is usually based upon. Reduced mismatch makes her more aware that she is not being paid enough for the effort that she is putting into her traineeship. The reduced mismatch between knowledge and skills is an important factor in their workplace, it makes trainees feel empowered and like they have more influence in the workplace, while in the public sector, the high level of mismatch makes them

feel anxious. Marija said that she was in a situation where in a short period of time she had to take over a lot of responsibility “which works for me, because I like constantly being challenged”. Marija was willing to have a lot of responsibility because it reduced the mismatch between knowledge and skills, meaning that she could obtain useful skills for her future employment. Isigicok and Emirgil (2009: 88) also claim that young people who have high levels of education and who are employed in precarious jobs think that their work conditions are safe, because they perceive their employment as an advantageous opportunity.

4.2.2. Public Sector

The public sector is specific in terms of working hours, job security and access to social benefits and statutory entitlements. It is one of the few places in Croatia that has not changed with the transformation towards a global, industrialized economy. Public sector is characterized by full-time, lifelong employment that has stable eight hours working time, it is regulated by collective social bargaining, covered under public social security schemes, and includes statutory entitlements (Albin, 2013; Carls, 2011). Precisely because it stands for a type of employment that is scarce in the contemporary society, I am arguing that there are precarious characteristics in this type of work traineeship that are at the same time non-existent for full-time workers in the same sector. These characteristics of precarious work are different in their intensity from the ones in the private sector.

The first precarious characteristic of work traineeship in the public sector is job insecurity. In 2009 the Croatian government issued a decision to ban new employment of civil servants and employees in state administration bodies, Croatian government’s professional services and offices (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 2009b). Since then there have been similar decision issued to reconfirm that the ban is still valid, such as the decision to limit new employment of civil servants and employees in state administration bodies with exceptions for situations that include work places where a worker has to be replaced for a temporary

period of time with a temporary worker, or when a worker's contract has expired in which case a new worker might be employed (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 2011). Concerning the last exception, in most cases that is possible when a worker retires, because most workers in public sectors have indefinite contracts. Work trainees in the public sector are aware of these rules even before applying to a trainee position in the public sector, and yet they still apply and during their traineeships carry out tasks efficiently.

After applying to a work traineeship in the public sector, trainees find themselves working in places where they have almost no chance of being employed after their traineeship ends. In exceptional cases they can be offered to work under a temporary service contract that lasts maximum a year, where they continue to do the same jobs but for a slightly higher payment (around 2300 Kuna/303 Euro). As I have stated, this is a best case scenario for work trainees in public sectors. Unlike the job insecurity in the private sector that exists to a lesser extent and therefore enables trainees to be fully involved in their daily tasks, in the public sector job insecurity is much higher, but the involvement in daily tasks and the attitude towards work is only slightly lower.

The fact that work trainees in the public sector know from the start that there is no chance of being permanently employed after the traineeship ends creates anxiety amongst them. On the one hand, trainees have to be grateful to have been given an opportunity to be a trainee because not only is that the only opportunity on the labour market for young people who have higher education with social sciences or humanities background, but amongst those young people there is a number of them who do not have the financial support from their families to be able to do a traineeship (more on that in the next chapter). On the other hand, trainees are aware of the high job insecurity in the public sector. Nina explains how she handled that conflicting circumstances. She had 'good' and 'bad' days, and during the good days she used to think that:

If you are already in that position where you are, if you have that chance, and even if it is only for a year, why not learn everything that you can, and then you can maybe use it on the next job.

Nina wanted to utilize the knowledge and skills she was gaining at her workplace and subsequently to avoid the ‘bad’ days. Those were the days when she would be aware of the position that she is in, the fact that her traineeship is characterized by job insecurity, that she is a precarious worker in a non-precarious environment where her position is a token position, where she represents all other unemployed young people that are, unlike her co-workers, living under completely different rules of the society and labour market. Ana explains what the difference is between trainees that are doing precarious work and the employed workers in the same workplace who have an indefinite contract.

[S]ometimes those people who have been working there for a longer period actually do not understand the situation in Croatia. They understand that you [young people] are struggling, but they do not understand how good they actually have it, especially the ones working in the state administration. They have an indefinite contract [...] When they talk for example about annual leave you realize that they live in their own country. Sometimes it seems that we come from two different worlds.

Ana shows the difference between trainees as doing precarious work and employees as being non-precarious workers, or as Standing (2011) would say, not belonging to the precariat. Ana’s example confirms that precarious work is indeed part of the second segmented labour market.

The second characteristic of precarious work in work traineeships is a mismatch between knowledge and skills. The mismatch is evident in the low productivity tasks the trainees have to do. Work trainees in the public sector have to face a lot of bureaucratic and administrative tasks, and sometimes it is all they do, without any possibility of doing more complex tasks because of the rigid hierarchies in the public sector that leaves no space for flexibility in tasks for trainees. When asked to describe his daily tasks, Luka said that what he is doing is:

Bureaucracy. Literary. The worst kind of bureaucracy. In the beginning it was only the most mind-numbing tasks, such as copying and scanning, carrying papers from one room to another, and that was it because I didn't know how to do anything else. And as time passed they gave me more complex tasks, such as writing letters to another public administration, sending attachments, and similar things. There is still copying and scanning. In fact, they don't give me tasks of any importance.

Luka explains how the productivity of his daily tasks has not changed since the beginning of his traineeship. Doing copying and scanning everyday shows a clear mismatch between the knowledge that he has from his education and the (lack of) skills that he acquired during his traineeship. Andrea reported the same situation during her work traineeship. She wants her new job to be more complex than her work traineeship, and said:

Andrea: I am done with copy-pasting.

Interviewer: How much copy-pasting, more specifically bureaucratic tasks were there during your traineeship?

Andrea: There was a lot [...] In the beginning and during the whole year. In the beginning there was more, later there was less, but that was the standard [...] Others do the job [write a document] and then give the most banal tasks to you, such as to justify, look at the font, paragraph, to edit the text so it looks nice and so on.

Andrea, just like Luka, explains that bureaucratic tasks were constantly present during her traineeship, implying that there was a constant mismatch between her knowledge and skills. Unlike in the private sector, there is no flexibility when it comes to carrying out different tasks, because there is a strict hierarchy in the public sector that prevents trainees from doing different tasks. The lack of acquiring skills that match their knowledge makes the trainees very frustrated with their traineeship. Not only do they feel like they are not learning anything new during their traineeship, they also feel powerless in the workplace because they do not have any sense of control or influence over what they do. The most extreme example comes from Luka who explained how his supervisor wants him to scan over a hundred pages of a case and that he and his co-workers feel like that is completely unnecessary, but cannot influence the supervisor's decision.

Imagine that feeling that you have to do something that you know is useless, but there's no way out and you have to scan something for two hours. I have to switch mindsets, but sometimes I have a nervous breakdown, I cry and go to the bathroom for 15-20 minutes.

Luka's example of doing a traineeship that offers skills that do not match his acquired knowledge and give him no advantage for further employment shows the effect that kind of traineeship has on his well-being. Anxiousness and feeling undervalued are a common feeling amongst work trainees, especially informal trainees as I will show in the last part of this chapter.

The last characteristic of precarious work in the public sector which is the lack of mobility after finishing their work traineeship or what Standing (2011) calls skill reproduction security. The success of traineeships depends on employers (mostly mentors) and trainees, in order for the trainee to acquire certain skills which they can then use if not in the same workplace, then somewhere else. Because of the hierarchy that exists in public sectors, these trainees can only acquire a limited number of skills, and the work that they do cannot be used anywhere else other than in public administration, which makes their mobility restricted only to other public administrations. Marko has finished his traineeship recently and said: "30 days ago I have passed my state qualifying exam. How good of a qualification is that when I come to a private business with that and it means nothing to them?" Just like Marko's example of the lack of mobility, Andrea also said:

There is a difference in the approach to work in private companies as opposed to public services. A person who is a work trainee in a private company will probably be more mobile as they are more qualified. Employers will ask more of them, they will have to try harder, and they will acquire better skills than they would have in the public administration.

Andrea explained there is a difference between the public and private sector in the way they treat their trainees and in the skills that trainees acquire. The private sector gives the trainees much more opportunities to learn and develop skills than the public sector does. In the public

sector work traineeships are more insecure and the mobility is limited, the work traineeships in that sector are more precarious than the ones in the private sector. For the same reason trainees regret doing their traineeships in the public sector because not only is it explicitly stated for the work traineeships generally that after completion there is no guarantee for further employment, but the traineeships in the public sector offer almost no chance of employment and provide limited mobility to private sectors where there is a chance of employment. By doing their traineeship in the public sector work trainees are entering a vicious circle where they cannot be employed in that sector after they finish their traineeships and they cannot use their acquired skills anywhere else. This is even more worrisome when the official statistics say that 60% of all trainees are working in the public sector (Šimpraga, 2014).

Unlike the traineeships in both the public and private sector, the informal traineeships are much more precarious and have characteristics that the previous two types of traineeships do not have. That kind of high precariousness gives the informal trainees an agency; they are much more critical towards the work traineeship policy and towards the omnipresence of precarious jobs in the labour market.

4.2.3. Informal Traineeships

Since November 2013 there are problems with financing work trainees because there is a lack of funds for unemployment policies. Every application for work traineeship that has been sent by the employer to the employment office for approval has been put on hold since there are no available funds for financing such a huge amount of trainees. In this subchapter I will analyse the situation of two young women whose employers have sent the applications and are waiting for the final approval for months so that they could start their traineeships. In the meantime, in agreement with their employer, they have started working and are either paid the same amount as regular traineeships or not paid at all, but in both cases they are pretending to

be a work trainee when in fact they are legally still registered as unemployed. I will show how their performed traineeships are even more precarious than the legal ones both in the public and private sector, and how their situation has given them an agency and they have become more critical towards the work traineeship in general and towards the precarious jobs in the labour market.

The first precarious characteristic of their performed work traineeships is job insecurity. Unlike in the cases of legal traineeships where the main problem of job insecurity is that there is no secure employment after the traineeship is completed, in this case the whole idea of traineeship is insecure as there is no guarantee that trainees will continue to pretend to do their traineeship there, eventually become legal trainees and in the end be employed in the workplace where they are doing their traineeship. These young women are only pretending to be work trainees while working almost full time and at the same time not getting even the basic benefits they would be entitled to as legal trainees. The reason they agree to do informal traineeships is because that is currently their only option if they want to gain work experience and do something more productive rather than just wait for the final approval from the employment office.

The second characteristic of precarious work in the case of informal traineeships are limited social benefits and statutory entitlements for trainees which is specific for informal traineeships and is not present amongst the different types of legal traineeships.. Their basic health insurance is paid by the state through the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance because they are still registered as unemployed. Their statutory entitlements are limited since they depend on the will of the employer, as the employer has no legal obligation to give them the statutory entitlements.

The high precariousness of their performed informal traineeships is seen in the way the employers adjust to the situation, for example when it comes to giving informal work trainees days off. Although they do not have the legal obligation to give them days off and especially in Eva's case where she has been performing her traineeship only for a few months, they still gave her a day off, because as she says "on the one hand they want to be professionals and treat me like I am a work trainee, and on the other hand they can't, so they are collegial and are helping me out". Employers have to balance between the legal provisions of the work traineeship policy and the real situation that their informal work traineeships are in. By taking on informal trainees employers face severe consequences if the authorities find out that they have a worker who is under the temporary service contract that is being renewed every month, but is in fact doing work that is meant for a work trainee.

At the same time, the work trainees have to act as if they are actually doing their traineeships to make their precarious position seem more secure. Lea is in a situation where she is working around six to eight hours a day, but she does not get reimbursed for her work. Officially, she is a volunteer who is waiting to start the traineeship, but unofficially she is already a trainee and is doing tasks that are in the job description for the traineeship.

I see myself as an employee, because I have to get up every day at 8, I have to go to work, and be there for six hours, and that fills my day [...] But I am also aware that I am volunteering because I do not get paid.

The discrepancy that Lea describes between the fact that they are doing the work traineeship but are in fact not work trainees makes the informal trainees more critical towards their performed work traineeship, or as Eva explains:

I am a very sceptical person, and especially now I approach everything with caution. Based on my experience, I take everything with scepticism. Okay they said something, okay I will hold on to that, but in the back of my mind there is constantly a voice saying: go and look for something else, perfect yourself, learn, absorb. I am also

fighting to stay there, I want to show them that they cannot function without me.

Eva shows how she is always aware of her position as an informal trainee, and therefore takes everything with scepticism. People who are doing informal traineeships are much more aware of the situation that they are in and are much more critical towards the rise of precarious work in the labour market. Albin (2012) claims that precarious workers are the losers of the new economy, not only socially and economically, but also legally. In the case of the informal traineeship, those three characteristics come together. They are socially deprived because they are still seen as unemployed and have the social stigma of being unemployed. They are economically deprived because they in one case do not get paid at all, and in both cases have limited social benefits and statutory entitlements. And they are legally deprived because they are performing work that they officially are not supposed to be doing and therefore do not have the same legal protection as they would have if a contract for work traineeship has been signed.

The work traineeship in general is making trainees feel anxious and Lea explains that “work traineeship creates the feeling of discomfort and uncertainty, because legally it is not very well regulated”. When talking about the situation that they are in, which is illegal and highly precarious Lea says that:

It has helped me because I have learned how to be patient. I am waiting for two months now. Contacting the Croatian Employment Service has become my constant duty that I have to do once or twice per week, and every time I get the same response: ‘Call us back next week’. So I became really patient.

Lea explains how she feels powerless because the only option for her is to wait until she can (legally) start her traineeship. The position Lea and Eva are in, being in a highly precarious and informal traineeship, has made them more critical towards the labour market and the work traineeship policy, even more so than legal trainees who are doing their traineeships in public

and private sectors. Buljan (2014) interviewed two young women who were in the same situation as my informal trainees (although they were not doing informal traineeships, just waiting for the approval of their contract by the Croatian Employment Service so that they can start working), who said that the only reason why work traineeships are effective is because young people do not have a choice, and for the employers it is not cost-effective to employ someone full-time. They also said that they feel terrible, and that they keep calling the Croatian Employment Service and being redirected to someone else who probably works there as a work trainee (Buljan, 2014). Feeling anxious, terrible and miserable is a daily reality for all those trainees that did not get their traineeships yet, or as Lea explains:

You are feeling undervalued. You have graduated from your university, you have finished your education, you have spent 5 years in higher education, and instead of someone being interested in you and wanting to employ you after you have finished your education, they give you a pay that is lower than the Croatian minimum wage and with whom a young person in a large city, that lives in a rented apartment, just can't live on, and is simply not enough to cover their expenses.

Lea is critical towards the work traineeship policy and the way young people are undervalued in the labour market. Anxiousness and feeling undervalued is at its peak in informal precarious traineeships which enables these young women to be critical towards the labour market and the imposed norm of precarious job positions, such as work traineeships. Those feelings are not only present in informal traineeships, they are a part of a wider feeling of personal uncertainty and insecurity because of current economic hardships. The fact that economic hardships are not unique for Croatia (and the region) like it was in the 1990s, and the experience is now shared in many other European countries, has contributed to the spread of feelings of anxiety and lack of perspective (Ilišin et al., 2013: 11-12). Work trainees are at the core of the precariat and experience what Standing calls “the four A’s – anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation” (2011: 19).

Characteristics of precarious work vary across sectors and are much more present in the informal traineeships. With the increase in precariousness rises also the trainees' critical stance on the current position of precarious workers in the labour market. Because the nature of possible employment for young women with higher education has changed and is limited to precarious work, it shows the existence of social inequalities amongst young people and the existence of the gender access to paid work which I will discuss in the next chapter.

5. Social Consequences of the Work Traineeship Policy

Work traineeship, the government's active labour market policy, has certain social consequences such as social inequalities, prolonged youth, and develops access to paid labour/full-time employment. In the first part of this chapter I will discuss how work traineeships reproduce social inequalities between graduates from higher education who have the financial incentives to do work traineeships and those who do not have such possibilities. The other social inequality is between young people with vocational and higher education. Because there are more young women than young men in traineeships, it is safe to assume that the social inequalities will be reproduced more amongst and have a greater impact on young women. Although work traineeships may seem on the one hand to be a choice available only for the privileged youth, on the other hand it means continuous support from ones family during the traineeship period, and consequently financial dependency of those young women who are doing the traineeship. Financial dependency is one of the many characteristics of the concept of prolonged youth, which I will discuss in the second part of this chapter. In the end of the chapter I will show how work traineeship influences access to paid labour and what the short- and long-term consequences of both the prolonged youth and gendered access to paid labour are.

5.1. Social Inequalities

Work traineeship is a policy that can be seen as a positive measure because it provides a set of skills and gives work experience to young people who otherwise cannot access the labour market. The current situation on the Croatian labour market, where a position for permanent employment is a rarity, makes the work traineeships the only option for unemployed young people. After the 2008 economic crisis and the rapid increase in youth unemployment that came with it, this policy was at first met with critical stances, but with time it was slowly accepted, mostly because of the lack of alternative options for young people. There are two

particular social inequalities in relation to work traineeship that I will discuss. The first social inequality is amongst young people with higher education, and the second one is between young people with vocational and higher education. In explaining social inequalities I will use Pierre Bourdieu's (1997) typology of capital (economic, cultural and social). According to Bourdieu, economic capital is "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights", cultural capital may be converted into economic capital and can be institutionalised as educational qualifications, and social capital is made of social obligations or connections, and can be converted into economic capital and be institutionalized as a title of nobility (Halsey et al., 1997: 47).

The first social inequality that the work traineeships are reproducing is the difference between young people who can afford to do work traineeships and those who cannot. Because there is a lack of employment options on the labour market for young people with higher education, a certain number of young people apply for positions that do not require university degrees and hide the fact that they are university graduates on their resumes in order not to be seen as overqualified. Because available jobs are scarce (at the moment), as much as two fifths of all employed young people do not work in the occupations they are educated for in Croatia (Ilišin et al., 2013: 61). Young people are for example applying to sectors such as retail. Due to its limited professional qualification requirements, retailing is seen as a transitory employment sector for young people who are entering the labour market. The problem is that young people today remain much longer in that sector as it can offer stability, unlike the current situation in the rest of the labour market where there are limited or no other opportunities (Carls, 2011: 159).

Ana had the possibility to apply for a work traineeship, but was at the same time looking for employment that is below her educational level. She explains how at first she applied for work traineeships and jobs that are for university graduates, but after some time started also

applying for jobs in the retail sector. As she could not stay unemployed anymore, she said: “I didn’t care what job I would get, I only wanted to get one”. Unlike Ana, certain young people cannot afford to do a work traineeship for a full year, and especially as it is full-time, they cannot have major incomes on the side that would improve their financial situation. Privilege in social status is seen not only in the financial resources but also in the educational level a young person has. Nina claims that work traineeships are not inclusive for everyone who would like to apply:

Work traineeships aren’t available for everyone because a lot of people cannot afford them. People with higher education can do it because there is nothing else to do. [...] But people with a high school degree do it only in cases when they are college students, so the work traineeship is an additional source of income. Only a few people with high school degrees do a work traineeship. But I also know people that cannot afford to do it, that have a university degree but have no financial possibilities. That is one of the biggest flaws of the work traineeships.

Nina explains that there are two categories of young people who cannot do work traineeships. The first one are young people who do not have financial resources to do work traineeships, and the second one are young people with secondary education. Nina, like most of the other interviewees, is aware of the privileged situation she was in when doing her traineeship. Although not from Zagreb, during her traineeship she lived in her own apartment in Zagreb (therefore she did not have to pay rent), her parents gave her additional money, she also lived with her partner who had a permanent work contract and they both shared the costs of utilities. Unlike her, other young people have to find employment where the wage is at least the same amount as the minimum wage in order for them to live off the money they earn. These circumstances point to the perpetuation of the existing social inequalities by the work traineeship policy. People who have a lower socio-economic background have lower chances of getting involved with the traineeship and consequently, because there are no other options on the labour market, have to apply for positions that are in practice a mismatch between the

knowledge they acquired during their education and the skills they will obtain on the job. Their socio-economic background, or in other words their lack of economic, social and cultural capital, prevents them from doing a traineeship and will result in them having less economic capital (because it is not likely that they will move up the ladder in their field of expertise since they cannot get a starting position), less social capital (because by not being a trainee in their field of expertise they will struggle to get into the right social networks) and less cultural capital (because they will lack specific knowledge and skills that would give them a higher position in the society since they could not obtain them during a traineeship). Existing social inequalities are perpetuated by the work traineeship policy and they continue to divide the youth.

Nina also talks about another social inequality which are educational differences amongst work trainees, or the lack of them. Eva confirms Nina's view on diversity of work trainees when she claims that the work traineeship:

isn't open for everyone, especially for people with lower education, such as people with high school degrees. I see very little calls for applications for someone with a secondary degree in economics, sales specialist or a person with a high school degree. Everyone is looking for a social sciences or humanities graduate.

Eva's example of what kind of educational level employers look for in a trainee confirms Nina's claim that only a few trainees are high school, and not university graduates. Their statements on the lack of educational differences between trainees can be backed up by the official statistics for work traineeships. People with secondary education degrees are very rarely doing a work traineeship, and as the official statistics show, in 2013 there were 24% of work trainees with secondary education and 76% with higher education (Ready for Work, personal communication, 20 May 2014).

According to the official statistics for the year 2012 (Barić, 2013: 14), the number of unemployed who have finished vocational schools was 34.2% and for those who have finished high schools was 27.6%, which is much more higher than the number of unemployed with a bachelor's degree (4.7%) or with a master's degree or higher (6.3%). Unlike unemployed with higher education, the unemployed with secondary education are in risk of long-term unemployment (40.9% of unemployed with vocational secondary degrees were unemployed for at least a year) (Barić, 2013: 19). These statistics show that there are generally more people with secondary education, that they are one of the most unemployed when looking at educational levels, and they are at a risk of long-term unemployment. Combining that with Eurostat's statistics on the percentage of unemployed young people with upper secondary and post-secondary education for Croatia which is 36.1% (unlike the EU 27 average of 16.9%), one comes to the conclusion that the unemployment of young people with secondary education is a problem that must be addressed and that is not being solved with the work traineeship policy. Young people with secondary education are not given the option of doing work traineeships in order to improve their employment situation. There is always the possibility that even if they had the chance to do a work traineeship, their financial circumstances would prevent them.

The International Labour Organization has already pointed out the possible disadvantages of work traineeships, and they have emphasized that traineeships are a temporary solution that may not be sufficient to decrease youth unemployment, and most importantly, that it "may benefit those who are already "better off"" (2011: 19). The latter is exactly what has happened in Croatia, the "better off", meaning the ones with higher education with better socio-economic background, higher cultural, social and economic capital, are using this opportunity whilst excluding those who are "worse off". Perlin has the same argument and claims that most internships are for the upper-middle class and the rich, while the "low- and middle-

income families stretch their finances thin to afford thankless unpaid positions, which are less and less likely to lead to real work, and a forgotten majority can't afford to play the game at all" (2012: 162). The ones that can 'play the game' are the ones who are already 'better off', who have better starting positions and come from a better socio-economic background, and therefore have higher education and enough financial resources which allows them to do work traineeships.

Ilišin et al. shows that a large number of young people in Croatia that come from a lower socio-economic status were forced to choose the professions that require the lowest qualifications and enable early employment (2013: 19-20). When young people with secondary education do get a chance for regular employment, the unemployed young people with higher education are also applying for the same positions. About a third of my interviewees have applied for positions that were meant for people with secondary education. It would seem that young people with secondary education are being pushed to the margins of employment and left to the will of the labour market, as the most used active labour market policy in most cases is only for people with higher education. My argument goes along with Ilišin et al. findings where they state that the most affected by the unemployment are young people with vocational training and those who do not have family resources that they can use when looking for employment (2013: 20). This is another example of how work traineeship works on the basis of social inequalities and how social inequalities in economic, social and cultural capital are reproduced in the labour market by a supposedly inclusive active labour market policy.

5.2. Prolonged Youth

For the past twenty years the concept of prolonged youth has been the subject of many academic researches in the context of the Global North (Petersen and Mortimer, 1994; Côté, 1994; Tyyskä, 2014, Settersten Jr. and Ray, 2010). Ule uses the term prolonged youth and

defines it as the youth who has prolonged institutional education, difficult and inadequate employment, slow social-economic independence, and is postponing the start of their own families . . . (Ilišin et al., 2013: 10). In this subchapter I argue that work trainees are part of the prolonged youth and that the consequences that the work traineeship policy enforces prolongs the already long period of youth and it enforces the prolonged youth's characteristics. I will also show what the social consequences of being a part of the prolonged youth are.

In order to show how work trainees are a part of the prolonged youth, it is not enough to use Ule's characteristics; one has to contextualize the concept of prolonged youth and the youth themselves. The youth that I am focusing on grew up in the post-socialist period where, as Ilišin et al. (2013) claim, they have been simultaneously going through two different transitional periods. The first one is their own transformation as they are transitioning from teenage years to adulthood, and the other is the society's transition, where the society is being reformed from a socialist to a capitalist society. Young people living in countries that were going through transitional periods are more exposed to certain changes in the society, such as the growing social inequalities and inequalities in educational opportunities, more competition on the labour market with the growth of unemployment and precarious work, and the fact that the value of socio-economic family recourses has never been higher (2013: 10-11). I will combine those changes with Ule's characteristics of prolonged youth in order to show that work trainees are a part of the prolonged youth and that the consequences of the work traineeships prolong already long period of being a young person.

I have already analyzed certain characteristics of prolonged youth in the previous subchapter, where I have shown that the work traineeship policy reproduces existing social inequalities and inequalities in educational opportunities.

I will now analyse the slow socio-economic independence or in other words, youth's financial dependence on their families. The latest research on the Croatian youth has shown that around two thirds of young people still live with their parents, mostly because of practical reasons and the lack of financial opportunities. Amongst young people who still live with their parents because of the lack of financial opportunities, the prevailing number are unemployed young people who have finished either a four year high school or higher education (Ilišin et al., 2013: 31). My interviewees, both young men and women, have during their traineeships relied on their families because of their prolonged education and the lack of financial resources for them to be independent. The trainees' prolonged education is evident amongst my interviewees as all of them have a master's degree, and all other trainees as the official statistics show that the age group from 25 to 29 years is more likely to start a work traineeship than the age group from 20 to 24 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, personal communication, 22 May 2014). The lack of financial resources for work trainees comes from the fact that their wage is below the minimum wage which prevents them from being financial independent.

Another characteristic of prolonged youth that is present amongst work trainees is the value of socio-economic family resources. Almost all of my interviewees were, regardless of age and marital status, financially supported by their parents during their traineeships. The parents were paying for their rented apartments or letting them continue living in the parents' homes, paying for their utilities, and giving them allowance money. Their circumstances show how much the parents' financial support is necessary for young people to be able to do the traineeships. The only interviewee who is not supported by her parents is financially supported by her husband who has a permanent employment which enables her to do a work traineeship.

The last characteristic that I will analyse is the fact that young people postpone starting their own families. Only two out of thirteen interviewees were married, and none of them had

children confirming the findings presented in Ilišin et al. (2013) that there is a rise in the marriage age amongst young people and an increasing number of childless couples.

Work trainees definitely fit into the category of prolonged youth, as they were in education until recently, they have little or no socio-economic independence and they have postponed starting their own families. The consequences of prolonged youth are that work trainees are unable to fully access socially valued goods and services that were taken for granted by their parents before, the prolonged youth has caused them economic hardship, extended education that is way beyond the skills that the labour market requires, and can significantly delay relationships and family formations (Tyyska, 2014: 53).

5.3. Gendered Access to Paid Labour

Access to full-time employment is discussed mostly in adult female employment (Tannous and Smith, 2013) or in youth unemployment (Plantenga, Remery, and Samek Lodovici, 2013). In this subchapter I argue that work traineeships create gendered access to paid labour which can have consequences in the short- and long-term for young women.

Work traineeship poses consequences for the labour market, especially the segment of the labour market where mostly women are working. One can interpret work traineeship as an extended job interview, a lengthy screening mechanism or a long trial run period. If the labour market targets specific educational tracks and therefore creates segregation in the labour market (as shown in the fifth chapter, the majority of the work trainees are young women), this creates different access rules for young men and women with higher education. The access to paid work is gendered, whereby young men that do not have a background in social sciences or humanities avoid the lengthy period of precarious work, which includes working full time and being underpaid without knowing whether one will get the permanent employment afterwards or not. As the work traineeships have now fully replaced starting

positions, the access to the labour market is different for young men and women. Although work traineeships are empowering, they also produce different the access points to the labour market, and force young women to look for support from their families.

The gendered access to labour, combined with the negative effects of prolonged youth, can result in both short-term and long-term consequences for young women. The short-term consequences are the continued dependence on the parents, the impossibility of leaving the family home (for example young people cannot get a mortgage), and the impossibility of starting a family. In the long-run gendered access to labour can also impact happiness, job satisfaction and health (Plantenga et al, 2013: 24). There is a possibility that the employers might exploit the trainees and pay the less than they would have if trainees were not doing the traineeship before employment, because the trainees have already gotten used to being underpaid (Levačić and Ostojić, 2014). This might lead to a decrease in trainees' labour costs and the value of labour. Lea shares the same concerns and says: "I firmly believe that it [work traineeship] will lower my labour costs. I believe that solely by implementing that measure the labour costs have already dropped." Apart from the decrease in labour costs, another possible long-term consequence for young women in traineeship is the inability to find a full-time employment with an indefinite contract. Plantenga et al. have shown that in the European Union, young women after being unemployed are more likely to have part-time or temporary jobs and therefore earn lower wages (2013: 44). The current situation in Croatia confirms that argument since 92% of newly employed women have a temporary contract in 2012 (Bačić, 2014). The final long-term consequences of gendered access to paid labour is that as most trainees start their traineeship and eventually start permanent employment later, and the jobs are more unstable and lower-paid, the probability to receive a full pension for young women is declining (Plantenga et al, 2013: 62).

The precarious nature of work traineeship influences and develops certain social consequences. The first consequence that I have discussed is the reinforcement of social inequality between young people with higher education who have the financial resources to do work traineeships and those who cannot afford to be a trainee, and between young people with higher and secondary education. The second consequence is that the young people who are trainees have their youth even more prolonged. In the last part of this chapter I have discussed the fact that work traineeships create gendered access to paid labour, meaning that young women from social sciences or humanities will enter the paid labour later than other young people with higher education. Combining the characteristics of prolonged youth with the gendered access to labour I have show what possible short- and long-term consequences work traineeships might have for young women.

Conclusion

In this research I have argued that work traineeship policy, as a form of non-standard employment, or in other words, a type of precarious work, is affecting young women as they are the main users of the policy. My research has shown that the work traineeship policy, which was intended to tackle the problem of increasing youth unemployment in Croatia, is an option only for young women with a social sciences or humanities background. As work traineeship is a form of precarious work, I have shown how characteristics of precarious work vary across different types of work traineeships, with the ones in the private sector being more secure and having less mismatch between knowledge and skills compared to the ones in the public sector. Trainees in informal traineeships, which are more precarious than other types of traineeships, are more critical towards the policy itself, the current situation in the labour market and the position of young people in it. Finally, I have show how the work traineeship policy reproduces existing social inequalities, extends the period of prolonged youth and creates gendered access to paid labour.

The contribution of my research comes in four parts. The first one is the contribution to the analysis of traineeships, not only because there is a lack of research done on traineeships generally compared to research on internships, but especially because there is an increase in using traineeships as a part of the active labour market policy programmes, a trend in youth employment policies noticed by Standing already in 2011. The second contribution is in expanding the meaning of precarious work made possible by Standing (2011), who identified interns as one of the groups that has a high probability of entering the ranks of the precariat. The third contribution lies in the gender analysis of precarious work. The fact that women are more likely to be in precarious employment is often acknowledged (Standing, 2011; Fredman, 2004; Young, 2010) but is rarely researched. The last contribution looks at the larger picture. Work traineeships are only one of the newest policies and laws that are strongly encouraging

precarious work. The newest labour law, which is slowly being passed by the parliament, is making the precarious type of employment a norm on the labour market. It *de facto* abolishes contracts of indefinite duration, prolongs the number of hours one has to work per week up to 60 hours, and promotes insecure, flexible types of employment, such as fixed term employment contract, jobs through employment agencies and outsourcing (Knežević, 2014).

The results from this research are limited to young women with a background in social sciences or humanities who are doing their traineeships in larger cities. This research cannot be used to explain the position on the labour market of young women with lower social, economic and cultural capital, as they do not have the same opportunities as my interviewees. It is also limited to young, formerly unemployed women and cannot be generalized to young men, especially for those with an engineering background, nor can it be used for comparing the opportunities on the labour market of young men and women. This could be done if the research on young men who have a different educational track takes into account gendered education, gendered access to paid labour and the consequences it has for both young men and women. The research is also limited to the context of Croatia as the work traineeship policy has specific provisions that are different from all similar youth unemployment active labour market policies.

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